



# Friends Forever

Building Friendships with God's Blueprint

*There are four important levels we reach in building lifetime friendships. Each level has a corresponding privilege and responsibility. When we understand these levels we can avoid many of the pitfalls we stumble into in our jobs, families, church, and anywhere else we must deal with people.*

*Dr. Sharon Schuetz*

## FRIENDS FOREVER

An estimated eighty-percent of a person's success in life is working with people. Whether you are a plumber, an architect, a doctor, a homemaker, President of the United States, or a student you have to work with others. We must all learn how to choose and correctly build the friendships and relationships that affect our lives. Not everyone you meet will become a friend, but those who do will have a profound influence on you, more than you would believe possible.



We must choose our friends carefully. A friend is one who attaches himself to another by affection or who has feelings of esteem and respect for the other. Real friendship takes time to develop. We begin all relationships as acquaintances and gradually learn more about each other. Some relationships will develop into close, intimate, friendships, while most will not. As we meet new acquaintances, we will have many choices. These choices often influence our lives. The Word of God must be our guide in our relationships.

*Draw a line to match the Scripture below to what it says about friendship.*

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. Prov. 17:17  | <i>old on to long term friendships</i>          |
| 2. Prov. 18:24  | <i>two walking together are better than one</i> |
| 3. Prov. 27:10  | <i>a friend loves all the time</i>              |
| 4. Prov. 27:17  | <i>we must show ourselves friendly</i>          |
| 5. Eccl. 4:9,10 | <i>man sharpens his friends thinking</i>        |

In his popular book on teen sexuality, *Why Wait?*, Josh McDowell explains why we should have a Biblical base for all our decisions, especially in making and relating to friends. He explains "Indecisiveness is powerlessness. The more decisions we have to make, the more we need a framework by which to make them. But instead of looking to the Biblical values known to be true for thousands of years, we have abandoned the framework we desperately need. Our inability to make decisions is evident in our culture. Without the Biblical point of reference, we feel confused and empty, which leaves us powerless. That in turn leads to insecurity and the need to hold on to something or someone; that is, it drives us to search for intimacy with another person."

6. What is indecisiveness? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Why does Josh McDowell say that indecisiveness is powerlessness?

---

---

---

Let's look at the word intimacy. What does it mean to be intimate with another person? The thought of being intimate with another person makes some people nervous. Sometimes it may make people feel vulnerable. Yet, inside each of us is a desire to have just that kind of friend. Intimacy is simply the close or familiar friendship of one to whom we entrust our thoughts without reserve. That's it! See, that was not too painful, was it? Can we really have this intimacy in our relationships? Is it necessary? According to Josh McDowell: "We can never enjoy the full potential richness of a meaningful relationship, for which we were created, without becoming intimate with at least one other person . . . When two people confide in each other about his or her innermost dreams, hopes and thoughts, they are "being intimate." True intimacy involves being able to remove all the masks and disguises we hide behind, without fear of rejection, and being known and loved for ourselves."



Intimacy involves a level of friendship that goes beyond the kids at the skating rink or the mall. It may not include anyone in your class at school either. It might not even include the kids on your block that you have played with all your life. Most of you can think of at least one person right now who you would say that you feel or have felt this way about. There may be someone you can talk to about most subjects, maybe not everything, but most of them. When you do, you are being intimate.

8. Do you have at least two people you can say that you are this close to?

Circle one:        *yes*                                *no*

9. If not, how many do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

The reason Josh McDowell says that we must be intimate with at least one other person is because we must learn the art of developing friendships. We must learn relationship skills. We are not born with

them, we must learn them. Most parents either do not or cannot teach these skills to their children because they, themselves, continually wander in and out of broken, empty relationships and do not know how to pass these skills on to their children.

An intimate or a real friend will accept us where we are and help us to become what God wants us to be. Betty Maltz said, "We are not human beings, we are human becomings." I like that. A real friend will love us for who we are and will encourage us into reaching God's best for our lives. There are no conditions placed on how and when he loves us. His love does not depend on whether we act a certain way, or if we do something for him. He will love us anyway.

Until we experience this kind of love, we cannot really love others unconditionally. Unconditional love is something one must experience before one can freely give it. After we receive love from another person unconditionally, it is easier for us to love others and to love God. With this kind of love, our friendships will have a solid foundation, grounded in the Word of God.

### ***LEARNING THE HARD WAY***

The Bible gives us examples of different kinds of friendships. We can look at these and get an idea what God intends for our relationships today. Time does not change human nature. What was right thousands of years ago is still right today. God based His commands on principles or rules found in His Word. If we follow these principles we will be successful in dealing with others. These principles have been the same since God created man.

God did not intend for His people, neither the Israelites nor for the church, to have serious or intimate relationships with those outside His will or sphere. Too often when we seek companionship in or from the world it pulls us closer into its system than we ever intended to go. We may think that we are too strong for that to happen to us. We often feel that we can help convert the other person, but many times the result is the other way. How can we convince others to change if we are changing to become like them? Who is showing the most faith in what they believe? Many who do this end up with nothing but a broken heart that leads to more serious or permanent loss. The loss is often eternal.

The Book of Judges tells a tragic story of the loss experienced when we seek companionship outside God's will, or, through methods He did not intend. Delilah was a Philistine who had no commitment to Samson or his God. She had not given her heart to God. She was a Philistine, a daughter of the mortal enemies of the Israelites.

## *FRIENDS ARE FOREVER \ 4*

The Philistines were sea people who migrated from Crete during the first quarter of the 12th century, B.C. They were chief rivals of the Israelites who arrived in Palestine from the opposite direction in about the same period. History tells us that the Philistines gradually migrated from our present day Bosnia to Crete.

The Philistines were tall, barbaric people who learned the secret of forging iron from the Hittites. This gave them superior tools, chariots, and weapons that they took advantage of until King David took the throne of Israel forty years after Samson's death. They worshiped the same gods of the other nations around Israel.

Samson was a Judge of Israel, yet the promise of love from the world easily fooled him. He ignored his parents when they tried to get him to date Jewish women. (Like some of you teenagers do when your parents want you to date only Christians). Samson was arrogant and self-willed. He convinced himself that he knew what he was doing. He toyed with the world and in the end it cost him. The pain and grief he suffered resulting from his refusal to listen to his parents or to God were devastating.

