

Are You A Good BEST Friend to Your Spouse?

By Moe & Paige Becnel

How successful have you been in maintaining strong relationships throughout your life?
Have friends walked away from you because of offense or gossip? Have you walked away?
How important are life-long relationships to you?
Are you a “good best friend” to your spouse?

Moe & Paige consider each other their best friend. They agree that, “The only person I want to live the rest of my life with is my best friend – to share GOOD times and endure HARD times with.”

Too Many Broken People

However, today we live in a society that disposes of relationships! Broken families are commonplace due to favoritism, sibling rivalry, controlling parents, selfishness and pride. Broken friendships are frequent because of betrayed confidences and offenses.

Gossip is rampant --- at work and within families, churches, and schools. Perhaps your name has been the center of conversation when you were not there, or perhaps you have been the source of gossip.

Divorce is all too common. Maybe you have been disposed of by someone, or you have disposed of someone in your life. Divorce has created a society of fragmented families, hurting people and damaged children.

Relationships are fragile, because people are fragile! Someone offends us, and we find it easier to end the relationship than to forgive the person who hurt us.

What God Intended

God never intended relationships to break down and end. God placed us in relationships and intended for all relationships to last a lifetime. He gave us the Ten Commandments; the 1st 4 are about our relationship with God, and the other 6 are about our relationships with people He brings into our lives.

In the Old Testament, from the moment Adam & Eve sinned and were cast out of God's presence, God initiated a plan to reconcile man back to Himself.

In John 15:12 Jesus said, *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”* Do you know how God has loved you? Do you really know that you are a Child of the loving, living God? Do you know & understand the depth of God's love for you? I believe most people don't, and that is why we have trouble loving & forgiving others! People fail to love others, because they have not truly experienced the depth of God's love. We learn to love others as we experience God loving us. We all need a deeper understanding and experience of God's love for us.

In John 15:15 Jesus stated, *“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you FRIENDS, for everything that I learned from My Father I have made known to you.”* Jesus called his disciples His “friends.”

Consider the difference between a servant and a friend:

A servant is tied to, in bonds to, bound, a slave. This makes me think of men who call their wives a “ball & chain.”

A friend chooses to serve the other, is concerned for the other, and wants to be where that person is. The Apostle Paul considered himself a Bond-Servant to Jesus. He chose to be a servant to Jesus. He chose to take on Jesus' mission.

Our Shortcomings in Relationships

Here are some possible shortcomings that keep people from being a Good Best Friend:

1. We do not need a friend. We are self sufficient. We get defensive because people have hurt us in the past.
2. We do not want to be a friend. For the most part, such a person lives his life concerned about self, not others. He/ she is consumed with their happiness, their loneliness, their needs, their wants, their desires, their hobbies, their dreams and their goals.
3. We may not know how to be a friend. Maybe we have only had acquaintances in our life; no one has ever shown a true interest in our life. We may not even have a good relationship with our own family.

Abundant Life is not found in pleasing yourself, it is found in relationships with those around you.

Reconciling is VIP

About 3 years ago, Moe was in prayer over a damaged relationship in his life. God revealed to him that he had walked away from two other significant relationships in his past. In his thoughts, God said, *“If you are going to be a Christian, you need to pursue LIFE-LONG relationships, and value those I have brought into your life.”*

Moe walked away from these two relationships because he had been offended. The *Spirit of Offense* says, *“With friends like that, who needs any enemies?”* Offense destroys many friendships, families & churches.

People offended Jesus many times. Did Jesus feel these offenses? YES – as He hung on the cross, it drove Him to say, *“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”*

Knowing he was going to betray Him in a few hours, Jesus still washed the feet of Judas. HOW COULD JESUS DO THAT? Because Jesus’ life was not about Him --- His life was all about other people.

Regarding Moe’s two failed relationships that he walked away from, God said, **“GO BACK; GO RECONCILE; GET PAST YOUR OFFENSES.”**

Husbands & Wives, if you have not valued the people in the relationships that you walked away from or caused offense in your past, you will not value your marriage partner when times get tough, when they make a bad decision, or when they hurt or offend you.

Being A Good BEST Friend

What does a “good best friend” look like? Let’s look at Jesus and His Disciples. Jesus called them to Him, He blessed them, He healed them, He taught them, He enjoyed being with them day in and day out, day after day for three years.

The disciples were not the best of friends in return --- they did not understand Jesus, they offended Jesus, they kept people from coming to Jesus, they had pride (in competition with each other as to who would be the greatest!). Jesus had to rebuke them on some occasions. They fell to sleep when Jesus needed them most. They denied - and even betrayed Jesus.

The Son of God cherishes companionship! He loves being around people, because He loves people. He gave, and never expected anything from them. Near the end of His life Jesus called them His friends.

The last day of Jesus’ life, before He was crucified, His focus was on His disciples --- His friends.
ONE LAST MEAL WITH THEM – ONE LAST OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE THEM – HE WASHED THEIR FEET!

Successful relationships are founded on Phil. 2:3-4. *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

Imagine what it would be like if two people met, got married, and began to consider each other as more important than themselves. They would get up each morning and ---

He would say, "I'M GOING TO SERVE YOU TODAY!"

And she would say, "WHAT CAN I DO TO SERVE YOU TODAY?"

Keys to Becoming A Good BEST Friend ---

1. Value your spouse. Work to become one in mind and spirit. Consider his or her ideas, and help them achieve their goals, dreams and desires.
2. Forgive them --- we often hurt the ones we are closest to, and the one we are trying to become one with. Forgiveness is A MUST for life-long relationships.
3. Guard your tongue --- nothing does more damage to relationships than harsh words, and gossip.
4. Do not set up expectations. When we are in relationship with someone, we often start expecting them to do and say certain things, and act certain ways. This only sets you up for disappointment, and puts your partner in bondage. Friends, including husbands, wives & children, were never intended to be used for our gain.
5. Be a LIFTER! Affirm, encourage and embrace each other. Pull your spouse close to you and BECOME THEIR BEST FRIEND. *Jesus never tears His Bride down. He lifts us, builds us, brings comfort to us, guards us, and sets us free!*
6. Search your past and identify 1 or 2 relationships that failed (*excluding* former spouse, unless your new spouse approves). Go and reconcile! Call them and apologize, or just let them know you have been thinking about them. Let them know that you value them. They may not accept your apology, but you have at least done your part.

Live in God's Principles, and Live Blessed!

Moe & Paige Becnel

Copyright © 2003 All rights reserved.