

Faith of the Persistent

Devotional Reading: [John 4:4–18](#)

Background Scripture: [Luke 5:17–26](#)

[Luke 5:17–26](#)

¹⁷ One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. ¹⁸ Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. ¹⁹ When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

²⁰ When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

²¹ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

²² Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? ²⁴ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” ²⁵ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. ²⁶ Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “We have seen remarkable things today.”



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Key Text

Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.—[Luke 5:18–19](#)

Examining Our Faith

Unit II: The Measure of Faith

[Lessons 6–9](#)

Lesson Aims

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. Identify the correct and incorrect conclusions of the teachers of the law and the Pharisees.
2. Explain the connection between the plural “their” and the singular “your” in verse [20](#).

3. Brainstorm modern helping situations analogous to that of the text.

Lesson Outline

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- B. Lesson Context

I. Faith That Seeks (Luke 5:17–20a)

- A. Teaching a Gathering (v. 17)
- B. Finding a Way (vv. 18–19)

A Lesson in Persistence

- C. Seeing Their Faith (v. 20a)

II. Faith That Finds (Luke 5:20b–26)

- A. Man Is Forgiveness (v. 20b)
- B. Jesus Is Disparaged (vv. 21–22)
Part of the Solution or the Problem?
- C. Man Is Healed (vv. 23–25)
- D. Crowd Is Amazed (v. 26)

Conclusion

- A. Authentic Friends
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

How to Say It

Capernaum	Kuh- <i>per</i> -nay-um.
Galilee	Gal-uh-lee.
Messianic	Mess-ee- <i>an</i> -ick.
Nazareth	Naz-uh-reth.
Pharisees	Fair-ih-seez.
Synoptic	Sih- <i>nawp</i> -tihk.

Introduction

A. Imposter Friends

Words and their definitions seem to change all the time. In recent years, discussions on blogs and opinion pieces have focused on defining the word *friend* in the age of social media. Is it possible for a person to have thousands of “friends”? Is it possible to be friends with someone you have never met in person? Many so-called friends on social media are criminals hiding behind fictitious names! They

are imposters.

I have found a simple way to identify one's genuine friends: announce that you are moving and see who volunteers to help. My wife and I have moved more than 20 times during our 22 years of marriage. Surprisingly, we have had no more than five people who have helped us pack and load the trucks. By contrast, I have over 300 "friends" on social media. Today's lesson allows us a first-century look at the results of authentic, Christ-honoring friendship.

B. Lesson Context

The third Gospel and the book of Acts were written by a man named Luke. He was a traveling companion of the apostle Paul and a physician by profession (see [Colossians 4:14](#); [2 Timothy 4:11](#); [Philemon 24](#)). Because Luke was not an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus, he gathered his information from those who had been so he could write a detailed account ([Luke 1:1–4](#)). Most students believe that the Gospel of Mark was written first and, therefore, could have been one of the sources used by Luke. The scene in today's lesson is worded quite similarly to [Mark 2:1–12](#) (but see [Luke 5:17](#), below; compare [Matthew 9:1–8](#)).

Today's lesson locates Jesus in Galilee, early in his three-and-a-half-year ministry. His popularity was rising, and he was drawing crowds. The news of Jesus' teaching and miracles was spreading rapidly ([Luke 4:37](#)), and attempts to keep things under control in that regard didn't work ([5:14–15](#)). As a result, Jesus had to make a conscious effort to carve out some "alone time" for prayer with his heavenly Father ([4:42](#); [5:16](#)).

[Luke 5:12](#) states that the healing miracle just prior to the one in today's text occurred "in one of the towns" of Galilee. [Mark 2:1](#) is more specific in indicating that the events of today's lesson took place in Capernaum. This town, located on the northwestern bank of the Sea of Galilee, became something of a headquarters for Jesus during his tours of Galilee ([Matthew 4:13](#)).

I. Faith That Seeks ([Luke 5:17–20a](#))

A. Teaching a Gathering (v. 17)

17a. One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem.

