

Friends, Part 2 | What does the Bible say about friends?

I. What Does the Bible Say about Friends?

- Proverbs 17:17, which says, “A friend **loves** at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”
- John 15:13-14, “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”
- The reality is that a friend **loves** — truly, biblically loves.
- The world wants us to think that friends are vital to our children’s lives. This is categorically untrue, unless the world is defining “friend” the way God does. If they are, then, “Yes,” friendships are *invaluable*. But merely surrounding myself with a bunch of people who validate my sinful life choices, never show any interest in my relationship with God, and model for me a Godless lifestyle is destructive. Psalm 1:1, “Blessed is the man who walks **not** in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.” You will *not* be blessed when you hang out with people who aren’t true friends.

II. What Does this Mean for Your Kids?

- **Who are your kids’ real friends?** Those who love them. Those who want God’s best interest for them.
 - As Christians, we *cannot* afford to redefine love or friendship.
 - But since this idea is so counter-cultural, we have to be okay with the fact that we will have few real friends.
 - We have to teach our children to recognize a true friend when they see one and to want to hang out with those people.
 - True friends love us as God loves us and work toward His best interest in our lives. This may sound like lofty goal for your elementary schooler, but it can be done. You can be teaching your child right now how to be a good, elementary-aged friend . . . even if no other child is mature enough to reciprocate.
- **Does friendship have to be reciprocal?** No.
 - We need to be everyone’s friend. Romans 13:8 says, “Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.”
 - God expects me to love everyone, therefore, God expects me to be a friend to everyone. There’s no one for whom I shouldn’t want God’s best in there lives. There’s no one I shouldn’t introduce to Him. There’s no one I shouldn’t point to Him, encourage in Him, admonish in Him, and edify in Him. My children have been tasked by God to be everyone’s *best* friend, and — if your children are born again — they have too.
- **What do you call someone who encourages you to do things that hurt you?** An enemy.
 - There’s no such thing as a “bad friend.” That’s the same as a “good enemy.”
 - The children who are unkind to your kid’s younger siblings, the children who whine at their parents, the kids who are selfish and sassy and have bad attitudes are just as big of a problem as the kids who encourage your little ones to lie. These benign friends, those who don’t encourage our children in the Lord, those who are mostly neutral people, but whose lives are a testament to practically-Godless living, are enemies.
 - This concept is complicated by the fact that some people sometimes act like friends and sometimes act like enemies. The more they act like enemies the less trustworthy they are.
 - Anyone who doesn’t love us and work toward God’s best interest in our lives is an enemy.

- **Does being enemies have to be reciprocal?** No.
 - How many people have chosen to be unkind to someone else simply because that person has unkind to them?
 - What if you don't have to be an enemy just because someone is your enemy? What freedom that realization brings!
 - That girl doesn't like you? Fine. Invite her to your party anyway.
 - What a change we would see in this world if we all did the same.
- **Is it okay to be someone's enemy?** Never.
 - God commands us to love those who are enemies to us and do good to those who hurt us.
 - However, Your children do *not* need to hang out with a bad influence simply because God commanded your child to love them.
 - The most loving thing your child can do is not casually hang out with an enemy. They need to love God first and foremost. This is why God commands us not to walk, stand, and sit with people who reject Him and His truth.
 - The New Testament tells us that though we're not to *fellowship* with people like that, we should have a relationship that allows us to share the Gospel. This is evangelism. Any opportunity your child has to share Christ with that enemy is fantastic, but that doesn't mean you schedule weekly play dates or let them have monthly sleepovers.
 - I suggest children like this can be invited over to your house to interact with your children and you. You can be a good testimony, share God's Truth and love, and be there to debrief your kid when the other child goes home.

III. Other Resources

- Episode 30, "Teens and Dating | what God has to say about their crush" applies these same principles to romantic relationships.
- As I mentioned before, "The Four Family Loves" series is vital to this discussion. I cannot stress it enough. When your child understand what true love is, they won't struggle with understanding what a good friend is.
- Episode 136 is called "Do You Really Want to Be Their Friend? | the requirement of befriending your kids." It applies many of these principles to our parenting.
- And all of this is the foundation of our Anti-terrorism series that started in episode 37. Even when our child has made herself our enemy, we must be her friend.