

Our Crowning Glory

"Friends must balance the inclination to be open and honest with one another with the need to be protective of each other's feelings. Sharing doesn't mean unloading on a person. Total disclosure does not inspire intimacy. Rather, it's an imposition and can cause even the best friendships to dissolve."

Dr. Joyce Brothers

Our relationships are so precious to us! Intimacy with others, in fact, is essential to our personal happiness and to our healthy development. We *need* each other! That's why Adam was not a bachelor. And that's one of the primary reasons why God has made us one Body in Christ.

In the divine design of things, we were made to be mutually dependent and mutually supportive. Yet the affection and support we need from others was never intended to absolve us from personal responsibility. Adam was not excused for eating the forbidden fruit because God made the woman, and the woman gave it to him! In the same context (Gal. 6:1-5) in which Paul says, *"Carry each other's burdens"* he also says, *"Each man should carry his own load."*

God's tribute to human dignity is that He has made us personally accountable for our own conduct. He has blessed us with a wonderful support system in our families, our friendships, in the church. He has given us the motivation and the power of His own presence in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But, unlike the lower animals of His creation, we are not driven primarily by instinct. Whatever help or hurt others may contribute, we enjoy freedom of personal choice, and to the end of the day, we are accountable both to God and to man for our choices.

That is our unique badge of distinction! It's bottom-line evidence of our maturity. And while responsibility is certainly not meritorious, our crowning glory will be to hear our Maker say, *"Well done, good and faithful servant."*

Ruel Dean Catlett