

Friends – Episode 2: The one with artistic flare

May 28, 2023

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BIG IDEA – Making friends is a dance and a discovery.

scripture focus - “Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is truly reliable?” **Proverbs 20:6, NLT**

ME

Before we get started today, I have a confession and an apology to make. Last week I exclusively used a Bible “Translation” in the message that I discovered is not good for personal study, memorization, or meditation. So, it is definitely not good to use to speak or teach from. I used **The Passion Translation**, but it is not a translation at all. **I wrote about it my notes for today (it’s all the way at the bottom of my notes). There are good reasons to NOT use this version of one man’s idea of interpreting the Word of God.** For now, please accept my apology for not finding out about it sooner.

The Art of Friendship is just that – an art. Making friends is an expression of effort, not an evaluation of stock performances. It’s more art than a calculated system. Thus, a bit more intuitive in the right brain versus methodical in the left brain. **But just because it may initially take more right brain functions like free-wheeling, creativity, intuition, emotional response, and imagination. That doesn’t mean the left brain is not also extremely helpful with more logical and bookish functions. Or our ability to do things like, communicate, strategize, and solve problems, memorize, and analyze. But how do I make friends? Let’s talk about it.**

In Dale Carnegie’s book, How to Win Friends and Influence People written as a self-help book in 1936. It has sold over 30 million copies worldwide, making it one of the best-selling books of all time.

One of Dale's great quotes about making friends helps us remember how it works; "A person's favorite sound is their own name. Their favorite topic is themselves."

Offentimes making friends reminds me of my first Junior High Dance.

My mom made me attend my Junior High dances because she had a "wonderful time" at her own school dances, and she wanted me to be more social. Nothing screams panic more than a socially awkward kid at a JH dance. They had some old recordings of the dances back in the day, so let me show you how I danced in Junior High. **Elaine Benis' dance in the Seinfeld Episode, The Little Kicks.**

WE

In researching the best ways to make friends, I believe that Dale Carnegie was on to something. [One pastor](#), wrote, "**The Book of Proverbs is about how we can win friends, avoid conflict, and impress kings. Wisdom literature was the *How to Win Friends and Influence People* of ancient times.**"

Dale Carnegie's book is about giving and putting others before ourselves. **When we practice biblical principles, that can attract people to us.** It is not only attractive to people like us, but those also who DO NOT believe like us, vote like us or go to churches that fit us. It's also attractive to people who are searching or hurting. People who may even be lonely like us.

There was a trend in Christianity that believed that the godly will not, should not win friends and influence people. Thinking – the gospel is supposed to make enemies! I'm sure glad Jesus didn't tweet that in his day!

There are believers that are convinced that we should give people ONE SHOT at truth presented in super subtle, confrontational, or argumentative ways. And, if they reject those methods, they are rejecting Christ and we can put them down as being destined to hell.

I remember the Apostle Paul's challenge to the churches in Rome, "Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? **Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?" Romans 2:4 NLT**

When we make friends, we are going about and doing likewise!

GOD

Making friendships, the good ones, the life-long ones take a curiosity for adventure and risk, but it is so worth it.

Here are six verses to give us some help in making and keeping friends.

1. **Become genuinely interested in other people.**

- The Apostle Paul wrote to the churches in Philippi, "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. **Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others**, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had." **Philippians 2:3-5 NLT**
- **"Do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it's in your power to help them.** If you can help your neighbor now, don't say, "Come back tomorrow, and then I'll help you."
Proverbs 3:27-28 NLT
- This is one of those skills that needs to be practiced, **because it cannot be faked. We can't pretend to be interested just to get something out of it.** That's disingenuous and dishonest. **Asking genuine questions out of curiosity helps tremendously.**

2. **Smile.**

- "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength." **Proverbs 17:22 NLT**
- "A cheerful heart brings a smile to your face; a sad heart makes it hard to get through the day." **Proverbs 15:13 MSG**
- **Carnegie writes, "a smile says, "I like you. You make me happy. I am glad to see you." That is why a baby's smile can light up a room!**