The phrase *one day* indicates that the events that follow probably occur on a day other than a Sabbath. Recognizing that this supposition is an argument from silence, we note that there are no complaints from Jesus' opponents concerning a Sabbath violation, as we see in [Luke 6:1–11](#) and [13:10–16](#).

This verse includes the first of 26 mentions of Pharisee or *Pharisees* in the Gospel of Luke. Two factors indicate their presence to have been an ominous turn of events. The first is that they were accompanied by *teachers of the law*. This rare designation (a Greek word of 14 letters) is found only here, in [Acts 5:34](#) (applied to the renowned Gamaliel), and in [1 Timothy 1:7](#) (regarding misguided aspirations). The *NIV* lists other times when "teachers of the law" accompanied Pharisees (example: [Luke](#)

5:30), but the English translation obscures the fact that a different Greek word is being translated in both cases.

Pharisees opposed Jesus (examples: [Luke 11:53–54](#); [John 11:45–57](#)), with a few exceptions (examples: [3:1](#); [19:39](#)). On the distinctive beliefs and practices of the Pharisees, see [Matthew 23:1–36](#); [Mark 7:3–5](#); [Luke 18:10–12](#); and [Acts 23:8](#).

The second ominous factor is that these religious leaders are not merely “local yokels” *from every village of Galilee*. Instead, they include individuals from *Judea* and *Jerusalem*. It’s a long walk from Jerusalem and its temple to Capernaum—approximately 80 miles! For these religious leaders to commit to such a trip reveals a determined intent that the person and work of Jesus required a thorough investigation.

Jesus Includes “Outsiders” in Luke’s Gospel

Jesus and Outsiders

- Jesus eats with outsiders (5:27-32)
- Jesus heals the servant of a centurion (7:1-10)
- Jesus teaches on neighborly mercy (10:25-37)
- Jesus and the tax collector (19:1-10)
- Jesus and the crucified criminal (23:40-43)

Jesus and Women

- A woman anoints Jesus’ feet (7:36-50)
- Jesus heals a bleeding woman (8:40-48)
- Jesus heals a woman on the Sabbath (13:10-17)

Jesus and Children

- Jesus heals a boy with a spirit (9:37-43)
- Jesus and the little children (18:15-17)

Jesus and the Unclean

- Jesus heals a man possessed by a spirit (4:31-37)
- Jesus heals a man with leprosy (5:12-16)
- Jesus heals a man with paralysis (5:17-26)
- Jesus heals a man possessed by demons (8:26-39)
- Jesus heals ten men with leprosy (17:11-19)
- Jesus heals a man with blindness (18:35-43)



Sheet 6—Spring 2024, *Adult Resources*, Standard Lesson Quarterly® Curriculum

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Lesson 6

Visual for [Lesson 6](#). Point to this chart and ask, “What do Jesus’ actions in the Gospel of Luke reveal about who or what Jesus finds most important?”

17b. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick.

With this phrase, Luke unites this event with [Isaiah 61:1–2](#), which Jesus had read concerning himself when he was in Nazareth a short time before ([Luke 4:16–21](#)). The healings, both physical and spiri-

tual, fulfill messianic prophecy.

The reference to healing *the sick* raises a question of antecedent: Who were these people? In any case, the focus is on the source of the power: *the Lord* (compare [Micah 3:8](#); etc.).

B. Finding a Way (vv. 18–19)

18. Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus.

The helping action of the friends of *a paralyzed man* is selfless and authentic. In their effort, the friends show what Jesus called the second greatest commandment: love your neighbor as yourself ([Matthew 22:39](#); [Mark 12:31](#)). This account does not specify how many men are carrying the bed, but [Mark 2:3](#) does: there are four. This makes sense when we imagine something like a medical stretcher with one person at each corner.

