

How to build good friendships

We've looked at the definition of a good friend:



A good friend is a helper given by God to partner with as you work for and obey our Creator

We've looked at the specifics of being a good friend:



A good friend loves reliably, sacrificially with and through the love of God

Today we look at the concept of "making" good friends:



Good friendships are God's friends pressing each other to work for and obey God

- Good friends are not people who tell you what you want to hear.
 - Good friends are not people you agree with on everything.
 - Good friends are not people who never hurt you.
 - Good friends are not people who "get" you.
 - Good friends are not people who are like you.
 - Good friends are not smart, funny, pretty, handsome, strong.
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- Good friends are God's friends
 - Good friends press you deeper into friendship with God
 - Good friends take second place, the servants place, helping you work for and obey your Creator
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1. Good Friends are God's Friends
 2. Make God's Friends your Friends

1. Good Friends are God's Friends

There is no good outside of God. Whatever good we may want, for any good that really is good it must come from God. When it comes to good friendships then an obvious yet all too often overlooked prerequisite requirement is to find folks who love Jesus, who have His Holy Spirit inside of them, those who have been forgiven of their sin. **The only good friends are God's friends.** You can have a lot of people in your life. Neighbors, classmates, coworkers but please always remember if they are not in friendship with God they will not make good friends.

These are the friends Proverbs is constantly warning against. Those who will turn our attention away from wisdom, away from godliness, flee these friendships, harden yourself against closeness with those who do not care for God. You can choose to

place your love upon those people in evangelistic fervor but do not take those people as your partners in life in the bonds of friendship.



Proverbs 1:10–19

10 My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent.
11 If they say, "Come with us, Let us lie in wait for blood, Let us ambush the innocent without cause;
12 Let us swallow them alive like Sheol, Even whole, as those who go down to the pit;
13 We will find all kinds of precious wealth, We will fill our houses with spoil;
14 Throw in your lot with us, We shall all have one purse,"
15 My son, do not walk in the way with them. Keep your feet from their path,
16 For their feet run to evil And they hasten to shed blood.
17 Indeed, it is useless to spread the baited net In the sight of any bird;
18 But they lie in wait for their own blood; They ambush their own lives.
19 So are the ways of everyone who gains by violence; It takes away the life of its possessors.

So much youthful heartache, ruin and waste of life would be avoided if that first verse were adopted and placed as the guardian of the mind. "If sinners entice you, Do not consent". Say no to sinners. Be near them, evangelize, witness, but do not take them as your advisors. Do not heed their wisdom. **Be with them but do not go with them.** Do not live life as they do, caring about what they do. **Stand in contrast not consent.**

Over my life I really haven't given much thought to my friendships. I took for granted anyone who was willing to hang out with me more than just a couple times. Looking back though I can see the times of greatest fruit and spiritual growth are directly correlated to the friends I was hanging out with at the time. Particularly in my early twenties I had some really poor close friends. One of them was actually in my wedding. We had met in church, but looking back it was pretty clear he didn't really care about Christ, but he was fun, we played soccer together, went to the gym together, played frisbee golf, video games, etc. He didn't get me into any serious trouble but he kept my heart from deepening in my love and affection for God. It wasn't until by God's providence I started dating my now wife I discovered the treasure of a true good friend.

She is the model of a good friend. Look up the definition of a Good Friend in the back of your bible and it's a picture of Deb, or at least it is in mine. Why? Because she is first a friend of God before she is a friend of mine. Together we are living for Jesus and not ourselves or even each other. We are good friends because we are God's friends.

So how do find God's friends?

1. A Friend of God Believes God



James 2:23

23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.

Thankfully the measurement criteria here aren't all that complex or mysterious. When asking the "to friendship or not to friendship" with a person question #1 is simply do they believe God? When God speaks do they submit to those words? Do they deeply revere the Bible? Do they consider it the final, official, infallible authority for life and godliness. Mental ascent to the existence of God is belief in God but not a belief of God. A friend of God will both fundamentally believe in God but more importantly actually believe in the God of the Bible, honoring and submitting to what that God says.