- **Mark Batterson, a Pastor in Washington DC, writes, “some say it takes twenty-two facial muscles to smile, while it takes thirty-seven facial muscles to frown. Save yourself some energy, and smile. Smiling relieves stress, boosts your immune system, reduces blood pressure, and helps you live longer. But wait—there’s more. Smiling helps you stay positive and project confidence.”** Mark Batterson, Please, Sorry, Thanks.
- **“On Average a Woman Smiles 62 Times a Day; Men Smile Only 8 Times,”** [South Florida Reporter, May 30, 2018.](#)

3. **Learn, remember, and use their name.**

- **Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language.**
- God specifically told Israel he knew them by name. “But now, O Jacob, listen to the Lord who created you. O Israel, the one who formed you says, “Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine.” **Isaiah 43:1 NLT**
- **God often called people by name and even changed their name when they became or would become a totally new person.**
- “Your name will no longer be Jacob,” the man told him. “From now on you will be called Israel, because you have fought with God and with men and have won.” **Genesis 32:28 NLT. Jacob means “heal” or “deceiver,” Israel means “God fights.”**
- “Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, “Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas” (which means “Peter”).” **John 1:42 NLT.** Simon means “listen” or “hearing” but Peter means “rock.”

4. **Be a good listener.** Encourage others to talk about themselves.

- “Fools care nothing for thoughtful discourse; all they do is run off at the mouth.” **Proverbs 18:2 MSG**
- “Even dunces who keep quiet are thought to be wise; as long as they keep their mouths shut, they’re smart.” **Proverbs 17:28 MSG**
- “Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.” **James 1:19 NLT**

- **This is similar to #1**, it is a learned skill that needs to be practiced. **If I was doing a seminar on this, I would have you practice with someone.** I know that's awkward right now, but can I suggest you try it out today, in the foyer or the parking lot? Linger about a little longer and practice with each other. Of course, it may feel silly, but physically practicing gives us hope and we get to hear ourselves trying it out. **Ask this: "what did you think of the message today?"** Then listen. It's even more effective if you repeat back a couple of key things that interested you. They may answer, "I liked the idea of smiling more." And you could say, "Yes, smiling is hard (or easy) for me."

5. **Talk in terms of the other person's interests.**

- "God loves the pure-hearted and well-spoken; good leaders also delight in their friendship." **Proverbs 22:11 MSG**
- It cannot be overstated; **a great friendship is more about other focused than it is self-focused.**
- Many of us get in these friendships where the other person does nothing but talk about themselves and **doesn't leave even a moment to ask how you are doing or what is happening in your life.** Of course, there are times when it is necessary to just be with a friend to only hear a **one-way communication**, just **don't pretend it's a conversation! Be the friend that is interested in them but** remember a friendship that **never** asks about you is not really a friendship, it's just free therapy for someone. **Lopsided friendships are difficult to maintain and invest in for the long haul!**

6. **Make the other person feel important** – and do it sincerely.

- "It is foolish to belittle one's neighbor; a sensible person keeps quiet." **Proverbs 11:12 NLT** "read the room folks!" You can't make friends by being mean to people!
- "Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is truly reliable?" **Proverbs 20:6, NLT**
- **Dale Carnegie figured out that this one thing that is the most significant and deeply desired need in each of our lives. We ache to be seen, known, loved and have significance to the**

meaning of our life – not life in general, but our life. Do I matter to anyone?

- **The friendship that folks are looking for and want to invest into are ones that become mutual**, but not just in conversation or friendly banter over sports teams or favorite foods. **Great friendships are seeing and affirming strengths, gifts and potential in one another.** We talked about this before, but being critical and constantly pointing out flaws, mistakes and even quirks can get exhausting. Last week I quoted the verse about the “wounds of a friend.” But can I tell you – it is much more effective and enriching to speak positive truths and pull-out godly characteristics than it is to always be “blind spotting.”
- [Harvard Business Review](#) updated these statistics on positive verses negative feedback. **“The average ratio for the highest-performing teams was 5.6** (that is, nearly six positive comments for every negative one).” Further, **“Only positive feedback can motivate people to continue doing what they’re doing well, and do it with more vigor, determination, and creativity.”**

US

These tips are not just helpful in learning how to make friends, but also how to be a great friend as well!

Why am I focusing on making friends and being friends?

For one, I believe it is BIBLICAL and BENEFICIAL.

Two, I believe it will help us understand how to make disciples.

Disciples aren’t projects they are people. Similarly, friends aren’t projects they are eternal investments.