Does this mean that we are not to talk to those who do not know God? Are we to be rude and ignore them? No, never! It means that we cannot allow their ideas, desires or motives to influence us. We are not to turn to them for answers or fall under the influence of their philosophies.

## ***LIFE IN A BOX***

Without a strong relationship with God we get most of our security in acceptance from others, usually our peers. The affirmation or approval of one's self-worth, humanly speaking, has its roots in the opinions of others. The stronger one's need for affirmation, the more vulnerable one is to peer-pressure.

Peer-pressure has long been considered a malady affecting only teenagers. It is here, during adolescence, that we develop our values and self-concept. Teens are not, however, the only ones who fall victim to the pressure of the opinions and attitudes of their peers. Adults and children as well are living in the same world and the pressure is on everyone. It is important that we select peers who will pressure us into a desired lifestyle or behavior.



Many of our actions are the results of the attitudes or opinions of others. Most people spend their entire life "performing" for others who are their "audience." Some of those in the audience are fellow performers. Most of them are the vague multitude called "they" whose voice is a faint cry in our ear. Sadly, many people spend their whole lives trying to please this illusive crowd. They fail to take the necessary steps to secure a positive future for their families and themselves.

These misleading voices may express approval or disapproval. We gain our self-image from our audience. Someone said that our self-image is not what we think we are. It is not what others think we are. It is what we think others think we are. There is much truth in this. We cannot let these nameless voices dictate what and who we are. If you could see the whole picture, you would see that those voices calling you to be like them live in boxes, too. *"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (II Cor. 10:12).*

Most people base their decisions on what their friends think, what is popular in the movies, or what they think will look good and give them self-esteem. They do not understand that these same friends are trying to make the same choices and they are dealing with the same struggles. Most of them are trying to cope with parents who they believe do not understand them. They may have acne and at least three bad-hair-days a week. Many were dumped by the love-of-their-life. Their problems are much the same, it is where they go for answers that makes the difference.

You may be thinking about dating a girl that your parents will not approve of. You know without asking that they would object. Your friends tell you that you have the right to date anyone you want. Your teacher tells you that it is your life, you only live once, enjoy it.

Your best friend, Tom, openly dated a girl his father disapproved of and found out there were too many problems associated with it. He got grounded for two-weeks and lost the keys to his car. Now Tom has decided that instead of openly dating someone his parents' objects to that he would simply arrange to be somewhere and just happen to run in to her. Then he could "truthfully" say that they did not have a date. Tom thinks there will be a difference because his father does not know.

If you ask Tom you will probably get some poor advice. Either way, Tom is disobeying his parents and it will catch up with him. Tom's second choice, or his newest method of dealing with his parents, was no better than his first one and has not been tested or proven by time or by use. If you take his advice you may find that you are no better off than Tom.

The advice we get from godly sources has been proven time and time again. We can only look as far ahead as we are now, at present, and only as far back as we have been. But God sees the past, the present, and the future. He made heaven and earth and all that is and ever will be.

As we mature and grow, we know who we are in Christ. We begin to develop a positive attitude about ourselves and break open the box and release the locked up potential hidden inside. We can learn to refuse to go into any box made by others, while allowing God to mold us as He wants us to be.

10. Complete this sentence from the above paragraphs.

If you could see the whole picture, you would see that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. What does this mean? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. What makes us vulnerable to peer pressure? \_\_\_\_\_

We hear much today about self-image and self-worth; both are different. Self-image is a human opinion of us based on an inward search of self. It is introspective and unhealthy. Self-image places self at the center of the universe and everyone else must relate to that self. It is what we perceive others think of us by their reaction to us.

Self-worth is different. It is to know God as the center of the universe, finding and filling our place in His plan. Self-worth looks at the Word of God as the Image-Maker. It is performing for God and God alone. When we know our value in God's world, or our self-worth, we can relate to others without the question: "What will they think of me?"

With our self-worth intact we can be selective of whom our peers are, deciding if we will draw closer to God or move closer to the world. We become like those we associate with. Our closest associations will affect the outcome of our lives. The Psalms clearly tells us, "*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in these at of the scornful...For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish*" (Psalms 1:1,6).

13. Where do most people get their acceptance? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Where is the approval of self-worth rooted? \_\_\_\_\_

15. What is self-image? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Why is self-image unhealthy? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. What is self-worth? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Self-worth sees God's Word as what? \_\_\_\_\_

19. What is the difference in self-image and self-worth? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. Complete this sentence from the above paragraphs.

We become like \_\_\_\_\_.

Much of our success or failure with others depends on our understanding the different levels of relationships. When we do, we can then learn to deal with people according to the responsibility and privileges at each level.

A relationship is an association, either by family connected through blood, or a union through association such as friendship. This leads people to want to be in the other's company, while seeking to promote his happiness and prosperity. Josh McDowell explains the importance of friends in the lives of teenagers. He quotes others who tell us: "Friends are vitally important to teens. Friends are to them what bread is to the hungry and clothes to the naked." Friendship is developed with another person over time. We begin as acquaintances and gradually get to know more about each other. Some relationships will develop into intimate eternal friendships, while some will remain as acquaintances.

21. What affects our success or failure in relating to others? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

22. What is a relationship? \_\_\_\_\_

23. Why does Josh McDowell say that friends are to teens what bread is to the hungry?

\_\_\_\_\_

There are four different levels of relationships. Each level has its own separate characteristics. They also have their own accompanying responsibility. Throughout our lives we should always know people we will relate to at each of these levels.

#### ***FOUR LEVELS OF RELATIONSHIPS:***

A young soldier asked his commanding officer if he could go out between the trenches into "No Man's Land" in World War I. He wanted to bring in a friend who lay seriously wounded. "You can go," said the officer, "but it is not worth it. Your friend is probably dead, and you will throw your life away." But he went. Somehow he managed to get to his friend, hoist him onto his shoulder, and bring him back to the trench. The two of them tumbled in together and lay in the trench bottom. The officer looked very tenderly on the would-be rescuer, and said, "I told you it wouldn't be worth it. Your friend is dead and you're now dying yourself."

"It was worth it though, sir," he said.

"How do you mean, worth it? I tell you your friend is dead."

"Yes sir," the boy answered. "But it was worth it, because when I got to him, he was still alive. And he said to me, Jim, I knew you'd come."

