

## Cheetahs and Golden Labs

### Scripture Reading — John 15:12-17

*I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. — John 15:15*

During a trip to the zoo in Columbus, Ohio, I was fascinated to learn about companionship. I learned that cheetahs are naturally shy and anxious creatures. They are so shy, in fact, that when they get nervous, it is difficult for them even to breed—and they are becoming endangered because of it.

The zoo needed a solution to help the cheetahs, so they began pairing cheetahs with Golden Labrador puppies. Normally these animals would be enemies, but because they were introduced at a young age, the cheetahs and Labs became best friends. The dogs helped the cheetahs calm down and relax. It was fun watching them run together and put on a display.

I have been reminded over the years that if you want to go fast (like a cheetah), you go alone; but if you want to go far, you go together (as friends).

Jesus was telling his disciples something similar. If we want to go far and grow the family of God, we need to love one another just as Jesus loves us. When he calls us friends, he removes the barriers we have created and becomes our companion. We no longer need to be anxious or fearful of anyone around us. Instead, we can learn to love one another.

### Prayer

*Dear God, thanks for help-ing us see that sometimes the people we have thought were our enemies can really be our friends. Thank you that Jesus showed us how to be a friend. Help us become that same kind of friend to others. In your name, Amen.*

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