ME

My own “blind date” experience of gaining a best friend.

Early summer, 1994. Robin would be going to kid's summer camp as the camp speaker. Her dad was the Christian Education Director for our then Southern California District Office of the Assemblies of God (now SoCal Network). She and our three young children would be gone for an entire week, and I would be home alone, bereft of food or social plans. A week of being sort of a bachelor once again.

She didn't want me sulking around the whole week, so she encouraged me to connect with friends, specifically friends outside our own church. There are times when it's good to venture outside your normal friend group for a different perspective on things.

She had a recommendation. The husband of a good friend and one I had met at this couple's wedding. The wife was a stellar woman full of God, adventurous and smart. The guy she married would have to be a great guy for her to marry him.

Before Robin and the kids took off for camp, I called our friend and asked about getting together with her husband. I just thought it would make it less weird than calling the guy up and seeing if he would get together. She talked with her husband, and he agreed that we could grab a bite to eat if it was at his favorite restaurant. "Where's that," I asked. She said, "Claim Jumpers," in Long Beach. Well, Claim Jumpers was also a favorite of mine so a date was set, and we would meet there. I remembered what the guy looked like from his wedding, but I wasn't sure if he'd recognize me at all.

We greeted each other at the entrance and asked to be seated as "first available," which happened to be the bar area in Claim Jumpers. To make things feel even more awkward, we are two guys, and we're seated in the bar area on a Friday night. Both of us recognized it and laughed about it.

We found we had so much in common. We talked about Christian music, the Bible, faith, family and eventually computers and gaming. He had a computer that was giving him problems. This is 1994 so Microsoft Windows was still wonky (I think it still is), so I went over to his house sat down for a few minutes, popped Windows into command

mode with a "DOS C" prompt. Ran a couple of direct DOS commands, fixed it up, typed "Exit," and got up out of the seat. He thought I was a master programmer, anyone with DOS skills used to be considered a computer whiz. Our friendship took off and we've been good friends ever since.

But it all started with a date set up by both our wives!

Don't raise your hand, but let's make this a prayer request to God together. If you would like to have good friends, better friends or even new friends then let me pray for you right now. I also want to remind you that truly God knows you better than any human can and wants you to let him in and change your life, If you'd like to say YES to God right now, I'll pray for his as well.

NOTES

[Elaine Dance Video](#)

Dale Carnegie

Carnegie had been conducting business education courses in New York since 1912. In 1934, Leon Shimkin, of the publishing firm Simon & Schuster, took one of **Carnegie's 14-week courses on human relations and public speaking**, and later persuaded Carnegie to let a stenographer take notes from the course to be revised for publication. The initial five thousand copies of the book sold exceptionally well, going through 17 editions in its first year alone.

In 1981, a revised edition containing updated language and anecdotes was released. The revised edition reduced the number of sections from six to four, eliminating sections on effective business letters and improving marital satisfaction. **In 2011, it was number 19 on Time's list of the 100 most influential books.**

"A person's favorite sound is their own name. Their favorite topic is themselves"
- **Dale Carnegie**

Scriptures

“Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is truly reliable?”

Proverbs 20:6, NLT

“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength.”

Proverbs 17:22 NLT

“Putting confidence in an unreliable person in times of trouble is like chewing with a broken tooth or walking on a lame foot.” **Proverbs 25:19 NLT**

“A gossip goes around telling secrets, but those who are trustworthy can keep a confidence.” **Proverbs 11:13 NLT**

“The godly give good advice to their friends; the wicked lead them astray.”

Proverbs 12:26 NLT

“A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the ways of the wicked lead them astray.” **Proverbs 12:26 BSB**

“God loves the pure-hearted and well-spoken; good leaders also delight in their friendship.” **Proverbs 22:11 MSG**

“A cheerful heart brings a smile to your face; a sad heart makes it hard to get through the day.” **Proverbs 15:13 MSG**

“Fools care nothing for thoughtful discourse; all they do is run off at the mouth.”

Proverbs 18:2 MSG

“Even dunces who keep quiet are thought to be wise; as long as they keep their mouths shut, they're smart.” **Proverbs 17:28 MSG**

“It is foolish to belittle one's neighbor; a sensible person keeps quiet.”

