My Philosophy of **Friendship**

Philosophy might sound like a course you take in college, but it's much more a part of your everyday life than you might think. Simply put, philosophy is "why you do what you do." We may not always pay a lot of attention to the beliefs and loves that motivate our actions, but we certainly have them.

Why we do what we do changes drastically when God brings us out of death and into life in salvation. For those who are in Christ, the fundamental *why* of our lives is transformed by the gospel: from a life motivated by the desire to serve and please self into a life oriented around pleasing God. But even though this change is true of believers in a positional way, we still have choices to make to live out this reality in our everyday lives.

As you know, spiritual growth doesn't happen by accident. If we aren't intentional about thinking through why we do what we do, we will inevitably be drawn to the desires of our sinful flesh. This is true in any area—including our relationships with other people. Taking time to create a personal philosophy of friendship (why I do what I do), based on the character and words of God, will provide a solidly biblical foundation for how you think about and build friendships.

How to do this study:

Following the steps below, use the chart on page 3 to create your own *Philosophy of Friendship*.

Step 1: Reject It!

In the first column, write down any areas of worldly thinking with which you struggle. You can also use this column to record what the world is telling you to believe. How is your thinking being influenced by social media, other people, or your own heart? Write down statements you have heard, advice you have received, and even misguided thoughts you have had. List one statement in each row. Use as many rows as you need (you will probably need to print several copies of page 3). Reject anything that doesn't match up with God's truth!

Step 2: Believe It!

In this column write down specific verses from Scripture that provide God's perspective on this issue. While you will find words like "friend" and "friendship" in the Bible, you will also find other Scripture passages that speak to every aspect of our relationships with others. God provides rich and accessible wisdom for this vitally important area of our lives in His Word. As in the previous step, write down the truth that applies in each row.

If you have a hard time knowing where to begin, consider starting with some of the Bible passages cited in *Help! I Want to Be a Godly Friend.* You can also look up key words like "friend" and "friendship" in a Bible concordance or online Bible program. It may also help to brainstorm the opposite of what you have written in the "reject it" column. If the world tells us, "A good friend is a person who meets *my* needs," then we will want to find passages that speak clearly about Christ's sacrificial love for others, such as Philippians 2:5-8 and John 13:1-17.

You can also write down a command from Scripture that corrects the wrong thinking in the first column. For example, in John 13:34, Jesus commands His followers to "*love one another: just as I have*

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loved you." Again, you can use a Bible concordance or Bible app or website to look up verses on the specific aspects of friendship you are considering.

Everything God says flows from God's character. His Words cannot be separated from who He is. When you read a command or promise in Scripture, you gain a glimpse into the nature of God. What has God said or what has God revealed about His character that you must believe? What God says is real and true. Believing or not believing the truth about God is at the root of every choice you make.

Step 3: Think It!

Next, take some time to prayerfully consider the passages you wrote down in the second column. Can you summarize the big idea of these verses in your own words? Use this column to write out the main biblical principle(s) found in the passage.

Step 4: Practice It!

Based on the work you did in steps 2 and 3, write down how you plan to live out these biblical realities in your every-day life. Be specific. How will you practically live out what God says about friendship? This step is important, not only for helping you practically apply God's Word to your relationships, but also so that you can be certain your philosophy is firmly grounded in God's character and God's words. God's opinion matters most!

Lastly, share your philosophy of friendship with a trusted, spiritual adult. Ask for input. How can you make it stronger or more specific? Are there areas you may have left out that need to be added? Ask for accountability. Make a plan to review your philosophy on a regular basis. Are you faithfully living out your *why*? Demonstrate your dependence on God by asking Him to enable you to live out your philosophy. It's not enough to write out your philosophy on paper, you need to adopt it as your own—committing to practicing it, by God's grace and for God's glory.

Example:

Reject It! The world says...	**Believe It!** God is... / God says...	**Think It!** Biblical Principle	**Practice It!** Personal Application
A good friend is a person who meets my needs. Choose a friend based on what they can do for me.	*Philippians 2:5-8* *John 13:1-17, 34-35* *John 15:12-17*	*Biblical friendship is not based on my need of others. It does not have a selfish focus. Jesus' love and friendship is the pattern He wants me to follow for my relationships with others. Biblical love sacrifices for the good of others.*	• *Identify a person in my youth group or school who seems lonely and may need a friend.* • *Show interest by asking "get to know you" questions.* • *Think of several ways I can show biblical love to my new friend.*
I can do life without other people. I don't need friends or the input of others in my life.	*Genesis 2:18* *Ecclesiastes 4:9-12* *Galatians 6:1-2* *1 Thessalonians 5:11* *1 Corinthians 12:21, 25*	*God does not want me to live independently of others in the body of Christ. He created me for relationships. I cannot be spiritually healthy without the influence of godly people in my life.*	• *Transparently share with my friend how God is currently working in my life.* • *Ask my friend to pray for or encourage me in that area.*

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