Jesus said, "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*" (John 15:13). Real friendships, eternal, soul relationships, do not happen quickly, nor are they accidents. We build these relationships with care, time, understanding, and much patience. America has lost the art of developing real friendships. Christian relationships must go through several different stages or levels. Many people fail to have serious friendships because they lack a clear understanding of these levels. Each friendship level has certain distinguishing characteristics and responsibilities inherent within it. In this study we will discuss these levels of friendships and learn what their characteristics and responsibilities are.

#### ***LEVEL ONE: Acquaintances***

Every morning for years my husband bought gasoline at the same convenience store. The woman behind the counter recognized his car when he drove in. Because he was a regular customer, she knew that he would go directly to the coffeepot. She tried to keep a fresh pot brewing when she thought he might stop in. She knew that he was always good for a warm smile, a friendly joke, and a positive attitude. They liked each other very much. If asked, they would both tell you that they were friends. Yet, they were really only acquaintances. This is one level of friendship. Theirs was really no more of a relationship than that of a clerk to a customer.

All relationships must begin at this first level. This is the acquaintance level. Obviously, we must meet each other before we can move into a deeper relationship. This level bases friendship on occasional contacts. Most people we meet will never go beyond this level. This can include the checkout girl at the grocery store or the man who sells newspapers on the corner. It could be the bank employees, people you go to school with every day, or anyone with whom you have any interaction. Every level of relationships must go through this stage. You are only ready to go to the next level when you have attained success at this one.

At this first level you are free to ask general questions. These questions come from public knowledge. Questions are important to friendships. We would be wise to take time to design good questions ahead of time to use when we meet new people. By doing this, we gain a greater measure of self-confidence and we can listen more carefully to what the other person is saying. When you ask questions and then allow the other person to answer them, it shows him that your interest in him and his need is sincere.

There are four areas considered public knowledge around which you can design your questions. Public knowledge is simply information that you can find out anywhere because 'everyone' knows it. These four areas are: family, school or work, church, and interest (hobbies, sports, etc.).

#### QUESTIONS COULD INCLUDE:

##### FAMILY:

- \* How many brothers and sisters do you have?
- \* What number child are you in your family?
- \* What type of work does your spouse (father, parents) do?
- \* Have you lived in many different places?
- \* Do you know much about your family heritage?

##### SCHOOL OR WORK:

- \* What school do (did) you attend?
- \* What was (is) your major?
- \* Where do you work?
- \* Do you have to drive a long way to work?

**CHURCH:**

- \* What church do you attend?
- \* How long have you been a member of this church?
- \* Does your whole family belong to this church?

**INTEREST:**

- \* What sports do you enjoy?
- \* What are some of your hobbies?
- \* Do you play any musical instruments?
- \* To what organizations do you belong?

These are just a few sample questions that we consider public knowledge. When you ask questions, you do not want to sound like a child. Plan your questions and ask them at the right time. Some people are protective of their privacy. Be sensitive to the person you are talking to. If he withdraws, do not push. If you do, you will never get past this first level.

With the general questions there is another responsibility that accompanies the acquaintance level. We must view each acquaintance as a 'divine appointment.' A divine appointment involves two individuals God created and loves who meet each other with potential benefit to each other. We can be confident that God created and loves everyone we will meet. God has a purpose for the paths of His children crossing. You may never know why God had our paths to cross those of others. Though we can be sure, He had a reason.

God has a purpose for every human being born on this planet. He will not force anyone to serve Him. He will, however, lead us to do His will while we are here if we will follow and be obedient. Many times you will find yourself waiting in line in the grocery store, or standing at the gas pump with a complete stranger. God will often prompt you to speak to him or her. If we learn to be obedient to God and recognize opportunities He places in front of us we can become important instruments used by God to reach others. We never know whose path we will cross tomorrow, but we can know that God arranged it for a purpose.

24. *What does divine mean?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

25. *Why would we consider meeting other people as divine appointments?* \_\_\_\_\_

26. *Can you name three people in your life you would call a divine appointment?*

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

27. Explain why you would consider each a divine appointment.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

Other than those listed above think of three more questions you could ask a new acquaintance in each category and list them below.

28. FAMILY:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

29. SCHOOL OR WORK:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

30. CHURCH:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

31. INTEREST:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

We either build or destroy many friendships at the first meeting. This is because each person is aware of attitudes the other is projecting. We can project the attitude of Fear: "Will he accept me?" We also can project Selfishness: "How will I gain from this friendship?" Only when we project right attitudes will those that we meet be comfortable in our presence. Examples of right attitudes are: Worth: "He is important to God," Interest: "I want to learn from this friendship," and Acceptance: "I want to help him reach God's potential for his life." He may not discern what your real attitude is, but he will know whether it is a right one or a wrong one.

32. *Have you ever met anyone found yourself with any of the above attitudes?* \_\_\_\_\_

33. *Which ones?*

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

e. \_\_\_\_\_

f. \_\_\_\_\_

34. *How did each make you feel?*

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

e. \_\_\_\_\_

f. \_\_\_\_\_

To have the right attitudes toward everyone that you meet, have the following questions in the back of your mind:

- A) What are God's purposes in his life?  
What responsibilities and opportunities has God given to him?
- B) How far has he come?  
Has he done what he could have?
- C) What has hindered God? Bitterness, temporal values, or moral impurity?
- D) How can I help God?  
Can I picture achievement for him and help him?
- E) What can I learn from him?

35. What is the first level of relationships called? \_\_\_\_\_

36. Exactly what is an acquaintance? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

37. Where do you meet acquaintances? \_\_\_\_\_

38. How long do we stay acquaintances? \_\_\_\_\_

39. What is our responsibility to each acquaintance at this level? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SECOND LEVEL: Casual Friendship**

You are only ready to go to the second level of friendship after you find that you enjoy his company and have the right attitudes about him. The second level in our study is the casual friendship. It, too, has distinguishing characteristics. We base casual friendship on common interest, activities, and concerns. We find many such relationships in our churches, clubs, and at school. When you reach this level you are no longer passing acquaintances, but you now have something in common. You will have something you both can relate to. This is the level that you decide that you like someone enough to date him or her. After getting acquainted with a person you can ask general questions. You will know how open he is by his response. You will know whether you are free to go to the next level of friendship and ask more specific questions. These questions can include: opinions, ideas, wishes, and goals.

**QUESTIONS COULD INCLUDE:**

**FAMILY:**

*FRIENDS ARE FOREVER \ 14*

- \* What is your happiest childhood memory?
- \* What do you feel is the most important factor to having a happy family? (or marriage)
- \* Did your parents have any special wishes for your life?
- \* What were the childhood goals of your parents for their lives?
- \* How did your parents come to choose the name they gave you?

