

Friends to the End!

Chapter Three Finding a Friend!



Read Matthew 7:12

This is called the golden rule. What is the golden rule?

What does this verse teach about finding a friend?

Re-title this Chapter based on this verse:

(New Title)

Look up the word **friendly** in the dictionary. How does Webster define it?

Friendly:

How would you define it? Write your own definition.

Friendly:

Read Hebrews 13:1

What does “loving one another as brothers” look like?

How long should you do this?

Read Hebrews 13:24

Who are we supposed to greet?

Why?

What difference does a friendly greeting make in people’s day?

Are you a greeter? Or do you wait until people greet you (a responder)?

Read I Thessalonians 4:9-10

How does God teach us to love one another?

Give some examples from your own life where God taught you to love other believers.

Is it possible to love ALL the brothers throughout Macedonia?

How?

How can you cultivate a heart of love for ALL believers (and ALL people) without become personally involved in each life?

Read Proverbs 18:1

Unfriendly = selfish. Why?

Unfriendly = foolish. Why?

Friendliness is a character quality not a personality trait!

Therefore, friendliness is not personality traits such as.....

However, friendliness is character traits such as.....

How can you grow in the character quality of friendliness?

Read Romans 12:16b

What wrong motivations does this verse address in initiating a friendship?

Read James 2:1-4

How does this verse check our motivation in friendship?

Read I Corinthians 12:21-26

Are there any Christians who are really not necessary? Why or why not?

Read Luke 14:13-14

How do these verses expand our horizons in whom we are to be friendly too?

Could one of these people be the friend you are looking for?

Where do you limit God in the area of friendship?

Read II Samuel 9:1-13

What is David's motivation for showing kindness to Mephibosheth?

Where can you imitate this principle in your life?

Application:

What are good motives for pursuing friendships? Next to each motive evaluate your heart in this area of motivation.

Good Motives for Pursuing Friendships!	Evaluating my Heart in this Area!

How can your motives change to become more Biblical?

How can you grow in the area of showing friendliness to others?

How does the principle of reaping what you have sown apply to this lesson being lived out in your life?

Finding a Friend!



It's a Wonderful Life!

My grandparents had something in common with George Bailey from *It's a Wonderful Life*. Louise, Lonnie and George all had loyal friends. My whole life, our home and my grandparents' home buzzed with activity. There were always parties, teas, company for dinner, or people "dropping in for a little visit." No one ever left hungry from my grandparents' house; my grandmother saw to that. She kept a tin of freshly baked cookies at all times in her pantry. Whether it was the governor or the little girl next door, cookies and drinks were offered in the afternoon to unexpected visitors. I was told a million times by countless people what wonderful, hospitable, kind grandparents and parents I had. And I agreed.

When Gramps died, I was surprised to discover how many people he had given money to, how many young relatives they'd put through college and how

many people had found solace, and sometimes a home, through their troubled times. I am convinced that many of our family blessings are just the reaping of things they have sown. So many people had stories to tell me. In tears, people would recount care and kindness that had flowed into their lives and changed them forever.

George Bailey, like my grandparents, was a friend to others and they returned friendship to him. In the movie, *It's A Wonderful Life*, George is constantly concerned that the lower middle-class citizens of his town can buy their own home and, in that way, be successful. He is not selfish and never takes advantage of them. Genuine love sown, reaps friendship. Generosity results in prosperity. Being a friend results in having a friend. That is God's Kingdom!

Often, we would rather be the responders than the initiators of a friendship. We long for others to be friendly to us rather than to take the first several steps.

It is time to be **proactive!**

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” Matthew 7:12 KJV

“All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.” ASV

*Therefore all things whatever ye desire that men should do to you, thus do *ye* also do to them; for this is the law and the prophets.” DARBY*

The Golden Rule!

Turn the tables! Start something new! Everyone around you is now completely released from being friendly, starting a conversation, or building a friendship with you. And don't worry; you will reap what you sow! (Galatians 6:7)

Because you are now taking full responsibility for being friendly, starting a conversation, and building friendships with others, you have no expectations of others. You will choose only to evaluate yourself in these areas. You can start this new way of living with cultivating friendliness.

Friendliness!



Friendliness is a character trait, not a personality trait. Some people find it easier to speak than others, or can be more energized by people than others. But friendliness flows from genuine interest and concern for other people. It is wrapped up in kindness and compassion.

Everyone has to learn to be friendly. Being out-going is not the same thing as being friendly. The sanguine man needs to learn to not brag about himself all the time. The out-going woman develops the ability to listen instead of doing all the talking. The shy person has to learn to initiate conversation. The quiet person begins to ask questions. And ALL people need to learn to listen.

Greeting!

Friendliness begins with greeting. I was surprised to discover how many times we are commanded to greet others and many times with physical touch. A warm handshake, a friendly hug, and a genuine smile express love in a very tangible way. We are to greet leaders, visitors, friends, acquaintances, children, teens, elderly—well, the Bible just says that we are to greet ALL God’s people. It doesn’t say that THEY should greet us, it says that we should greet them. Just concentrate on being obedient in this area without evaluating others.

As you greet them warmly, introduce yourself to people you don’t already know. Use common courtesy and good manners, being sure to look people in the eye. Try to be approachable by smiling and focusing on others rather than on yourself. Ask questions and listen attentively. Don’t interrupt or correct them. Use affirming and encouraging words. Try saying: “That’s a lovely dress,” rather than “I hate the color of your dress.” I’m exaggerating but you get my point. Focus on the positive and give verbal expression to it! Try to remember people’s names—the sound of your own name is one of the sweetest sounds on earth!

Sincere Interest!

If all of this sounds difficult, then ask God to put a sincere interest in others and their lives. My husband always asks people about their jobs, not basic but very detailed questions. He is fascinated by technology and details. Because he chooses to be interested in other people, he is now a wealth of information on how businesses, government bureaus, machines, and computer systems function. Sincere interest in other people can result in our own intellectual growth!

We should show friendliness to ALL people of ALL ages. God commands us to not show favoritism. God is the God who loves the WHOLE world. The more God's heart is in us, the more we have the same heart toward all different kinds of fellow human beings.

It is right to want to have friends. There is nothing selfish about desiring close friendships. Our motivation to be in relationship springs from the core of our being and is put there by God. It is unrealistic to think that we can enjoy close friendships with a large number of people. We can be friendly to everyone we know and out of the pool of acquaintances, friendships will spring forth, and then from those relationships even deeper ones will develop. Give God time.

I want to caution you at this point to be careful to guard your heart so that your motives are pure. It is not the best to want to be someone's friend because they are wealthy, have a position of power, can further your ambitions, or will get you in with the right crowd. This is called selfish ambition and is forbidden by our Heavenly Father.

Good Motives!

Here are some good motives. Ask God to pour these into your heart:

- *To obey God!
- *To fulfill God's plan and purpose in the earth! (Stone to stone!)
- *To link arms to do spiritual warfare!
- *To link arms to serve God and His people!
- *To disciple or be disciplined!
- *To grow spiritually, emotionally, intellectually or in your gifting!
- *To experience the richness of God's blessing!