

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Circles

WEEK 3

BE FRIENDLY WHEN YOUR CIRCLE CHANGES.

“The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

MARK 12:31 NIV

DAY 1

Changing your circle of friends might seem awkward, but it can actually be an opportunity to explore new friendships. There’s a whole world full of people out there for you to meet! So even as your circles change in life, remember that what may be the end of one friendship could be the beginning of another. And no matter what, make sure you are focusing on being the kind of friend Jesus calls us all to be. Make sure you are loving the people in your life the way you want to be loved. This week, think about the way you want to be treated by your friends—both old and new. Ask God to help you treat others in that same way!

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.”

1 PETER 4:8 NIV

DAY 2

When a friend does something that hurts us, it’s easy to feel offended or upset. In those moments, it’s important to remember that none of us are perfect. We’re all going to get it wrong sometimes. And when we do, it’s important to offer the same kind of forgiveness Jesus offers us—a forgiveness born out of love. Does it mean everything always goes back to normal? Of course not! Sometimes friendships have to change, even after you forgive. But it does mean that you can extend love and forgiveness to others who hurt you or to those you’ve hurt. Is there a friend who has hurt you? Or maybe a friend you’ve hurt? Ask God to bring His love and forgiveness to that situation.

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

COLOSSIANS 3:13 NIV

DAY 3

We all long for genuine friendships. They make things more fun and bring a little bit of meaning to our lives. According to this passage, one of the keys to having deep and healthy friendships is accepting each other's faults and offering each other forgiveness. Just like God provided forgiveness to us through Jesus, He wants us to extend that same kind of forgiveness to others—even when it's difficult! Because He knows that when we do, we're opening ourselves and our friendships up to becoming better in the long run. Try to memorize this verse this week. Let it be a reminder of the way you've been forgiven by God and a motivation to offer that same forgiveness to others.

“Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.”

ROMANS 15:2 NIV

DAY 4

Have you ever seen a friendship breakup? If you have, then you know that the changing of circles is often surrounded by a lot of drama! But Paul calls us to remember that it's our job to encourage and build others up. (And he's not just talking about those who do the same for us!) We are to encourage and build up all of the people around us—even the ones we may no longer be friends with. Is there a person in your life who you're struggling to build up or encourage? Ask a trusted adult for help in finding a way to treat that person in a way that builds them up rather than tears them down.

“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.”

LUKE 6:27 NIV

DAY 5

No matter how someone may treat you, it's important to remember that God loves them. He wants to be a part of their lives. And He might even want to use you to help show them His love. It's one of the reasons Jesus wants us to take the high road—to do what we can to show love to others regardless of how they treat us. Of course you can stand up for yourself or ask for help when you're being treated poorly. But we can also do our best not to treat others that same way. This week, talk to your Small Group Leader about what it looks like to show God's love to the difficult people in your life!