*FUTURE:*

- \* What are some goals you have for your life?
- \* What to you is most important in life?
- \* How did you happen to get interested in your present work? (if employed)
- \* If you could have one wish, what would it be?

*FAITH:*

- \* What do you think God's purpose was in making you?
- \* What were the events that led up to your becoming a Christian?  
(his answer may reveal the need to explain salvation to him)
- \* Have you ever dedicated your life to God's will?
- \* What do you see as a difficulty in living the Christian life?

As with the acquaintance level, the casual friendship level has certain responsibilities accompanying it. Besides the questions, you must learn to identify and encourage positive qualities. At this level of friendship you know enough about him to recognize some of these qualities in him.

Through your positive, uncondemning, loving example, you can help him develop those qualities necessary for success, at least as much as any casual friend will allow. Every negative trait is a positive quality misused. A person who is careless with money is misusing the quality of generosity. A person who is critical and judgmental is misusing the quality of discernment (See *DISCERNING POSITIVE QUALITIES THROUGH NEGATIVE TRAITS*, page 31).

This second stage can be difficult if we do not understand its responsibilities and privileges. Too many people carelessly move from this second level as casual friends to the privileges available only at the fourth level, intimate friendship. Today's schools teach children that they can move from this level into deeper physical contact with little or no harm. Children are encouraged to have "safe sex" from the sixth-grade through high school and beyond. Public education requires that all school children take sex education and AIDS education. Teachers who are steeped in, and deeply believe the philosophy that says, "if it feels good, do it," are teaching these classes.

When the seventh-grader asks her teacher when she can have sex with her boyfriend, the teacher tells her that it is all right if they have a meaningful relationship. This child interprets this as permission and plummets headfirst into a lifestyle that can and will destroy her.

How many seventh-graders understand what a meaningful relationship is? How many adults really do? We do not find the word meaningful in the dictionary. The closest we can get to a definition is the word meaning. It simply means, "That which exists in the mind, view, or contemplation as a settled aim or purpose; that which is meant or intended to be done." So, if you think one day you may marry, or if you both mutually agree that all you want is what you have now, then by all means, do it. As long as you both have strong feelings, then anything you want to do is fine. Mistakes at this level of relationships destroy or at least diminish the full potential of millions of young lives.

Other than those listed above think of three more questions you could ask a casual friend in each category and list them below.

40. FAMILY:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

41. FUTURE:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

42. FAITH:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

Before moving into the third level of friendships we must know each other well as casual friends. Sometimes you may genuinely like a person. You enjoy his company and you feel like there is potential for a strong, enduring friendship. You are willing to do what is necessary to encourage your friend and help him any way you can. Your friend, however, may not understand how important the relationship is to you.

Maybe he was never taught how to be a friend. It is important to learn the steps in proving a friend or a friendship before you invest more in someone than they warrant or deserve.

The first thing you must know is whether they listen to you or not. Many people are only quiet while you talk because they are planning what to say next. When you talk to your friend does he discuss your needs with you? Does he ask questions and draw out your feelings? Does he offer suggestions to encourage you to seek help from your family and from God? If he cuts you off in mid-sentence and tells you, "Awe, forget about it. Let's go do something fun," then maybe you need to ask yourself if he is a fun friend or a real friend.

All friendships must be proven. This is done a step at a time. Sometimes we make a friend, enjoy his company, and because we quickly feel close to him we reveal deep feelings to him. We tell him how we feel about certain people. We tell him secrets of our past that we thought we would never tell anyone. We have failed to prove him and find out how serious he is about the relationship.

Bill just moved into town. His parents joined the local First Church. James and Bill quickly liked each other. They spent time together in youth group and became fast friends. Bill had a slight limp from a motorcycle accident he was in two years before. It was only obvious when he walked long distances. James started teasing Bill in front of the other kids. At first it did not bother Bill, but after a while it started getting on his nerves. He talked to James and told him that his limp was something that he struggles with. He asked him to please not mention it in front of the others.

James laughed and told Bill he did not mean anything by it, he was only having fun. The next time they were in the youth group James teased Bill again. Bill knew then that James was not a serious friend. James cared little about Bills feelings. Bill knew that he would never go beyond a casual friendship with James. Bill and James remained friends, however, Bill did not open himself up to James any more than he could trust him.

43. *What does it mean to prove a friendship?* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

44. Have you ever had a friend hurt you who had never been proven? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

45. *What happened?* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**THIRD LEVEL: Close Friendship**

When you reach the third level of friendships, you will have established a close friendship. This level takes time to reach. Our culture wants to reach it much too quickly. You cannot be close friends in a few days or weeks. It takes months or even years. We build relationships at the close friendship level on trust and experience.

This level of friendship also has unique characteristics that distinguish it from the others. First, we base it on mutual life goals. Both people in the relationship must want the same end to have mutual life goals. These goals must be compatible, whether they are to serve Christ, preach the Gospel, or serve their employers as godly Christians. It does not mean that you both must feel the call to preach. It means that one cannot sell out to God while the other sells out to Satan. These are incompatible lifestyles. The end of each will be completely different, but predictable.

46. *What are mutual life goals?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

47. *What does compatible mean?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

48. *Why must life goals be compatible?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

49. *Paraphrase Amos 3:3* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

50. *What does this mean?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

51. *Paraphrase 2 Cor. 6:14* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When they reach this level in dating, both girls and boys struggle with questions of sexuality. What can we do now? How do we show love to each other without going too far and getting into trouble? Where do we draw the line as Christians? Is it wrong to pet each other? Help! The most important thing parents and teachers can do is to encourage teens to talk and allow them the freedom to shock us without condemnation. You can be sure that the moment you tell your teenager that you want to help him, he will test your sincerity by blurting out some outlandish problem he or a friend is struggling with. The more bizarre the better as far as he is concerned. He wants to know how serious you are. If your mouth drops open and you run to the phone and call the pastor, you blew it. He needs someone that he can talk to without fear of condemnation. He has plenty of that in his life already.

We must be honest with our teenager who is struggling with questions of teen sexuality. From the age of twelve, most of them have had some level of stimulation, if nothing but mental images created by the well-chosen words of a teacher. It is time for someone to start telling him the truth.