The Greek verb to describe the man's disease is in the tradition of other ancient medical writers, and Luke's books feature four of its five occurrences in the New Testament (here and in [Luke 5:24](#); [Acts 8:7](#); [9:33](#); compare to the fifth occurrence in [Hebrews 12:12](#), there translated "weak"). If spoken in Greek, the word would sound very much like our English word *paralyzed*. The affliction made it impossible for the man to come to Jesus without assistance.

What Do You Think?

How will you demonstrate the second greatest commandment (see [Matthew 22:39](#); [Mark 12:31](#)) toward a friend in need in the upcoming week?

Digging Deeper

Who might you recruit to help you in this regard?

19. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

The religious leaders' determination to investigate Jesus ([Luke 5:17a](#), above) was matched by the determination of four men to have the suffering man healed by Jesus. This verse reads quite similarly to its parallel in [Mark 2:4](#), except for Luke's phrase *right in front of Jesus*, which Mark did not include.

First-century Palestinian houses typically had flat roofs with exterior steps or a ladder providing access. Roofs were built with beams resting on the outer walls, with smaller posts crossing the beams and covered with thatch and mud. The rooftop was a place for household activities, drying laundry, and getting fresh air. It was also where people sometimes hid, conferred, mourned, and prayed ([Joshua 2:6](#); [1 Samuel 9:25](#); [Isaiah 15:3](#); [Acts 10:9](#), respectively). Roofs were also places where bad things could happen ([2 Samuel 11:2](#); [16:22](#); [Deuteronomy 22:8](#); [Jeremiah 19:13](#)).

Even with outside access readily available, for the four men to climb the stairs or ladder while transporting the man was undoubtedly quite difficult—another sign of their faith and commitment. And lowering the man *through the tiles into the middle of the crowd* would probably have required

ropes, possibly an indication of advance preparation.

What Do You Think?

How can perceived physical or spiritual obstacles become an opportunity to demonstrate your faith and trust?

Digging Deeper

How is your faith strengthened by the examples from Scripture of people who faced and overcame obstacles to faith (example: Paul, [2 Corinthians 11:23–33](#))?

A Lesson in Persistence

I was a college student visiting Europe, foolish enough to wear a belt pouch with a single, inviting zipper. It attracted thieves like chum attracts sharks.

In Paris, a man held open a door for me while he tried to sneak the zipper open. In Rome, a trio of young women jangled bells in my face while they did likewise. In both cases, I clamped my hand over the zipper.

It was an older woman in Rome whose persistence paid off. She begged in a loud voice as she pushed a swaddled baby against me. A moment later, I felt her rummage in my belt pouch.

I stepped back. “Did you take something from me?”

The woman’s failed burglary didn’t faze her one bit. She pointed to the water bottle in my hand and cried out, “For the baby! For the baby!”

I gave it to her.

Lord, help us to seek you with that persistence as we do so with godly motives!

—N. G.

C. Seeing Their Faith (v. [20a](#))

[20a](#). When Jesus saw their faith, he said,

The four Gospels mention *faith* a total of 24 times (in Greek), and Luke features 11 of those instances. The verse before us is the first (earliest) of those 11. Faith, being a mental and spiritual state, cannot literally be seen in and of itself by us ordinary humans. That limitation does not apply to the Son of God, however. He knows people’s spiritual and mental states (see [Luke 5:22](#), below). But even though we lack the divine ability to see the faith (or lack of faith) in someone’s heart, we can certainly see evidence of faith in one’s actions or inactions ([James 2:17](#)). What the crowd saw in the actions of the men Jesus *saw* in both heart and action.

We must not assume that the phrase *their faith* refers only to the man’s friends to the exclusion of the paralyzed man. There is no indication that he opposed others’ carrying him to Jesus. It’s likely that he was more than willing to seek out Jesus.

What Do You Think?

In what ways do a believer's actions reveal his or her faith in God?

Digging Deeper

How do [Hebrews 11:1–12:3](#) and [James 2:14–26](#) inform you of the connection between faith and action?

