

How to lose a friend

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

We've looked at the concept of "making" good friends:



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

Today to close out our June friendship series we look at how to lose friends:



Good friends are forever in heaven but while here they must come and go

Humans are finite. We exist on earth within a span of time. While we are eternal being we are not omniscient. Even as Christians, perhaps even especially or uniquely we are marked by weakness and limitations. We are given the power of God to overcome but not to overextend as some sort of super human. Life is hard, we get tired and the strength we are given by God is to behave as Christ in our humanness not to circumvent our humanness. We are a breath, a vapor, marked by insufficiencies.

This extends to our relationships, our friendships. There are distinct limits on our abilities to relate at any significantly deep level with others. Do not let your limitations excuse your laziness but rather focus your efforts towards being most meaningful and intentional as you aim to maximize your kingdom impact.

We are not to be scurriours bouncing around frantically only ever able to engage at a surface level due to time and distance constraints. We make it our aim to please Christ, to emulate and reflect him in our earthly dealings. Live within your limitations but ever be pressing and succeeding within those bounds.

There are two distinct limitations I'd like to look at this morning as they relate to friends. Proximity and Preference.

The Importance of Proximity



Proverbs 27:10

10 Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend, And do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity; Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother far away.

Even in our technologically, electronically connected world there's still something about being close together, near, in fellowship with others. If you all had a choice between irl and zoom uth camp which would you choose? Did any of their think at all about sitting next to your friends? Being near them? There's something special about being in close proximity with your friends. Conversation is easier. Shared experiences are deeper. There's a unique bond that's formed with the people we're near. Now understand this can be both tremendously encouraging but also frustrating and even debilitating for those not near the ones they love. This is why separation from loved ones can be so hard, even in a society as technology advanced and connected as ours. Our digital connections are good for doing business but they're pretty poor for loving each other. For that we still need to be close enough to hug our friends, to feel their presence.

This one has been really hard for me as I've gone through my life. Some of the closest friendships I've had were with missionary kids I met when I spent 3 months in Mongolia. Some of you probably don't even know where that is it's so far out there in the world. Suffice it to say it is not close. When I came home after my time there it was gut wrenching for months to be so far from those friends. I tried desperately to stay connected over Facebook, email and texting. We tried to stay connected but the time difference, the lack of any shared experiences made it impossible. I grew frustrated at a perceived lack of care or interest in me. I became bitter and resentful in my pride and the people who were some of my best friends became a source of anguish for me. There were a distinct few moments though when I was turning down opportunities to hang out with people near me, chances to build new friends, that I realized the power of this verse. A major component of a good friend is not just finding planet earth's most godly peers but finding godly peers near me. They won't be perfect, they might even be a little weird but they're my people, the people my feet can find. They're close.

You don't have to abandon friends you had when you move on but never let old friends far off block out new friends close by. God has intended for our closest friendships to be with those in close proximity with each other sharing experiences and doing life together.

Do not idolize experiences.

The Importance of Preference



Proverbs 18:24

24 A man of too many friends comes to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

If the first one was hard this next one may be devastating and maybe even surprising. Don't have too many friends. The average person can only really know about 120 people and I would argue the number of close friends you have will probably only be about 10 - 20. That's like, hardly anyone. You meet, speak to and know something about way more than 10 - 20 people. That means you're going to need to get good at moving on from friendships. About adding gradation to your relationships. Close ones, near ones, distant ones. Not every friend will be a best friend. Not every best friend will be a best friend forever, and that's okay. Be careful letting go of good friends but be equally careful of holding on to friends, especially ones no longer in close proximity, after the time has passed. For believers we have all of eternity to enjoy one another so remember the purpose of friendship, to keep ourselves on target as we serve and obey God. It is not only bad friends who will do this poorly, a good friend far away can also be a detriment to this endeavor and it will cause you no small heart ache if you are trying to squeeze this kind of help out of a friend you cannot physically be with.

It is not unbiblical to have gradation in your friendships. You can love everyone in this room well while still having special, unique closeness with a select few. If your motivations for friendship are righteous, intentional and filled with purpose it is both right and essential that you have layers of friendships around you. There is no place for a lack of love but within your love there can be and really must be variance in depth. Those you share more and less with. Those you spend more and less time with. Those you pray more and less for. Those you text more and less.

This of course can lend itself towards people, especially new people, falling between the cracks. In your circles and preferences always be leaving room for friendships to be both deepening and becoming less deep. Friendships need not die abruptly but think about them. Evaluate your friendships regularly. Talk about your friendships with your friends. Don't just shut

people out deciding one day to just never text that one guy again. Be real, be kind, love always but allocate your finite resources wisely.

Many times too, especially for us young people, we change. Interests, maturity, even salvation we may find the friends we used to hang out with maybe we need to get some new more spiritually mature friends. Never be afraid of letting go of poor friends, continue to encourage them towards holiness but do not excuse poor friends.



1 Corinthians 15:33

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

You need good friends and you can only have so many relationships so please ensure your close circles are always packed full of good, godly friends.

Review:



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Application:

- Fill your friendships with the purpose of God for relationship. To keep you believing and obeying Christ
- Focus your friendships on pouring out the love of God sacrificially and reliably
- Find friends which are God's friends and strive to be and become better friends of God
- Finally hold your friends with heavenly hands allowing them to come and go as needed to ensure God's purposes for friendship are upheld.

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.