We live in a different world today than the simple life we knew in the sixties and seventies. The eighties propelled our children into a new dimension of thinking. Most large cities dispense condoms to their students. Some schools have abortion clinics on the premises while others have an affiliate close by. Girls are receiving abortions without the knowledge or consent of their parents. Schools in most suburbs must provide day-care for its high-school girls. It is becoming an epidemic. Now even middle schools are struggling with student pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.



Diseases, like AIDS, are not a concern to most children who do not see themselves as likely candidates for them. They foolishly move from relationship to relationship, and from bed to bed, believing that AIDS is something that only happens to other people. They have fallen for the lie of "safe-sex." Safe sex is a myth. There is absolutely no truth to it. A condom cannot protect anyone. It does not take much to tear them. Many women have become pregnant while using this useless good-luck-charm. Condoms have been proven to fail at least 15% of the time. They fail 36% of the time in young, unmarried minority women.

It is said that the virus that causes AIDS is so small that it can easily travel through the tiny microscopic holes in the rubber of a condom. Remember when you were small and you got a helium balloon? Remember how proud you were of it? You took it home and tied it to your bed so it would not

float away when you went to sleep. It was the last thing you saw before turning out the lights. What a surprise when you woke up the next morning and it was floating two-feet off the floor. The helium leaked out while you slept. Who would have thought that the balloon had so many holes in it? They make condoms from the same material as that balloon. If the balloon cannot hold simple gases how can a condom withstand the AIDS virus?

### **CHARACTER ACHIEVEMENT**

By the time you reach this third, close friendship level, you should be comfortable with each other most of the time and you have probably expressed your commitment as friends. One responsibility of the close friendship level is to picture achievement in each other's life. Also, we must discern and develop appropriate projects to gain this achievement. Here we have the freedom to suggest mutual projects toward reaching life goals. As close friends, we know each other well. Therefore, we can learn to picture character achievement for each other. This means simply, you help him set goals in developing the necessary character qualities to reach the potential God has for him. There are four important steps in this process.

#### ***1. Overcoming Fear of Failure***

Most people have some kind of fear of failure hidden deeply within their unconscious mind. This probably comes from childhood memories of embarrassing experiences or the fear of being rejected by someone special. Robert McGee tells us in *Search for Significance*, "Consciously or unconsciously, all of us have experienced the feeling that we must meet certain arbitrary standards to attain self-worth. Failure to do so threatens our security and significance. Such a threat, real or perceived, results in a fear of failure. At that point, we are accepting the false belief: *I must meet certain standards in order to feel good about myself.* When we believe this about ourselves, Satan's distortion of truth is often reflected in our attitudes and behavior."

He continues to explain the results of this false belief. He says that because of our unique personalities, we each react very differently to this deception. Some people develop perfectionism or an unwillingness to fail. They perceive any failure as a threat to their self-esteem. Fear of failure results in a number of negative attitudes and responses. Examples of these attitudes can include: avoiding risks, anger and resentment, anxiety and fear, pride, depression, low motivation, sexual dysfunction, and chemical dependency.

Whatever results stem from the fear of failure, we must help our friend overcome this useless inhibitor. We must help him prepare when he steps out to do something different. This could include the eighteen-year old facing adulthood, a new job, or a new school. It could be the middle-aged executive making a career change, or the senior citizen who faces the lonely years of retirement. Many situations cause us to dredge up those old hidden fears. We must encourage each other to trust God and move forward.

Once we learn to recognize and overcome this fear we have a greater measure of confidence and belief in what we can do and ourselves. We overcome fear of failure by finding out who we are in our relationship to God. Once we know Him and believe that He created us for a unique purpose we begin to have more confidence in what we say and do. Robert McGee explains, "If we base our self-worth on our ability to meet standards, we will try to compensate, either by avoiding risks or by trying to succeed no matter what the cost. Either way, failure looms as a constant enemy . . . Thankfully, God has a solution for the fear of failure? He has given us a secure self-worth totally apart from our ability to perform. We have been *justified*, placed in right standing before God through Christ's death on the cross, which paid for our sins."

52. *What is the fear of failure?* \_\_\_\_\_

53. *What can cause it?* \_\_\_\_\_

54. *How can you overcome it?* \_\_\_\_\_

## **2. Picture Vocational Direction**

Many people choose their vocation because of the influence of one or two individuals. Furthermore, there are times when God wants to change the direction of our lives. We must be alert to Him and help deepen each other's commitment to our vocation and ministries.

Our vocation has nothing to do with what we are, nor does it limit what we can do for God. Too often we think that what we do for a living is WHAT WE ARE. This has nothing to do with what we are. My husband tells people, "I am a minister of the Gospel, I earn an income in engineering." This is not to say, however, that you cannot minister in engineering. You can. You can touch people anywhere God places you to serve. You must become sensitive to the needs of others. Then God can use you anywhere.

One difficulty in having God's best for our lives is that it is usually opposite of those around us. It is easy to imitate others. Everyone is doing the same thing. God calls us to be different than the world. How can we offer them something they do not already have if we are just like them. This is where fear often attacks us. God's best can only be communicated by God. We can only recognize it as He reveals it to us. If God calls us to it He also will give us the power to achieve it. He does not expect us to do it ourselves. He will use His power to cause the changes that are beyond our capacities and abilities to appear as His power and His presence to those around us.

### ***3. Instill a Sense of Destiny***

An important job of a parent or friend is to instill a sense of value and responsibility for God's plan in the heart of others. God made each of us for a purpose. It is wise to encourage a sense of destiny in others. A remark made by John Wesley's mother did this for him when he lived through a fire. "Thou art a brand plucked from the burning. God must have some special purpose for you to perform."

By the time today's teenager is ready to consider his future he must overcome so much sin and filth from his past that he gets discouraged. When I look at a teenager I do not see what they are. I see what they can and will be if they will allow God to rule their lives.

Learn to help others become God's best by recognizing the good in them and encouraging them in it.



If you see a talent or a skill either lying dormant from lack of use, or because he has never discovered it, encourage him to use it. Talk about what he can do for God and those around him who are looking to him for leadership and help. It will not be long before you see him standing a little taller and walking a little straighter.

Our teenagers are the dooms-day-generation. All they have ever known is the bomb, inflation and recession, war, terrorism, AIDS, global warming, and all the other evils plaguing man. They have received little to give them hope and encouragement. Even Christian teenagers are not really sure that they are ready for Jesus to come back. They want to live, to love, to have a home, a job, and responsibility. We must help them

understand whether they have these things or not they have a destiny. They can serve God now, and that what they do now will affect them and others for eternity.