2. A Friend of God Obeys God



John 15:14–15

14 "You are My friends if you do what I command you.

15 "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Second and equally obvious is that a friend of God obeys God and specifically obeys Jesus Christ. They are not only familiar with the Bible, believing what it says, they obey it, striving to do so all the time, in every area, without fail, and when they do they repent, turn, and seek improvement, sanctification. For the friend of God his word is the recipe for a living a meaningful life and they strive to follow it because they believe its author in every word.

3. A Friend of God is at Enmity with World



James 4:4

4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Finally a friend of God is not also friend of the world. It's phrased in the negative here but for someone to be a friend of God they cannot also be a friend of the world. What is a friend of the world? Simple, someone who is not a friend of God, who doesn't believe Him or obey His words, someone pulling you or anyone else away from any good devotion and desires to be God's friend. This is a one side or the other. There are no okay friends. There are good friends and bad friends. Those who help and those who hurt you in your striving to believe and obey God. Pick those who help, everyone else is hurting.

I find it very interesting too the phrase here "wishes to be a friend". You can't actually be friends with the world. The world knows nothing of true self sacrificial friendship. The world apart from the love of Christ will chew you up and spit you out and you will do the same to those around you. The best you'll get is wanting true friendship but in the world you will never get it. Only in Christian relationship will you get true friendship.

So then for finding good friends we must first find those who are God's friends. Those who:

1. Believe God
2. Obey God
3. Reject the World

2. Make God's Friends Your Friends

So once you've found someone or someone has found you who is a friend of God how do you then begin from there to build and grow that relationship into something great, strong, deep?

1. Walk with Them



Proverbs 13:20

20 He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.

The idea here is finding wise people and doing life with them. As you move about on the planet during your relatively short time on earth, make sure you're moving with the right people. Wise people. People who believe and obey God.



Proverbs 27:17

17 Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another.

Iron only sharpens iron if they rub each other the right way. If they just beat on each other the iron will be dulled. So as iron is towards other iron so it will become. In the same way you will become a reflection of the people you surround yourself with.

For awhile Erik had some bath coloring tablets. Red, yellow, green, blue. We had fun trying to make different beautiful colors my mixing different amounts of each tablet, or at least I did, Erik enjoyed just dumping them in indiscriminately which always resulted in what color? Brown. Ew. Your friendships will be like this. Mix in the wrong friends and your life will take on a gross brown hue. Walk with wise friends. Do life with God's friends and you'll acquire a beautiful life useful and pleasing to the Lord.

So to make God's friends your friends first walk with them.

2. Love Them



Colossians 3:12–15

12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

The rest of the answer is really the rest of your life and honestly just a filling in of the previous point. As you walk with your friends walk like this.

- Compassion
- Kindness
- Humility
- Gentleness
- Patience
- Tolerate each other
- Forgive each other
- Love each other
- Agree and be at peace with each other
- Be thankful for each other

It's a long and difficult list but this is life. Daily life. These aren't other things to add, these are the things to have. This is the Christian life. Do these things in fellowship with the friends of God and you will find in the end true, rich, deep, valuable friendships which will build a life of good work and obedience to your Creator. Which remember is the point of it all.



Good friendships are God's friends pressing each other to work for and obey God

Conclusion

- Are you a friend of God?
 - Are you believing and obeying God?
 - Are you at enmity with the world?
 - Are you making God's friends your friends?
 - Are you walking with your friends?
 - Are you loving your friends?
 - How could you do better?
 - Make a plan
 - Follow through
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Exodus 33:11

11 Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

James 2:23

23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.

James 4:4

4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Luke 7:34

34 "The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

John 15:14–15

14 "You are My friends if you do what I command you.

15 "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

1 Corinthians 15:33

33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

Proverbs 22:24

24 Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man,

1 Kings 12:8

8 But he forsook the counsel of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who grew up with him and served him.