

friending

FRIENDING, PART 4: UNFRIENDING

Lets talk about the people who surround us—our friends and unfriends. With todays craze on social media, we have added many new words in our dictionary and one is *unfriend*. Have you ever unfriended someone or unfollowed someone on Instagram? If so, we want to talk about friends and unfriends. If you think about it, we sometimes friend those we should have unfriended and we unfriend those maybe that we should have friended. Because 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: It is impossible to live the right life when you have the wrong friends.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Watch the following Jimmy Kimmel clip about friends, Facebook, and unfriending (<http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/video/kimmel-announces-national-unfriend-day-12054946>)
2. Talk about a time when someone in your life influenced you to go in the wrong direction.
3. Is there a friend who is tempting or distracting you? What are you going to do to redefine that relationship?
4. Who do you need to show the unconditional love of God to? How are you going to do it?
5. *With your Bible or your Bible App, read Proverbs 12:26.*

The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray. Proverbs 12:26

6. *With your Bible or your Bible App, read 1 Corinthians 15:33.*

Do not be misled—bad company corrupts good character. 1 Corinthians 15:33

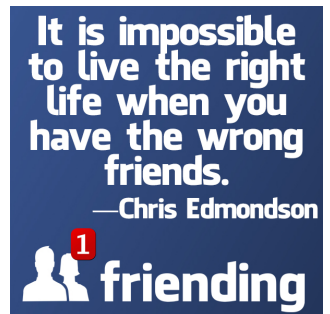
7. Chris said that there should be “Two things I won’t let my friend do.” First, we should not let our friends distract us from God’s plan.
8. *With your Bible or your Bible App, read Matthew 16:21-24.*

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!” Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” Matthew 16:21-24

9. Read the previous verses in Matthew 16:13-20. Why does Jesus change the direction of His teaching now?
10. It seems in one verse, Jesus is praising Peter and in the next verse, He is calling him Satan—kind of extreme! Why was Jesus’ response to Peter so strong? (*read Matthew 4:1-11*)
11. What kind of Messiah was Peter expecting?
12. Chris said the second thing we should not let our friends do is tempt me to sin.
13. Chris said the one thing we should never stop doing is loving people. *With your Bible or your Bible App, read John 13:34-35.*

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34-35

14. Describe a time when someone showed you the unconditional love of Christ. How did it make you feel?
15. Is there anything keeping you from showing the unconditional love of God to others? If so, what is it?
16. Do you feel your core of friendships is strong enough for you to reach out and friend those that don’t know Christ? Why or why not?
17. Do you have the right friends? Do you feel you are getting adequate time with those friends?



GOING DEEPER

We are called to be salt & light in our communities to influence people for Jesus Christ. But there is a fine line between influencing others and ourselves being influenced by others. If we're not careful—sometimes our best intentions can turn around and be our downfall. Nowhere is this more evident than the type of friends we choose. Remember—*show me your friends and I'll show you your future.*

1. Chris said, “Jesus didn’t unfriend sinners! He loved them! He distanced himself from hypocrites: Lose our heart for people.”
2. At oneChurch.tv, we gauge spiritual growth by the 3 vital relationships—having an intimate relationship with God, community with insiders, and influence with outsiders. What is the difference between having community with someone and having influence with someone?
3. It really all focuses on those words *community* and *influence*. When we start judging people outside the church is where we really drift off the rails.
4. *With your Bible or your Bible App, read 1 Corinthians 5:1-13.*

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father’s wife. And you are proud! Shouldn’t you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth. I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked man from among you.” 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

5. What are the most common ways that Christians come across as judgmental towards those who are not yet followers of Jesus?
6. At oneChurch and perhaps other churches in your community, to what degree have you seen Christians wrongly judging those who are not yet followers of Jesus?
7. In your community, what expectations do people who aren’t Jesus followers have of those who are?
8. Chris said, “Anytime the church leverages anything other than love, we go backward, not forward, in our influence.” Do you agree or disagree. Why?
9. In what ways do you see Christians trying to leverage anything other than love to try to influence culture?
10. *With your Bible or your Bible App, read 1 Corinthians 5:12 again.*

What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?

1 Corinthians 5:12

11. How does this passage challenge your assumptions about what the Bible says regarding judging others? How does it square with Matthew 7:1–2?
12. If you’re a follower of Jesus, why is it so difficult to not judge nonbelievers?
13. What is most uncomfortable about holding other followers of Jesus accountable for their behavior? How do you know when it’s your duty to do so?
14. If we have no business holding unbelievers accountable for their behavior, how does this free us in the way we can relate to them?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Jesus didn’t unfriend sinners! He loved them! He distanced himself from hypocrites: Lose our heart for people. What’s one thing you’ve learned from this series that you’ll put into action to strengthen your friendships?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Do not be misled—bad company corrupts good character. 1 Corinthians 15:33