55. *What does it mean to instill a sense of destiny in a friend?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

56. *How can you encourage someone into reaching God's best for their own lives?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### ***4. Picture Character Achievement***

More important than picturing vocational direction is the ability to encourage character development. After we picture character achievement, we can design character projects to aid in their development. These projects must be practical, measurable, and achievable. We should design them to strengthen character qualities. Examples can be, challenge him to memorize Scripture, plan a trip to the Holy Land, schedule a track invasion to help him develop confidence in witnessing.

57. *List three things you could do to help your friend develop the depth of character he needs?*

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

#### ***FOURTH LEVEL: Intimate Friendship***

The fourth, and final level of friendship is intimate friendship. You can only reach this level by taking the necessary steps from acquaintances to casual friends. From casual friends you must become close friends who share common interest and goals. This is the level of "soul relationships." Married couples should always be at this level. Unfortunately, not all are here, but this is the goal for which we should strive. To be intimate you learn to share the personal side of yourself with another. This only comes through trust and learning to trust even when it hurts.

Jonathan and David are two friends who developed this level four relationship. They invested years into their relationship. The Bible describes their's as a soul relationship: *"And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul" (I Samuel 20:17)*. Even after Jonathan died, David continued to take care of Jonathan's family.

We all remember many times as children when we disappointed our parents and thought that they would hate us forever. We may have even wanted to run away from home because we feared their hate. Somehow, we made it through these times because the intimacy of real love was there. In our childhood, the love that kept the family together had nothing to do with sex. The pain and disappointments of these family relationships are similar to those we experience in marriage. Only an intimate love, not sexual fulfillment can survive a lifetime. Your family will love you all your life although only your spouse will ever know you sexually. An intimate relationship can lead to marriage and marriage leads to a sexual relationship. Sex is only sex without God's intimacy.



Intimacy has nothing to do with a sexual relationship. Never once did God tie a sexual relationship to friendship. He plainly declares it is only for marriage or it is sin. There is a reason for this. Sex outside of marriage can be devastating.

Physically, sexual outside marriage can destroy you. We are all familiar with sexually transmitted diseases and problems associated with them. In the late sixties and seventies we learned about syphilis and gonorrhea in health class. These were the most common sexually transmitted diseases, or STDs, known then. It was embarrassing to someone who developed symptoms of these diseases. He slipped out of town and went to a doctor no one knew. He told everyone that his penicillin was for a cold or sore throat. Most of us never even knew anyone who had either of these diseases.

Since then, sexually transmitted diseases have multiplied hundredfold. In the ten-years between 1981 and 1991 syphilis has increased 34% while gonorrhea increases one new case every 12 seconds. There are one-million new cases of pelvic inflammatory diseases annually with 50% of them transmitted through STDs. One-hundred-fifty-thousand women become infertile each year from STD related pelvic-infections. Research has linked seven cancers to STDs. In 1991 America spent nearly five billion dollars on STDs and

will spend an estimated ten billion by the year 2000. For every one who has become infected there is one to three who have been exposed.

Teen pregnancy is rising annually. One million girls under age 20 become pregnant each year, or one in ten girls. Forty-three-percent will become pregnant before age twenty. Seventy-two-percent of high school seniors and 40% of all fifteen-year-old girls are sexually active. And sixty-five-percent of teen births are unmarried.

One in five girls between the ages of 11-16 are sexually active, reports one anonymous survey taken by Pediatrics. Some of these girls were as young as eleven-years-old. Sixty-percent were between the ages of 13 and 14; almost half said they have had many different sex partners, up to ten in many cases (*Pediatrics*, 1992).

There are physical effects involved in teen sexuality other than sexually transmitted diseases and teen pregnancy. When we were children we heard a myth about a woman who had a box that contained all the evils of the world. It was to be a gift to her husband. When he opened it, all of the vile sins we now must fight were supposedly released into the world. Once they opened the box there was no way to put them back into it. The woman's name was Pandora.

Human sexuality is like Pandora's box. Once opened you cannot put everything back the same as it was. There are parts of the human body that God never intended for us to be aware of before we were mature enough to understand them. Unfortunately, today this is rarely the case. The younger you expose a child to the arousal of these organs and the urges created by them, the more difficulty he or she will have controlling the urges.

I once saw a two-year-old girl climbing onto the legs of some men who were sitting with us in a large circle of lawn chairs. She was a cute baby, but it was obvious the way she was moving up and down, rubbing the front of her diaper on their shinbones that someone had stimulated her sexual organs. Later her father admitted that he had been touching her when he bathed her. When a child has had sex, whatever his age, he has lost more than innocence; he lost the freedom of not having to fight frustrating urges and aching desires that he cannot understand or control.

58. *What is the fourth level of friendships and what is another name for it?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

59. *What two Bible characters had this kind of relationship?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

60. What are STDs? \_\_\_\_\_

61. What percent of babies are born to teen mothers out of wedlock each year? \_\_\_\_\_

62. Explain how teen sexuality is like Pandora's box? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now that we have looked at some of the physical damage of sex outside of marriage, let's see how it affects us spiritually. When a man and a woman have sex their spirits are opened. God gives only one relationship in the Bible where both parties are required to leave their parents, cleave together, and become one. This is the marriage relationship, which includes sex. The becoming one is part of the sexual relationship. This is a spiritual oneness. One spirit. Paul said *"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh"* (Cor. 6:15,16).

During the sexual experience both the man and the woman are focused on each other. They direct their minds, their will, and their emotions toward the conclusion: the moment of climax when both will experience total release. As they both center their desires toward each other the conscious minds give over to the ecstasy of the moment, their spirits are opened and they become united as one. Any satanic influences possessed by one will be transferred to the other through this opened spiritual channel. Every sin, every sexual partner, every disease, everything each has done will fasten onto the other's spirit like a ball and chain. It will bind their spirits and limit what they may be able to do for God later.

When you have sex with someone you do not know well you are opening your spirit up to all kinds of problems. When you later find the person who God has for you to marry, you will have serious problems in your sexual relationship after marriage. Flashbacks are very common. A flashback is when you are in the middle of intercourse and you suddenly have scenes of your past flash across your mind. These flashbacks are seriously distracting and make the oneness of spirit in marriage a difficulty that both partners must work together and struggle to overcome. Often Biblical counseling is necessary to have total freedom.

