



## You have a friend request

Shaking hands and kissing babies sure makes a lot of friends. Take US President Barack Obama for example. More than 24.2 million people “like” him, according to his Facebook page. But he isn’t close to being the world’s most popular person. He trails cartoon character SpongeBob SquarePants, who has 29.5 million fans, and even Lady Gaga’s 45.7 million followers.

However, even they still have ground to make on the most “liked” person. Who might that be? Amazingly, it’s entertainer Eminem, adored by a whopping 49.8 million people.

Facebook has revolutionised how we connect with friends and reconnect with forgotten ones. It allows us to share our daily lives, our photos, our music and our humour.

But are those relationships genuine?

If we’re honest with ourselves, social network sites lack human warmth. It’s easier to stay in touch by Facebook than meet face-to-face. It’s no wonder many people report they feel alone.

There is something deep inside of us that yearns for real friendship. It’s hardly surprising, considering God created us for relationships. With our family. With our community. And especially with Him.

To prove it, He himself walked the earth as a living, breathing man called Jesus. Not only did he heal the sick and call everyone to love one another, but he also offered the gift of eternal life. Imagine that – a future life filled with

joy, peace and splendour with the God who loves us.

But His gift came at a cost. You see, we’re all sinners and the penalty for even the smallest or sneakiest of our sins is hell. God knew this so He did something completely radical. He willingly died on a cross. He substituted himself for us, so those who believe can be rescued from damnation.

As the Bible teaches us: “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13).

Even if Eminem, Lady Gaga or President Obama wanted to die on behalf of all their Facebook friends, they couldn’t in the way that Jesus did. They’re sinful like you and me. Only the death of Jesus, the one without sin, could pay for the sins of the world.

God doesn’t want fans. He wants a genuine personal relationship that is honest and daily. And in return we can be guaranteed that even in our weakest moments, he will never “unfriend” us.

### **Prayer:**

Dear God, let me experience a deep loving friendship with you that is eternal. Amen.

### **Bible verse:**

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