II. Faith That Finds ([Luke 5:20b–26](#))

A. Man Is Forgiven (v. [20b](#))

[20b](#). “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

How Jesus addresses the man varies across the accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (the synoptic Gospels). Luke uses the generic Greek word for *friend*, while the other two Gospels use the Greek word that can be translated as “son” ([Matthew 9:2](#); [Mark 2:5](#)).

B. Jesus Is Disparaged (vv. [21–22](#))

[21](#). The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Not (yet) finding anything in Jesus’ teaching to criticize, *the Pharisees and the teachers of the law* focus their attention on his actions and implied identity. They are not correct in an absolute sense when they say that *God alone* can forgive sins—people are encouraged to forgive sins committed against one another ([Matthew 6:14](#); [18:21–22](#); [Luke 11:4](#); [17:3–4](#); [Colossians 3:12–13](#)). But the teachers of the law and the Pharisees are correct in the sense of a person sinning against God ([Exodus 34:6–7](#); [Psalm 103:2–3](#); [Isaiah 43:25](#); [1 John 1:8–9](#)). According to Jewish writings in the period between the Old and New Testaments, the Jews expected a righteous Messiah to overthrow foreign invaders. They did not expect a Messiah who would be God-in-the-flesh, able to forgive sins.

This unspoken question of the religious experts goes to the heart of understanding the person and work of Jesus. The experts actually had a good grasp of what was happening: Jesus was speaking and acting in a manner reserved for God. For a mere human to forgive sins committed against God would indeed be blasphemy, which was punishable by death ([Leviticus 24:16](#)). Various forms of the word *blasphemy* occur dozens of times in the New Testament. Jesus eventually would be crucified on this very charge ([Matthew 26:65–66](#); [Mark 14:64](#); compare [John 5:16–18](#); [10:31–33](#)). The text establishes this instance as the first organized opposition to Jesus in the Gospel of Luke.

What Do You Think?

How can you prepare yourself for others’ questions regarding the identity and authority of Jesus?

Digging Deeper

What steps do you need to take to be successful in this regard?

Part of the Solution or the Problem?

My wife and I have been reading Helen L. Taylor’s *Little Pilgrim’s Progress* to our kids each night. They love this adaptation of Bunyan’s classic *Pilgrim’s Progress*, published in 1678. They are fascinated by all the obstacles Little Christian encounters—giants, lions, and other children who mock him as he keeps moving along the King’s Way toward the Celestial City.

The characters who oppose Little Christian are what might be called “threshold guardians,” and they have names that reveal their nature. Characters named “Obstinate” and “Pliable” try to keep Little Christian from ever starting his journey of faith; “Worldly” tries to get him to go an easier way; “Self” attempts to enslave him, etc.

The Pharisees arose as threshold guardians against Jesus’ ministry, but Jesus did not abandon his calling. When you think of the problem of spiritual threshold guardians, how do you ensure you’re not part of the problem?

—N. G.

22. Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?”

Everyone present could see the evidence of the faith of the man and his friends in their actions. Jesus, however, was able to see the doubt and lack of faith in the *hearts* of the religious leaders. The ability to know people’s hearts and innermost thoughts is one of the divine characteristics of Jesus that Luke emphasizes (see [Luke 6:8](#); [9:47](#); [24:38](#)). With this ability, he was able to respond to their unspoken question with an audible question of his own. Although Jesus knew the thoughts of their hearts, he asked them a question, a method of teaching that he often used ([2:49](#); [6:9, 39, 46](#); etc.).

C. Man Is Healed (vv. [23–25](#))

23. “Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?”

Not waiting for an answer to his question, Jesus immediately poses another one. Some students see this as a “greater to lesser” argument (technically known as *a maiore ad minus*). A simple example of this argument goes like this: “If a glass can hold eight ounces of water, then it can surely hold five ounces of water.”

Other students see it as the opposite—a “lesser to greater” argument (technically known as *a minore ad maius*). A simple example might be: “If it is illegal to shoot fireworks on the Fourth of July (a single day), then it is surely illegal to shoot them off on all other days.”

