

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

I Am a Friend of God, In Christ Alone

WELCOME

Friendship List. Name at least three characteristics that you are looking for in a best friend.

WORD

JOHN 15:13–15

¹³ "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ "You are My friends if you do what I command you.

¹⁵ "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

FRIENDSHIP

Why Should We Choose Our Friends?

The Bible tells us why. If we always hang out with people of bad influence, sooner or later we will be like them. Let's not be deceived that we are an exemption; bad company corrupts good morals (**1 Corinthians 15:33**). More often than not, it's easier for them to pull us down than for us to pull them up.

If we don't choose our friends, they will choose us. We will find ourselves joining a group simply because we want to belong and may end up with friends that are bad influences.

Parents play a critical role in guarding their children, especially in choosing their friends. Parents should help them find their identity in Jesus so that they can say no to certain kind of friends.

What is a True Friend?

- Loves at all times, in good times and bad times. (**Proverbs 17:17**)
- Knows when to listen and when to speak. (**Ecclesiastes 3:7**)
- Will say the truth even if it is painful, in a loving manner. (**Ephesians 4:15**)
- Encourages one to go further (**Proverbs 27:17**); "If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together" (African Proverb)

DATING

Do not arouse love prematurely (**Song of Solomon 2:7**).

Dating should not be for the sake of just dating but with marriage in mind. The best time to date

someone is when you are both ready for the lifelong relationship of marriage, ready to support each other financially and to raise up a family of your own. However, don't make unrealistic financial goals to the point that money is already being a hindrance from getting married at the right time.

Sin can totally destroy God's good design for sex. So, while dating, remember that God's will for us is to abstain from immorality (**1 Thessalonians 4:3**).

MARRIAGE

If God wants you to be married, then you will be married. But it is Jesus whom we should be pursuing, not marriage.

Marriage is a beautiful picture of what our relationship with God is like (**Ephesians 5:22–25**) but it is not the ultimate goal in life. We don't have to be married to be complete. Married or not, it is Jesus Christ who should complete us.

In **Genesis 24**, we can learn how to choose a spouse.

- 1. Involve the community (v. 1-2)** – Don't date in secret. Involve the people you trust especially your parents who can know if somebody is good for you or not.
- 2. Set standards and set convictions (v.3-9)** – Know what you want. If you do not have standards and convictions you might just carelessly marry anybody at anytime. Convictions are non-negotiable such as: loves God more than you; loves and cares for others.
- 3. Prepare yourself (v.10)** – Look at your list, are you the person you want to marry? If you are looking for Mr. Right, are you Ms. Right?

WORD (cont'd)

4. **Be in the right place (v.11)** – If you are looking for a spouse, be in the right place.
5. **Pray (v.12)** – If you desire to have a spouse, then pray. For the parents, pray for your children's spouse even while they are young.
6. **Look for character (v.13)** – Beware of the following traits: spiritually incompatible with you (**2 Corinthians 6:14**), self-centered, has anger issues, struggling with addictions, blameful of others, deceptive, possessive, materialistic (**Proverbs 23:33**). Instead, look for the following character: Loves God and people, humble, joyful in Christ, etc.
7. **Observe (v.21)** – Don't believe everything you read about the person on social media but get to know the person of your interest up close and personal. Observe how they serve the Lord.
8. **Be straightforward; don't play games (v.49)** – Remember the purpose of dating is to find a partner in marriage. Intentions should be clear.
9. **Parental consent (v.51-52)** – Invite the person who is pursuing your child or being pursued by your child and get to know the person by asking questions.
10. **Future spouse content (v.57-59)** – For the men — lay down your intentions and ask the woman if you could pursue her.

To help you navigate the minefield of this life, particularly in the areas of friendship, dating and marriage, pursue Jesus. He is a true friend to us (**John 15:13-16**).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. **I Am a Friend of God.** According to **John 15:13-16**, how do we become God's friends?
2. **Marry Me.** How do you feel towards being married to someone having exactly the same character you have?
3. **Pursuing Jesus.** How will you pursue Jesus in friendship, dating and marriage? Briefly share to the group.

WORKS

TRUE FRIEND

List down names of people who you would like to be true friends with and write down how you can exemplify Jesus' "friend" characteristics towards them.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants and a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends