

Introduction:

- In our lives, we have friends for different areas of our lives. We have casual friends, close friends, work friends, social friends, etc.
- *"There are "friends" who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother."* (Proverbs 18:24, NLT)
- Who is your best friend in the whole wide world? Why? It is hard to define what a friend is because it takes so many words to do. And most of the time we don't really define it but describe what a friend is. A friend is a person we can talk to and share our deepest thoughts, a friend is someone we can trust and a friend is someone who is with us when we are going through bad times.
- You have been in school for almost a month. Some of you have made new friends, some have reconnected with old friends, and some of you are still in process of making friends, and some of you are discovering that who you thought was a friend really is not.

I. The Circle of Friends

A. Let's first talk about the circle of friends so we can see this from a bigger perspective. Sometimes it is hard to see because we are so close. I want to look at these circles in Jesus' life so you can see what He did in making friends. IE. Keynote 180902 circle of friends.

1. Crowds - lots of people I don't know or may be familiar with.
2. The Twelve Apostles - He chose 12 men as friends. John 15:14-15 *You are my friends*. Phileo - a special form of friendship.
3. The Three - Peter, James, and John. Of the twelve, Jesus had three that were very close to Him.
4. The Closest - John the Apostle. Of the three, John the apostle was closest to Jesus. In 13:25 John leaned against Jesus' chest. Jesus trusted John to care for His mother.
5. When it comes to making friends everyone goes through this process. Not everyone will be very close to you. Some will be acquaintances, some will be friends, some will be close friends and some will be best friends forever! It is physically impossible to have lots of close friends because it takes time to do that. When you go to school you will have a crowd of people around you. You will choose to relate to many of them. Several will become your friends and hopefully you will have at least one close friend among them as you grow in relationship. So how does this work?

B. You Are Here

1. What kind of friends do you want? Determine the kind of people you want around you. How do you do that? Well, I want Christian friends. I want people who will build me up. I want people who want to become better than what they are today.

(interested in growing: spiritually, emotionally, influentially). Ie. I wanted to go to college someday. So my close friends in high school were also carrying the same dream. We shared the same classes. Helped each other with homework. , etc. Here are five things you should look at when making friends"

- a) I want friends who are christian. *"Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness?"* (2 Corinthians 6:14, NLT) This is important because that is an inner circle friend. Can they be unchristian? Yes, but that moves them to the outer circle called the crowd. When you make friends there it is for the purpose of influencing them to Christ.
 - b) I want friends who are not going to lead me into evil. *"Don't be fooled ... for bad company corrupts good character."* (1 Corinthians 15:33, NLT)
 - c) I want friends who will challenge me to be more than I am. *"As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend."* (Proverbs 27:17, NLT) *"Become wise by walking with the wise; hang out with fools and watch your life fall to pieces."* (Proverbs 13:20, The Message)
 - d) I want friends who will challenge me to honor others. *"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works."* (Hebrews 10:24, NLT)
 - e) I want friends who will consider my heart. 1 Sam 16:7 *God looks at the heart.*
 - (1) Why does it hurt when someone we are friends we breaks our heart? They are closer to our heart than a stranger is. We trust them more...not to hurt us.
 - (2) Trust makes close friends. Therefore to break that trust cause pain in our hearts.
2. What kind of people should I avoid when making friends. Again, I remind us that we are talking about people we are letting into our inner two circles. Solomon had much to say about who we should avoid as friends. Even if they are popular.
- a) People who are foolish. Proverbs 14:6-7 *A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, but knowledge is easy for a man of understanding. Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge.* Fools are people who are always trying to get you into trouble. They do not act, or talk wisely. Solomon say leave their presence.
 - b) People who are angry. Proverbs 22:24-25 *Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.* People who are always angry or have quick tempers will not be good friends. They will hurt you often and seek to put you down.
 - c) People who do wrong. 1 Corinthians 15:33 *Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."* IE. Play-dough

- d) People who gossip. Prov 16:28 *A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends*. NLT
- e) People who are dishonest. Prov 26:18-19 *Just as damaging as a madman shooting a deadly weapon ¹⁹ is someone who lies to a friend and then says, "I was only joking."* NLT
- f) People who are prideful. Proverbs 13:10 *Pride leads to conflict; those who take advice are wise*. NLT

(1) So now we have 5 things to look for and to avoid in making friends. How do we begin?

C. Take the first step.

1. When you take the first step in being a friend, you will find you have all kinds of friends. But if you stay in your shell and wait for people to befriend you, you'll have a few or fewer friends. Any time we are quick to meet others, greet others, help others, WE WILL MAKE SOME FRIENDS.
2. Eat together. It's been said that when people visit a church for the first time they will decide whether they will come back or not in the first 7 to 12 minutes. This is why a friendly greeting and friendly greeters are so important! And it is why we should do more than shake a hand we should share a meal. As you share a meal you will learn the heart. Maybe that is why Jesus ate with so many different people.
3. Be a listener. One sure way of not making friends is by not listening to people or not paying attention to them.
 - a) IE. Dale Carnegie once said, "You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in people, than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you."
 - b) IE. An 80-year-old grandfather went to his daughter's house for Sunday dinner. When the meal was over, he announced that he was going to take a walk through the neighborhood. "I'll be back in twenty minutes," he said. But two hours had passed before he finally returned. "Sorry I'm late," he said. "But I stopped to talk to an old friend and he just wouldn't stop listening."
4. Show you care. Jesus was always caring for people no matter their predicament.