There must be a first time for a person to have sex: whether it is two people who love each other and have planned the moment after a long engagement; whether it was the experience of rape or abuse; or whether it is two sixteen-year-olds in the back seat of one of their dad's car. Regardless what the

circumstances are surrounding this important event, it is the most important time in his life. The first time is the one that sets the standard, the expectations, and the attitude about sex for all future sexual encounters. It is the one time that teaches the individual and affects his view about sex for the rest of his life. Many couples must seek outside help when there have been many sexual encounters or sexual partners before marriage.

63. What does God mean when He tells the man and woman to cleave together and become one? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

64. What is oneness of spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

65. What happens to the other when one partner has unresolved sin in his or her life? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

66. What is a flashback? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

67. What causes them? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Love is such a vague concept today that the average person has no idea exactly what it is. We can discuss the definition here, but it will not help us much. Defined, it is simply a strong affection. The point I want to make clear is that *LOVE IS NOT SEX*. It is almost silly to feel compelled to say this so strongly, however, many people confuse the two.

When a boy you have dated a few times tells you that he loves you, you tingle all over. You get goose bumps on your goose bumps. Now he is ready. He has made his commitment. He told you what you wanted to hear. It's time. Now he wants you to show him how much you really love him. He gently caresses you as he says, "If you love me you will prove it." That is one of the oldest, lines hell ever produced. Tragically, millions of girls are deceived by it. Real love has absolutely nothing to do with sex.

Christian teenagers often question how far they can go to express their feelings for the one that they are dating. God made the genders different in several ways. My book, *Family Relationships That Work*, covers several of these extensively. Right now I want to mention briefly the difference in the way each are stimulated or sexually turned-on.

What he sees with his eyes excites a man. He can see the filmy outline of a woman through her blouse and get an immediate reaction. When a woman or a girl brushes against his leg, or her breast skims his body it suddenly arouses his senses. This is why a girl must dress appropriately when she goes on a date. If she really likes a guy, she will want to do what is best for him too. This means she will not tease him and touch him in a provocative manner.

Today, almost everywhere we go, we hear women and girls make lustful comments about men's bodies. This is unnatural. It is a trained response in women, financed by Hollywood and those who gain from the collapse of the family. The excitement women are experiencing when they see a man is part of our cultural programming. It is done to bring out the basic animal instincts dormant within all of us.

Romance is what stimulates a woman. She needs to feel that she is important to her man. I once read a book called *Sex Begins in the Kitchen*. I do not remember who wrote it, but it hit the nail on the head. It is the little things that a man does for a woman that affects her. Try opening her car door when she gets in the car and see how she responds. Most women still like their chair pulled out for them. The movies have it wrong. Women want to be treated like a lady. Once she has been romanced she is moved by being touched, but only after she is convinced that you believe she is special.

If a boy puts pressure on you to do things that you are not comfortable with, he is only seeking his own satisfaction. This has absolutely nothing to do with love. If he really has any serious feelings for you he will consider how his actions will affect you later.

You can show each other your feelings without getting into heavy petting. There is nothing wrong with kissing under the right circumstance. Holding hands and putting your arm around each other are fine if they are done in a healthy, respectful way. It becomes wrong when you start slipping your hands under clothing, or when you place your hand on each other's thighs, knowing down inside that it could lead to more. Girls, if you lean across him with the secret motive of "turning him on," you have reached a line you may not can come back across. If you really care about each other you should both be responsible to protect each other.

You know when you are moving into a potentially dangerous direction. You can deceive yourselves if you want to, but you know, before you have done it. You should both be responsible. If you ever here the words, "If you love me you will," or, "Let me show you how much I love you," run, do not walk. Boys, girls use these lines, too. Do not let Satan fool you into throwing away the full potential God has for your life.

68. Why is important to protect each other when two Christian teens are dating? \_\_\_\_\_

69. *What stimulates a woman?* \_\_\_\_\_

70. *Where does showing affection for each other begin to go too far?* \_\_\_\_\_

---

We base intimate friendship on commitment to each other's character development. This includes the freedom to correct each other. We can only do this if we have the close bonds required by intimacy. This is the only level that allows for the gratification of our sexual desires, and then, only through marriage. Too often, people go to this level as casual friends. This is dangerous. Not only is it unsafe and spiritually destructive, it also destroys the relationship before it has a chance to grow into anything healthy.

When you break the barriers between friendship levels too soon, you have broken a trust. Once the trust has been broken it is difficult to replace. Nineteen-year old Rick had just begun his preaching ministry. He loved God and looked forward to becoming a pastor someday. While at a church picnic, Rick met pretty, seventeen-year-old, Faye. She was visiting with her cousin Sarah. Rick and Faye really liked each other. She was so small and fragile, someone that Rick could see himself taking care of. Faye thought Rick was wonderful: so godly, so gentle, so strong, and so kind. They arranged to go out the following Friday night. Rick was the perfect gentleman. After a month of dating, he bought her a promise ring. It was beautiful. It had a tiny diamond chip. This was it! She was his!

The next Saturday Rick went to Faye's house. Her parents were out of town. They knew better, but after all, they were almost engaged weren't they? Five weeks after they met, they went from casual friends to intimate friends at level four. Once they broke the barriers in their minds, there was no protection.

Three days later Faye mailed Rick's promise ring back. She could not face him. In breaking the trust, each had lost respect for the other. Rick blamed Faye because she gave in and Faye felt if Rick had really loved her, he would have waited. This is common even in our sexually active culture. The cultural rules may change, but the inherent nature God gave man will not. When you do wrong, your heart will tell you.

71. *Complete this sentence from the above paragraphs.*

*When you break the barriers between friendship levels too soon,* \_\_\_\_\_

---

72. *What does this mean?* \_\_\_\_\_

---

73. What were Rick and Faye's first mistake? \_\_\_\_\_

---

74. Why did Rick and Faye break-up after they had sex? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Linda and Missy met in first period English. They found that they had a lot in common. They both like to sing, to draw, and to play volleyball. They had several classes together, and they both like the same music, television shows, and actors. This new found friendship excited them. Each afternoon they rushed home to get their homework done so they would have time to either talk on the phone or go to each other's house. They were together every weekend.

