

The sweet smell of incense can make you feel good,
but true friendship is better still.

Proverbs 27:9 (CEV)

REFRESHED **12**

Megan Anderson [Kokomo, Indiana]

My friend Renae and I come from different economic and religious backgrounds. When we hike together, we talk about the challenges in our lives and often discuss our differing views of God and the Bible. Renae is the rare kind of friend who won't judge me for my struggles or brush off my opinions. Because we respect each other, we are not afraid to dive into difficult subjects or to get into heated debates. Following our conversations, I always come home feeling refreshed. After our last hike Renae said, "I feel like myself again after being with you."

When we spend time with God and enjoy God's company—through nature, faithful friends, or times of quiet reflection—we feel more like the people we were created to be. <



the real me:

Lord, thank you for giving me people with whom I can have real conversations.

Thank you that when I speak from my heart with honesty and sincerity, they listen and don't judge me or tell me I'm wrong to think or feel a certain way.

Thank you for giving me courage to be open and honest, instead of fearful and insecure. It's freeing to realize that they see the real me—faults and all—and still love me, as You do.

Elaine Creasman [Largo, Florida]