

1 **friending**

FRIENDING, PART 2: ONE FRIEND AWAY

Friendships are powerful things. They're great, but dangerous. You drop your guard with your friends. You become less careful. And as a result, you're easily influenced, drawn toward the acceptance you find. Many of us don't realize the importance of the people we choose to surround ourselves with. Our friends determine the quality and direction of our lives.

BIG IDEA: You might be one friend away from changing the course of your destiny.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What friend from your past has significantly impacted your life?
2. We need friends who will help us become better, find strength in the Lord, and tell us the truth. What type of friend are you missing?
3. What's your next step to develop the relationship with the person you need as a friend?
4. *With your Bible or your Bible App, read Acts 9:26-28.*

When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to meet with the believers, but they were all afraid of him. They did not believe he had truly become a believer! Then Barnabas brought him to the apostles and told them how Saul had seen the Lord on the way to Damascus and how the Lord had spoken to Saul. He also told them that Saul had preached boldly in the name of Jesus in Damascus. So Saul stayed with the apostles and went all around Jerusalem with them, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord.

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—Chris Edmondson
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Acts 9:26-28

5. Why were the believers in Jerusalem skeptical of Saul's conversion towards Jesus? Put yourself in the 1st Century Christians shoes—would you risk your life, your family's life, and the life of your friends to allow Saul/Paul to become a part of your community? Why or why not?
6. How did Saul/Paul's friendship with Barnabas change his entire life and destiny? If Barnabas hadn't taken Saul/Paul under his wing, how might our lives and the Bible be different?
7. Chris talked about 3 types of friends every person needs. Do you have each type of these friendships? What can you do to practically find a Samuel, a Jonathan, and a Nathan in your life?

Samuel—A Friend who makes you **Better**.

8. *With your Bible or your Bible App, read 1 Samuel 16:11-13.*

*But the Lord said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. **People** judge by **outward appearance**, but **God** looks at the **heart**." Then Samuel asked, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse replied. "But he's out in the fields watching the sheep and goats." "Send for him at once," Samuel said. "We will not sit down to eat until he arrives." So Jesse sent for him. And the Lord said, "**This is the one**; anoint him." So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the flask of olive oil he had brought and anointed David with the oil. And the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David from that day on.*

1 Samuel 16:7, 11-13 (NLT)

9. Samuel believed in David, even when David's own family did not. Do you know what it feels like to have the pain of a family member not believe in you and bring out the best in you? If you are willing, share this with the group.
10. Do you think your current friends have made you a better person? If so, how have they helped you?

Jonathan—A Friend who helps you find **Spiritual Strength**.

11. *With your Bible or your Bible App, read 1 Samuel 23:15-16.*

*One day, David received the news that Saul was on the way to search for him and kill him. Jonathan went to find David and **encouraged** him to **stay strong in his faith in God**.*

1 Samuel 23:15-16 (NLT)



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12. Where might you be struggling in your spiritual life? How could your friends help you strengthen your spiritual life?
13. Do you have anyone who can encourage you to stay strong in Jesus and to increase your faith in God?

Nathan—A Friend who Tells you the **Truth**.

14. *With your Bible or your Bible App, read Proverbs 27:5-6.*

An open rebuke is better than hidden love! Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.
Proverbs 27:5-6 (NLT)

15. Describe a time when a friend told you the truth when you needed to hear it. How did you respond to it and how did hearing this truth affect you?

THINK ABOUT IT

Share some encouraging thoughts about what your group has meant to you in your life. How have you seen God use these gatherings to grow you as a Christ-follower? Dream together about what God might do with your group in the next few months.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

What's one thing you hope to become, accomplish, or achieve? How might having the right friends help guide you to success? What's one thing you can do this week to appreciate the friends in your life that are making you a better person?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

One day, David received the news that Saul was on the way to search for him and kill him. Jonathan went to find David and encouraged him to stay strong in his faith in God.
1 Samuel 23:15-16 (NLT)