Proverbs 11:12 NLT

Questions

Q: What are some ways that worked for you to make friends?

Q: Do you find it difficult or easy? Share a friend story.

Q: Were you aware that friendship was a big theme in Proverbs?”

Q: Did any other Proverbs come to mind about friendship?

Q: In making friends, have you found it helpful to show interest in them?

Q: What are some of your struggles in making friends?

Q: Would you say you are an introvert or an extrovert? How do they differ in making friends?

COMMENTARY REFERENCES

Elliott's Commentary for English Readers

Proverbs 20:6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness.— **Will be full of his benevolent intentions**, "but a faithful man," who carries out these promises, "who can find?" [**best intentions are not helpful in urgent or devastating situations**]

Benson Commentary

Proverbs 17:22. A merry heart — Cheerfulness of mind, especially that which is solid, and ariseth from the testimony of a good conscience; doeth good like a medicine — **Even to the body; it contributes very much to the restoration or preservation of bodily health and vigour, as physicians observe and experience shows**; but a broken spirit — A spirit sad and dejected; drieth the bones — Wasteth the marrow of the bones, and the moisture and strength of the body.

Proverbs 22:11 Who is plain-hearted or sincere, and abhors dissimulation; whose **heart is so free from guile that he places his pleasure in the integrity of his mind**, and the purity of his conscience.

Pulpit Commentary

Proverbs 11:13 A tale-bearer. The word implies **one who goes about chattering, gossiping, and slandering** (Leviticus 19:16); Vulgate, qui ambulat fraudulenter; Septuagint, "**the man of double tongue.**" To such a man it is safe to trust nothing; he revealeth secrets.

Proverbs 15:13 The face is the index of the condition of the mind. "**In the forehead and the eye the lecture of the mind doth lie.**" And, again, "A blithe heart makes a blooming visage"

Proverbs 17:22 "**A merry heart goes all the day, Your sad tires in a mile-a.**" So the rabbis enjoin, "Give ears no room in thine heart, for **care hath killed many**" (Dukes, p. 68). Religious gladness is a positive duty, and "low spirits," as Isaac Williams says, "are a sin." Asks the Greek moralist - "**Workers of death are sorrow and disease.**"

Proverbs 25:19 A faithless man is as little to be relied on in a time of need as a loose or broken tooth, and a foot unsteady or actually dislocated. **You cannot bite on the one, you cannot walk on the other; so the perfidious man fails you when most wanted.**

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

Proverbs 25:19 Treachery annoys as well as deceives.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible

Proverbs 11:13 The man who comes to us with tales about others will reveal our secrets also. Faithfulness is shown, not only in doing what a man has been commissioned to do, but in doing it quietly and without garrulity.

Gil's Exposition of the Entire Bible

Proverbs 11:13 A talebearer revealeth secrets,.... The Arabic version adds, **in the congregation, openly and publicly; that goes about with tales from place to place, who is like a walking merchant or peddler, as the word (l) signifies; who takes up his wares at one place, and exposes them to sale, and vends them at another; so a talebearer, he goes from house to house, and picks up tales at one place and carries them to another and tells them; and as by his going about he gets into the secrets of persons and families, or is entrusted with them, his character not being known, he reveals them to others, and so breaks the trust committed to him.**

Benson Commentary

Proverbs 15:22-23 *A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth* — By a wise or good and seasonable answer: that is, **"It is a great pleasure to a man to give wholesome counsel, and a greater to see the good success of it; but the greatest of all, both to himself and others, is to have given it so seasonably,** that a business was easily effected by it, which had not been done without it." *For a word spoken in due season* — **Counsel or comfort given to another in a fit time and manner; how good is it!** — **It is highly acceptable and useful.**

Proverbs 13:20 That is, who keeps company, and commonly converses with them; shall be wise — Shall learn wisdom and goodness, both from their counsels and examples; but a companion of fools — **But he who associates himself with the wicked; shall be destroyed — Shall be as certainly ruined as he will be unavoidably infected with their wickedness. Evil pursueth sinners** — The evil of punishment, in proportion to their evil of sin, shall certainly, sooner or later, overtake them, although they may please themselves with hopes of impunity.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

Proverbs 15:13 There is nothing that can be hid from the eyes of God, not even man's thoughts.

