

Chapter 2: Friends

Friendly people make friends. You don't have to be an extrovert to be friendly. Even if you find it difficult to approach people, you can at the very least be friendly when someone approaches you. Of course, not all friendships will develop into a romantic relationship, but friendships do give us a good place to start from. Friendships are an opportunity to get to know one another, free from any expectations. This phase involves group gatherings where you can enjoy a lot of friends at the same time.

Proverbs 18:24 (NKJV)

A man who has friends must himself be friendly. But there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

This scripture encourages us to be friendly if we want to have friends. Then, out of a larger group of friends, a smaller group of close friends will develop. However, it's important to avoid being cliquy. Share yourself around and always be open to make new friends.

Question

Name three qualities you like in a friend:

Your Questions

Question 1

Who should or shouldn't I consider as a 'friend'?

Answer 1

Being friendly allows you the opportunity to see who you want as your close friends. If you're shy, it might be easy to let people decide for you. But, close friends will have a lot of influence on you, either strengthening or weakening you, so it pays to choose wisely.

We tend to make friends with people we share things in common with, like values, interests, thinking, humour, or attitudes we admire. **The good things in common can strengthen us. But, someone who is critical, jealous, or vindictive, can have a negative impact on those they call friends.**

When we make new friends we also risk rejection. At these times it's worth considering God your greatest friend. He is for you and is always close to you. That means you are never alone or friendless. He has good friends for you to choose from; in your own way, at the right time, and in the right place. No need to be hasty.

Question 2

What can we do to connect with each other if we belong to different circles of friends?

Answer 2

Be creative!

1. Ask friends to help, without being too obvious: things like orchestrating seating arrangements or introductions based on some common interests – e.g. "Let me introduce you to Lisa, she likes that band too."
2. Suggest that different circles meet for combined events and outings.
3. Try non-invasive ways of finding out more about the person you are interested in, like social media – looking at their friends and photos can tell you a lot about the person you are interested in.
4. Get to know his/her friends (they could be a helpful source of information and, in some cases, assistance).
5. Ask other couples who had to overcome a similar obstacle for advice (helpful tips).

Question 3

I get so nervous I can't talk to the person I like. How can I get over these feelings?

Answer 3

Most people, even confident people, can feel nervous in the presence of the person they like. In most cases, nerves are part of the process and completely natural. When we're nervous we can react in different ways. Some people talk too much, and some people clam-up and don't talk all.

If you're the type that talks too much you can:

Ask your friend open questions, such as "why" and "how," which they can answer in one sentence or more. Prepare more rather than less questions;

be a good listener; avoid finishing people's sentences for them; and avoid looking at your phone because you don't know what to do.

If you're the type that clams-up then you can:

Take the pressure off by lowering your expectations and aim for friendship only. Face your fears, talk to that wonderful person, and it will get easier from there. Prepare some good questions to ask and think about how you would answer in case your friend flips them back at you. Because we all experience nervousness, we should give people a couple of chances. Funny thing is that some people are attracted to the nervous types that talk too much and some to the types that clam-up. There's another group of people who feel extreme anxiety, probably caused by the bad experiences in our past. Experiences such as: demeaning comments made by the opposite sex, family, friends, ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend; and or abuse. Can we stop being a slave to the bad experiences in our past? The answer is, "Yes" – seek God, seek healing, seek prayer, seek friendship talk to a trusted friend or a professional counsellor.

What You Shouldn't Do in the 'Friends' Phase

The don'ts in this book are important because it's what you don't do during these phases that will allow you, at any point, to back away from the relationship gracefully, without hurt, embarrassment, or awkwardness.

1. Be careful of exchanging personal contact details: especially address or phone number with people you barely know, even if they name drop saying, "I know such and such ..." or "I'm a Christian..."
2. Don't ignore your gut feelings and miss out on someone special. Perhaps being part of the same team will give you more insight.
3. Don't be intense on social media, your interaction needs to be casual as it would be with any friend.
4. Don't expect a marriage proposal. Be JUST FRIENDS! Friends know when to back off.
5. Don't buy expensive gifts!
6. Don't assume physical contact is OK with everyone. Some cultures are more comfortable with physical contact between guys and girls than others. Please be guided by what's considered appropriate in the culture that you live in. In many cultures physical touch is interpreted as a sign of commitment.
7. Don't flirt! Flirting is when you're showing interest in someone you have no interest in pursuing a relationship with.
8. Don't be inaccessible. Only hanging with your group of friends makes it more difficult for someone outside your group to approach you.
9. Don't play hard to get. That's when someone makes themselves inaccessible as a kind of game. Some find these games tiresome and those playing them could miss out.
10. Don't have a strict list, but rather a list with reasonable expectations such as; someone who is kind, considerate, hardworking, etc. People with long specific lists such as: specific look, age, career, wage, and political views – will find it hard to meet someone who fit all these requirements. Why not be up for an adventure?

Tips for Friends

1. Look for opportunities to start natural conversations.
2. This is just friendship! So please try to treat all the guys/girls as equally as possible.
3. If you have that person's phone mail address, avoid sending text messages with icons of love hearts and kisses. Build friendship naturally without the pressure of romantic expectations.
4. Nothing will start if you are just looking at the person from far away. Make a move to place yourself in that person's world. Don't be too aggressive in your approach, but be natural. Sometimes, creating a "natural" situations can be a lot of work. But hopefully worth it.
5. Remember that you might go to a lot of trouble to try and connect with someone that you are interested in, only to find that he/she is not interested in you. Even though you may have lost in the romance stakes, you have gained a friend! Friendships and the experience that we gain in making them are definitely worth the trouble. Keep learning how to be a good friend! Remember, letting go is part of being a good friend