

DAY 6

But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Luke 6:27 NIV

As followers of God, we're called to do what we can to show love to others, no matter what. Of course, this doesn't mean we just let others treat us however they want. We can stand up for ourselves, ask for help, or take steps toward a healthier friendship. That's part of loving ourselves and others, too! But even as we speak up or think about how the friendship may need to change, we can do our best not to treat others the way they've treated or hurt us.

This week, talk to your small group leader about what it looks like to show God's love to the difficult friends in your life!

DAY 7

Do to others as you would like them to do to you. Luke 6:31 NLT

Changes in friendships can be challenging. When friendships shift or end, we can look back to God's Word for guidance on how to handle it.

Today, think about a friendship in your life that has changed. Then, read this verse 5 times in a row. Ask God to help you remember this truth as you interact with that person, even as the friendship has changed. Come back to this verse when you need a reminder to treat them how you want to be treated, too.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

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everyday faith.

REAL FRIENDS / WEEK 3

MIDDLE SCHOOL

DAY 1

The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these. Mark 12:31 NIV

Changing your circle of friends might seem awkward, but it can actually be an opportunity to explore new friendships. There's a whole world 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!

DAY 2

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8 NIV

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 that comes from 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 love and forgiveness to that situation.

DAY 3

Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

Colossians 3:13 NLT

We all want real friendships. They make things more fun and bring a little bit of meaning to our lives. According to this verse, one of the keys to having real, healthy friendships is understanding that we're all going to make mistakes, and we all need forgiveness sometimes. Just like God provided forgiveness to us through Jesus, God wants us to extend that same kind of forgiveness to others—even when it's difficult!

Is there a friend in your life you need to forgive? Talk to God today about that situation and ask God to help you forgive them.

DAY 4

We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. Romans 15:2 NLT

Have you ever seen a friendship break-up? If you have, then you know that there can be drama when friendships change or end! 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 called 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.

DAY 5

Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:32 NLT

Written by Bella, age 17, from Cumming, Georgia, USA

Being blessed with good friends is such a great thing. They make you laugh, listen to you when you cry, and are someone to spend time with. But they can also really hurt you, and when that happens, sometimes the friendship needs to change or end. I know this is true, because in my own life, I went from having the best friends ever to being told I was one of the worst friends they'd ever had. My friendship with them ended. After that, I was so lonely. But I was reminded of the truth of this verse: to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving toward others, because Jesus is kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving toward us.

Today, remember that it's okay when friendships change or have to end. Think about one friendship you have that has changed or ended recently. How can you be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving toward that person?