Internet Links

[How to Win Friends and Influence People – Dale Carnegie](#)

Part 2 – Six Principles:

1. Become genuinely interested in other people.
2. Smile.
3. Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language.
4. Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves.
5. Talk in terms of the other person's interests.
6. Make the other person feel important – and do it sincerely.

<https://www.hubspot.com/sales/how-to-win-friends-and-influence-people-summary>

['How to Win Friends and Influence People' is now targeting Gen Z girls](#)

Dale Carnegie's daughter, Donna Dale Carnegie wrote the book "How to Win Friends & Influence People for Teen Girls."

Making Good Friends

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships-communication/making-good-friends.htm>

14 Ways to Find Good Friends No Matter What Your Age

<https://www.lifehack.org/794675/good-friends>

YouTube Videos - Career and Life Skills Lessons

- What are quality friends? <https://youtu.be/bNzFPPMnFIY>
- How to build quality friendships. <https://youtu.be/lo06FEheofE> [Helpful PDF Quiz follow up!](#)

How Introverts Can Make More High-Quality Friendships

1. When you don't have the energy to reach out, draw others to you.
2. Stop trying to charm people.
3. Give yourself permission to be vulnerable.
4. Look for the other introverts.
5. Figure out their "[love language](#)" and share yours.
6. Hold out for true connection.
7. Be intentional.

And...

[The Introvert's Complete Guide to Making Friends Who 'Get' You](#)

Notes and links about The Passion Translation

The Passion Translation is not a translation at all! It is the work of one man, Brian Simmons and what **he describes as a direct revelation from God**. I do not know these men personally, but I do recognize the danger and error of claiming a direct revelation without any accountability.

[Brian Simmons on Sid Roth, "It's Supernatural! Television" Show](#)

Direct quotes from Sid's transcript.

SID: Okay. 2009, Brian Simmons gets a new assignment. What happened?

BRIAN: Jesus Christ came into my room. He breathed on me and he commissioned me.

SID: When he breathed on you, I have to ask you this, what did it feel like?

BRIAN: It felt like a kiss from Heaven. It felt like Heaven's wind. The rock, the breath, the wind of God came upon me. And **he spoke to me and said, "I'm commissioning you to translate the Bible into the translation project that I'm giving you to do."** And he promised that he would help me, and he promised me that **he would give me secrets of the Hebrew language.**

SID: Do you believe that when he blew on you it was an impartation for revelation?

BRIAN: I do. **I believe the spirit of revelation was given.** And I have to say, when he breathed on me in no way would I want to compare that to the writers of the New Testament, the original writers, you know, Moses and the Torah, and Ezekiel. He breathed on me so that I would do the project, and I felt downloads coming, instantly. I received downloads. It was like, I got a chip put inside of me. I got a

connection inside of me to hear him better, to understand the scriptures better and hopefully to translate.

SID: Are you finding that when people read the translation you're working on that it almost does a mind bypass and goes directly into the heart?

BRIAN: I think that's a brilliant way to say it. The poetic language of Hebrew and Aramaic released something inside of us. It's Divine. It is full of revelation. There's flavor. It's not, it's like thinking with your heart. It's like heart level to heart level, spirit to spirit, deep calling out to deep.

These quotes from Brian are filled with RED FLAGS that should warn anyone using The Passion Translation for memorization, meditation or study. **It should definitely NOT be used in preaching or teaching congregations or in disciplining others.**

- “Special” or “solo” revelations are dangerous in and of themselves. Rev. 22:18-19. Specific to the Book of Revelation, but principle applies to all of the Bible.
- The use of the word, “secrets” is also dangerous
- The Passion Translation itself is not peer-reviewed, and rejected by most Biblical scholars and commentators.
- [Brian is a part of the New Apostolic Reformation \(NAR\)](#). Let's just say it is [dangerous](#) to start a new denomination or movement that strays from standard systematic theology.

Today, we still take our cues and clues from what history calls, The Bereans. [Who were the Bereans](#) and what were they known for? They intensely studied the scriptures to protect themselves from philosophers and false prophets.

As your Pastor, I believe the Passion Translation should NOT be used for teaching or preaching congregations. And without a more mature understanding of scripture itself, I would not recommend it for anything other than an interesting point of view, from one man about the Bible itself.