Missy was having a problem at home. She did not know how to talk to her parents and there were several times she had gotten in trouble that they were not aware of. She wanted them to know, she just did not know how to tell them. Without thinking about the consequences and without warning Missy, Linda tried to help. Unfortunately, she did not know either Missy or her parents well enough to interfere, but she did. She told Missy's parents not only the things Missy had done, she also told them how Missy was feeling about certain family situations.

Missy's parents were furious. They grounded her and the wall that had been between them grew into a fortress. Linda meant well, she just did not have enough information to really help her friend. She went from somewhere between level two and three, to level four before their relationship had matured to that point. Anytime you skip a level in your relationships you invite trouble.

You do not always have to know what level you are in, in your relationships. But, you must understand that you cannot go too fast. If you do, you will regret it. Many Christians become disillusioned and bitter because they trusted someone they did not know well, or whose friendship had not been proven. We need to make one point in any discussion of relationships. The art of developing healthy relationships is not always in knowing how to develop relationships with others. Often it is as important to know how to detect and end unhealthy friendships. When you find, after meeting someone, that they are pulling you away from God, you might consider



what kind of influence this person has over you. No friend is worth losing God for. If you are honest with yourself and God, you will recognize harmful, dangerous relationships and avoid them.

If God's will is important in our lives we will sharpen our awareness of how different relationships with others are effecting those we love and us. A friend of mine had a sixteen-year-old son, Mark, who learned this the hard way. Fortunately, he was finally able to realize what was happening to him before it destroyed his life and ministry potential. A week before youth camp Mark's church had a lock-in with about forty teenagers. There were several older girls there that nobody really knew very well. They knew some of the local church's young people. One of these girls, Debbie, was wild. She was two years older than Mark. She decided that she wanted to date him and started putting on the moves. She went to youth camp with them the following week and they got too close, too fast.

Debbie really wanted to be a good Christian. She wanted God in her life, she had just not developed the character yet to combat her loosened drives. Having been in some heavy relationships in her past, she was not ready to settle down just yet. She struggled with her search for God in her life. By this time Mark had made some very important choices in his relationship with God and he knew that he would go into the ministry.

When he met Debbie, however, he forgot all about many commitments, including the ministry. All he cared about was going off with her and having fun. He knew she was wrong for him. However, at sixteen it is easy to let your hormones do your thinking for you. He made some choices that could have been very destructive. God was merciful and helped him to see what was happening in his life. He dated Debbie for just a few weeks, but it was an important lesson he had to learn.

Today Mark is almost eighteen and has already answered God's call to the ministry. God has someone for him when the time is right, and he is waiting for her. One lesson he learned was that associating with the wrong people could cause serious harm to your spirit. This is especially true if it is someone who has a strong influence over you. Even Christians can fall into this trap. The Bible promises, "*Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee . . . To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words, which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.*" (Prov 2:11, 16-17).

75. What is another important thing to know in developing relationships with others? \_\_\_\_\_

---

76. Complete the following sentence from the above paragraphs.

If God's will is important in our lives we will sharpen our \_\_\_\_\_

77. What does this mean and how can we do it? \_\_\_\_\_

DISCERNING POSITIVE QUALITIES THROUGH NEGATIVE TRAITS

<b>POSITIVE QUALITIES</b>	<b>POSITIVE QUALITIES MISUSED (NEGATIVE TRAITS)</b>
1. ALERTNESS	Jumpiness; quick criticism; presumptuous inquisitiveness
2. AMIABILITY	Gullible; status-seeking; socially preoccupied; spineless
3. ANALYTICAL	Pickaxes; fussiness; pettiness; over-attention to detail
4. ASPIRATION	Selfish competition; vain ambition; scheming
5. COMPASSION	Gushy sentimentalism; undiscerning empathy; taking up offenses
7. COOPERATIVENESS	Compromising; conniving; lacking initiative
8. COURAGE	Recklessness; brashness; brazenness
9. COURTESY	Self-consciousness; social stiffness; superficial flattery
10. CREATIVITY	Mischievous; crafty; day-dreaming; devious
11. DECISIVENESS	Inflexibility; ruthlessness; dominance
12. DILIGENCE	Slavishness; one-tracked mindedness; selfishly industrious
13. DISCERNMENT	Snoopiness; judgmental; critical; fault-finding
14. DISCIPLINE	Rigidness; harshness; overbearing; tyrannical
15. DISCRETION	Over-cautiousness; secretiveness; timidness; undue carefulness
16. EARNESTNESS	Nervous meticulousness; over-conscientiousness; over-seriousness
17. EFFICIENCY	Perfectionism; fussiness; rigidness; impatience

18. ENTHUSIASM	Fanatical; over-bearing; over-wrought; aggressive
19. EXPRESSIVENESS	Wordy; glib; vociferous; melodramatic
20. FAIRMINDEDNESS	Indecisive; indiscriminate; undiscerning
21. FLEXIBILITY	Wishy-washiness; indecisiveness; spinelessness
22. FORGIVENESS	Irresponsible leniency; permissiveness; irresponsibility; weakness
23. FRANKNESS	Tactless; insensitive; undiplomatic; disrespectful
24. FRUGALITY	Stingy; miserly; penny-pinching
25. GENEROSITY	Extravagance; spend-thriftiness; wastefulness; squandering
26. GRATEFULNESS	Flattery; gushiness; extravagant generosity
27. HONESTY	Outspokenness; bluntness; brutality; indiscretion
28. HOSPITALITY	Ingratiating; social climbing; cliquish
29. HUMILITY	Self-abasement; extreme self-criticism; lack of self-confidence
30. LOYALTY	Possessiveness; idol worship; blind obedience; undue attachment
31. NEATNESS	Perfectionism; over meticulousness; intolerance; stiffness
32. OBJECTIVITY	Insensitivity; cold calculation; unloving
33. PATIENCE	Indifferent; permissive; disinterested
34. PERSISTENCE	Stubbornness; inflexibility; self-willed; headstrong
35. PERSUASIVENESS	Smooth talking; high pressure tactics; pushiness
36. PUNCTUALITY	Intolerance; impatience with tardiness
37. PURPOSEFULNESS	Single-mindedness; intolerance; inflexibility
38. RESPECTFULNESS	Idol worship; debilitating subservience
39. RESOLUTENESS	Hardheadedness; closed mindedness; stubbornness
40. RESOURCEFULNESS	Over-independence; manipulating; scheming calculation
41. SENSITIVITY	Touchiness; easily offended; emotional
42. SINCERITY	Gullibility; over seriousness; impulsiveness