In either case, Jesus’ question gave the religious leaders something to think about. What was to be not doubted was Jesus’ ability not just to say *get up and walk* but actually to bring that action about, as the next verses demonstrate.

24. “But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.”

This verse—worded almost the same as [Matthew 9:6](#) and [Mark 2:10–11](#)—stresses that Jesus healed the paralyzed man as evidence of Jesus’ *authority on earth to forgive sins* (compare [John 5:8](#)). In this way, Luke again connects what has happened here to Jesus’ reading of the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue (see notes on [Luke 5:17b](#), above). When John the Baptist wavered in his faith while imprisoned,

Jesus confirmed his messiahship by mentioning signs such as this (7:22–23). Faith in Jesus is based on evidence!

This verse is the first of 25 occasions that Luke records Jesus’ using the self-designation *Son of Man*. Overall, this expression occurs across all four Gospels more than 80 times. In almost every case, it comes from the lips of Jesus and not as a description of Jesus by the Gospel writers. (Luke 24:7 and John 12:34 are the only two exceptions, both quoting Jesus.)

The background of this designation comes from the Old Testament. The book of Ezekiel applies the title to that prophet more than 80 times, but without suggesting that he was divine (examples: Ezekiel 5:1; 6:2; 7:2). The two uses of the designation in the book of Daniel recognize the Son of Man as having divine attributes (Daniel 7:13–14; 8:17).

25. Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God.

Earlier, Luke established Jesus’ authority and power to heal and drive out demons (Luke 4:33–36). And we remember that *authority* is “the right to do something,” and *power* is “the ability to do something.” Luke is the only writer of the four Gospels to use both words together (examples: 4:36; 9:1; 20:20). Although the text now under consideration does not explicitly use those words, both concepts are present in this verse.

The adverb *immediately* establishes that the healing happened instantly at the mere spoken words of Jesus. This particular adverb is a favorite of Luke’s. The Greek word that is being translated occurs most often in the New Testament in the Gospel of Luke (examples: Luke 1:64; 8:44; 13:13; 18:43) and the book of Acts (examples: Acts 12:23; 13:11). The healing did not happen over a length of time. And there is no indication that Jesus’ touch was involved, as healing miracles featured in other contexts (compare Mark 8:22–25; John 9:6–7).

The man’s sudden ability to walk was (or should have been) evidence that Christ had both authority and power to forgive sins (see Luke 20:2–8). The statement *in front of them* is essential to this proof—everyone present saw the result. In biblical times two or three witnesses were required to prove the veracity of an event (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; Matthew 18:16; John 8:13–18; 2 Corinthians 13:1). Thus, Luke confirms that a sufficient number of witnesses were present to verify the miracle.

What Do You Think?

How do you ensure that worship is your first response when you experience God’s work?

Digging Deeper

How do you maintain an attitude of worship even when it seems God has not worked in the way you desired?

D. Crowd Is Amazed (v. 26)

26a. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said,

This is the only verse in the New Testament where amazement, praising *God*, and *fear* occur together as reactions of a crowd. The parallel verses of Matthew 9:8 and Mark 2:12a, by contrast,

record only two of these three reactions each. We presume that the word *everyone* includes the religious leaders who were present. This was their first encounter with Jesus, as recorded in the Gospel of Luke, and it's not unreasonable to conclude that they shared in everyone's reactions. Like everyone else, those leaders needed time to process the evidence for Jesus' deity just seen. Soon enough, however, some people will reach the wrong conclusion (see [Luke 11:14–16](#)).

26b. “We have seen remarkable things today.”

This is the crowd's fourth reaction, as recorded by Luke. If spoken aloud, the Greek word translated *remarkable things* (which occurs only here in the New Testament) would sound like the English word *paradoxical*. This reaction, unlike that in [Luke 4:28–29](#), is one of confused neutrality. It reaches no conclusion.