II. Keeping Your Friends

- A. Treat your friends like you want to be treated. Luke 6:31 *Do to others as you would like them to do to you*. NLT Golden Rule. Look at how Jesus treated Judas.
- B. Help each other. Proverbs 17:17 *A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need*. NLT Stay with your friends. Remember, a friend is one who comes in when all others are going out. The whole design of friendship is to avoid being left

alone when the times of hardship, trial and calamity arise (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). A man with a friend is a threefold cord.

- C. Friends are loyal. They don't reveal secrets (Proverbs 11:13). They stick with you "rain or shine," in the good times and the bad (Proverbs 17:17). There's a great quote from James Bowie, hero of the Alamo. Bowie was complaining that his friends had forsaken him after a terrible error in judgment on his part. His companion in the conversation asked, in amazement at Bowie's displeasure, "Well, you do know you were wrong." To this Bowie replied, "Well, yes, but that is when I needed them most!"
- D. Friends honor each other. Romans 12:10 *Love one another with brotherly affection. Out do one another in showing honor*. Honor a friend.
- E. Friends are kind. Eph 4:29-32 *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.* NKJV Be kind.
- F. Friends forgive each other. Proverbs 17:9 *He who covers and forgives an offense seeks love, but he who repeats or harps on a matter separates even close friends.*
- G. Friends comfort one another. Job lamented the fact that when his friends came to his aid in his time of calamity that rather than comfort him, they began to accuse him falsely of sin (Job 6:14-15). They were "miserable comforters," that is, they offered no consolation and showed no pity (Job 16:2, 20; 19:19). Job endured the failure of his relationships, as did David (Ps 38:11) and, even, Jesus (Mt 26:56) all the disciples forsook him. From Jesus we learn what a real friend is John 15:13, laying down our lives. While others may forsake us, we always have a friend in Jesus (Hebrews 13:5-6) I will never leave you or forsake you. Jesus learned this from His Father John (16:32). Friendship is intended to head us off from and bring us up out of the depths of despair and loneliness (Pro. 27:17).
- H. In a survey of more than 40,000 people, Americans said these qualities were most valued in a friend: 1) The ability to keep confidences, 2) Loyalty, and 3) Warmth and affection. These are the ways to keep a friend. Be there. Be helpful. Be faithful. Be loving. Be supportive.

III. Parents as Navigators

- A. A navigator is one who plots the course of a ship, aircraft, etc. They make sure to establish the path to get from one point to another.
- B. The number one way to have your children end up surrounded by spiritually passionate Christian friends is this: They need to be spiritually passionate Christians. Like minded friends attract others who are spiritually passionate.

1. This means your children must be waking up in spiritually passionate homes.
 2. They need to be a part of a family that serves others. Not just once a year at Thanksgiving. A home that serves each other, neighbors, church, etc. This others orientation gives children a better perspective when choosing their friends.
- C. Teach them friendship
1. Perhaps one of the greatest skills we will impart to our children is that of making friends. In order to begin, we must teach our child how to be a friend (Proverbs 18:24). This involves our helping them develop all those attributes of character that make them worthy of the friendship of others (Psalms 35:14). As a parent, you must lead your children to be trustworthy, kind, loyal, brave, men and women of faith and love.
 2. You must impart to them an understanding of the difference between friendship and cronyism (Proverbs 6:1, 2; 19:4, 6-7; Luke 6:27-38). There are always people who will imitate friendship for what they perceive you are able to give them (Proverbs 6:3; 14:20). In youth we often unwisely confuse popularity with friendship. We mistake pleasurable association with companionship. Being the center of attention and invited to all the parties does not mean one has friends. I.e. Just ask the prodigal.
 3. Being someones friend on FB or Instagram does to make you a friend, or them.
 4. Another important life lesson we need to impart to our children is control of the tongue, the lack of which often adversely impacts friendships (Proverbs 16:28; 17:9). They must learn not to gossip, but rather one whose speech is always uplifting and wise (Psalms 141:3; Proverbs 22:11).
 5. Finally, model this behavior before your own children (I Timothy 4:12). Let them see in you how a friend behaves and they will have ready made friends (Proverbs 27:10).

Conclusion:

- IE. Last slide from Circle of Friends. YOU ARE HERE:
- We all need good company in life; good friends as we walk along life's highway. The thing that will make the trip better, more enjoyable, easier, and shorter is to have some good friends.
- You can be a better friend today by giving your life to Jesus and living according to His word.