

● Losing friends - broken relationships

One of the most distressing experiences of life is to lose a close friend. Those who have been the best friends can become the worst enemies since they can use what they know about you against you.

* Proverbs 16:28 * Proverbs 17:9

What can be the cause of lost friendships? _____

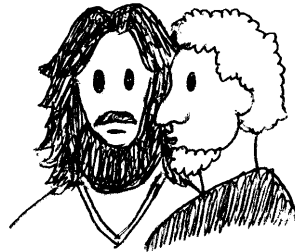
* Psalm 31:9-13, 38:9-12, 41:7-9, 55:12-14, 55:20-21, 88:8, 109:1-5

Describe some of David's feelings of rejection.

* Matthew 26:14-16 * Matthew 26:47-50

Even Jesus suffered betrayal from a friend.

How did Jesus address Judas after he betrayed him with a kiss?



Heartsearch

● Restoring friendships

Communication, apology, forgiveness and putting away the past are all helpful in restoring broken friendships. Are there friendships that you could restore (Psalm 133:1)?

friendship

extra thought and discussion

• Physical contact

It is normal in the Bible that relatives and good friends express their love for each other in brief affectionate contact such as an embrace or a kiss (Gen 33:4, Acts 20:37, Rom 16:16, 1 Pet 5:14).

There is however no place for sexual intimacy between friends. This is reserved for the covenant relationship of heterosexual marriage. Sex before marriage, even for engaged couples, is not appropriate for Christians (see Units 13 and 14).

• Paul and his friends

Paul had many friends who worked alongside him

and who offered him hospitality as he travelled around (Rom 16:3-16, Col 4:14-15, Philm 1:1). His friends were male and female, old and young. In 1 Tim 5:1-2 he explains how we should treat our friends of various ages.

In his letters he often refers to the people he is addressing as "dear friends" (New International Version). This is a translation of the Greek word *agapetos* which means "the one I love" or "beloved". The word more usually used for "friend" in the New Testament is the Greek word *philos*.

Paul also had enemies and at times felt abandoned by his friends (2 Tim 4:9-18).

• Other Bible verses

Many or few friends? — Prov 18:24

Friendship with the world — James 4:4

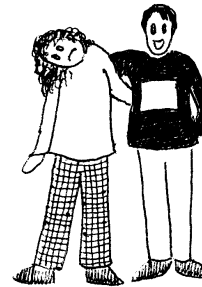
Job's friend — Job 16:18-21

friendship

Unit 11

● Good friends

* Proverbs 17:17 What does a friend do?



* Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Why is it good to have a friend?

* Proverbs 27:6 * Proverbs 27:9

How can good friends help you?

* Luke 15:6 * Luke 15:9

What else can they do? _____

* Proverbs 22:11 How do we make friends?

* Proverbs 11:13 How do we lose friends?

* Psalm 119:63 What kind of person makes a good friend?



Who are *your* best friends?

Are you a good friend to others?

Staying friends

Here is a list of qualities which help to maintain friendships. Tick the *five* which are most important to you.

- ☐ Honesty
- ☐ Trust
- ☐ Apology
- ☐ Forgiveness
- ☐ Tolerance
- ☐ Love
- ☐ Support
- ☐ Encouragement
- ☐ Help
- ☐ Sympathy
- ☐ Confidentiality
- ☐ Loyalty
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Faithfulness
- ☐ Reliability

Depth of relationship

Depth of relationship can be assessed by our level of communication.

Level 1 Superficial level of casual conversation including greetings and jokes.

Level 2 Reporting facts. Talking about work, events, interests, sport, media, music, etc. Avoiding controversy.

Level 3 Stating your opinions. Airing your views and judgments on personal issues, news, politics, religion. This may be controversial with the possibility of disagreement and confrontation.

Level 4 Sharing your feelings, hopes, fears, joys and emotions. At this level you become most vulnerable.

Think about the people you meet each day and the level of communication at which you operate.

● Loyalty

* Proverbs 20:6, 27:10

Loyal and lasting friendships are commended in the Bible.

* 1 Samuel 18:1-4, 20:41-42

David and Jonathan enjoyed a close covenant friendship which they maintained even in the most difficult circumstances. David fulfilled his promises even after the death of Jonathan (2 Samuel 9:1-13).

* Ruth 1:16-18

This is a beautiful story of loyal friendship across generations of Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi.



● Friends of Jesus - friends of God

Jesus often referred to people as his friends and indeed he was accused of being a *friend of sinners* (Matt 11:19). Jesus also had close friends.

* Luke 8:51 * Luke 9:28 Which three apostles were close to Jesus?

* John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 21:20-24

Who do you think was the disciple whom Jesus loved? _____

* John 11:1-6 Who were these other three good friends of Jesus?

* John 15:13-15 How can we be friends of Jesus?

* Exodus 33:11 * 2 Chronicles 20:7

Who were friends of God?

Do you consider God and Jesus to be your friend?



● False friends

* Proverbs 19:4 * Proverbs 19:6-7

What is a common cause of false friendship?

● Bad friends

* 1 Corinthians 15:33

Some friends may not be good for you. Whom should we avoid?

Deut 13:6-8 _____ Prov 13:20 _____

Ps 1:1 _____ Prov 16:29 _____

Ps 26:4 _____ Prov 22:24-25 _____

Ps 101:7 _____ Prov 23:20 _____

Prov 4:14-17 _____ Prov 24:1 _____

Prov 5:8 _____ Prov 28:7 _____

Prov 12:26 _____ Eph 5:5-7 _____

* 1 Corinthians 5:9-11

Who might be the most dangerous kind of friend for a Christian?



* John 17:15-19

Think about the friends you have. Are some harmful to you?

How do you relate to ungodly friends – do they draw you away from God or do you draw them nearer to God as Jesus did?

● Unhelpful friends

* Job 2:11-13 What were the names of Job's friends?

* Job 6:14-17, 12:4, 19:13-22, 42:7-10

Job's friends began by sympathising but ended up criticising him. With all their words, theories and advice they were little comfort to suffering Job. He felt forlorn and friendless.

Beware of being a "Job's comforter"!