Conclusion

A. Authentic Friends

Social media has changed the world's concept of friendship. Only time will tell whether a new word is needed to distinguish between a virtual social-media friend and an authentic real-life friend. In the meantime, I will continue to post online as we prepare for our next move and patiently wait for my 300 so-called friends to show up.

The friends in today's lesson remind us of the nature of authentic friendship. We are unsure how long they had been carrying their friend around on this bed. We know that when Jesus came into the city, they believed he could help their friend. However, they did not stop at simply believing. They put their faith into action and brought their friend to Jesus, overcoming every obstacle on the way.

It was not an easy task to get their friend onto the roof, tear it apart, and lower him into the room. Undoubtedly, they could have spent their time on other matters that day. How can you dedicate your time and resources to assisting a friend in need?

B. Prayer

Father, we are grateful for the friends who have helped us on our faith journey. We pray that you will help us be the friend who carries the bed of another when needed, regardless of the obstacles in our path. We give you thanks for friends and the strength to be a friend in Jesus' name. Amen.

C. Thought to Remember

God enables us daily to be faithful friends!

Involvement Learning

Enhance your lesson with [NIV Bible Student](#) (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity

Into the Lesson

Look up the definition of *friend* in a dictionary and write that definition on the board. Distribute index cards and pens to each learner and ask them to write down the first three words they think of when they hear the word *friend*.

After one minute, ask volunteers to share their three words as you write those words on the board. Lead a whole-class discussion using the following questions: 1—Which of the listed words are similar? 2—Which words stand out as unique? 3—How do these words match the definition? Keep these words and their definitions on the board for the entire class time.

After comparing the contributed words with the dictionary definition of *friend*, lead a discussion regarding how the meanings of words can change over time. Say, “For example, the word *friend* means something entirely different in the context of social media.” Lead into Bible study by saying, “In today’s lesson, Luke describes a faithful friendship. While reading the text, notice how the text uses active words to describe the actions of a friend.”

Into the Word

Divide the class into three groups: **Jesus Group**, **Religious Leaders Group**, and **Friends Group**. Write the following headers on the board: *Jesus / Religious Leaders / Friends*. Introduce the activity by saying that the action verbs found in this section of Scripture help us understand the passage.

Distribute a sheet of paper and pen to each group. Ask each group to read [Luke 5:17–26](#) and write down all the action verbs associated with their group’s namesake. After five minutes, have a volunteer from each group write their group’s words on the board under the appropriate header.

Lead a whole-class discussion using the following questions: 1—What do the lists of verbs reveal about the characters’ motives? 2—What do these verbs reveal about the faith of the friends? 3—What do these verbs highlight about the disbelief of the religious leaders? 4—What do these verbs tell us about what is most important to Jesus? 5—What is the connection between the faith of the friends and Jesus’ actions?

Option 1. Ask a volunteer to read aloud [Matthew 17:14–20](#). Ask the following questions for whole-class discussion: 1—How does [Matthew 17:14–20](#) pertain to today’s lesson? 2—What is the connection between having authentic faith and our actions?

Option 2. Distribute copies of the “God’s Definition of a Friend” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Have the learners work in pairs to complete and discuss the activity page as indicated.

Into Life

Ask learners to work in small groups to create a definition of the word *friend* using only the ideas

conveyed in [Luke 5:17–26](#). Ask each group to write their definition on the board. In a whole-class discussion, ask how these definitions are similar to or different from the definition from Into the Lesson. Allow five minutes for this discussion.

Have learners work in their small groups to brainstorm real-life helping situations analogous to today's Scripture text. Ask, "How does each helping situation fulfill the role of a friend as described in your definition?" Then have groups come up with possible challenges they may face in acting on these helping situations. Distribute an index card to each learner and have them write the name of a person who can benefit from a helping situation in the upcoming week.

Alternative. Distribute copies of the "Remarkable Friendship" activity from the activity page. Have learners complete it as a take-home activity. To encourage completion, tell the class that you will set aside some time at the beginning of the next class to review the activity and its results.