



*"I couldn't be more grateful for
Scott's voice on this topic."*

MATT CHANDLER

foreword by **ANN VOSKAMP**

befriend

**create belonging in an age of
judgment, isolation, and fear**

Scott Sauls

author of **JESUS OUTSIDE THE LINES**

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT *BEFRIEND*

Books like *Befriend* have me hopeful that God's people are going to rise to the occasion of our moment in history with God's goodness and grace. I pray that as you read through each of these chapters, you might add more serious and diverse friendships to enrich and expand your view of what God is up to in our day. I couldn't be more grateful for Scott's voice on this topic.

MATT CHANDLER

Pastor of The Village Church, author of *The Explicit Gospel*, and coauthor of *The Mingling of Souls*

Scott Sauls is a pastor even through his writing. He doesn't preach; he cares for souls and gently reminds us of a better way, of the tension and beauty of following Jesus. Jesus was and is a friend. Scott not only writes masterfully about that but lives like Jesus in this way.

JENNIE ALLEN

Founder/visionary of IF:Gathering and author of *Anything* and *Restless*

In this accessible book, Scott Sauls looks at virtually the entirety of the Christian life through the prism of friendship, and that's a well-grounded project theologically. When the gospel makes God our friend rather than our enemy, and we are also reconciled to ourselves—both our sin and our identity in Jesus, our friend—then we move out into the world in a new way. As Scott so ably shows us, Christian practice is to a great degree an exercise in friendship. This is a helpful, practical, and rich encouragement to bring all of our life in line with the gospel.

TIMOTHY KELLER

Senior pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City

In *Befriend*, Scott Sauls provides *real* rescue from loneliness by highlighting what it means to be in real relationship and exposing the difference between “friending” and “befriending.” In a

world full of “likes,” Scott points us back to *love*. There could not be a better time for a book such as this one.

ELISABETH HASSELBECK

Talk show host, wife and mother, and author of *The G-Free Diet*

It feels ironic that in an age when connectivity is on the rise, so is loneliness. Friendships, real friendships, aren't always easy, but they are always important. I'm glad that Scott has taken such an honest look at something we all need more of. And because he's my friend, he forgave me for ending that last sentence with a preposition and beginning this one with *and*.

JON ACUFF

New York Times bestselling author of *Do Over*

Simply stated, this book is important. For the kind of humans we want to be in the world in which we are living, *Befriend* is what we need to read and use as a guidebook as we work hard to love our neighbors well. Wanting to be culture shapers requires effort and focus, and Scott pastors us all toward that end in this and all of his writings. I'm grateful for his voice in my life and in our culture.

ANNIE DOWNS

Bestselling author of *Looking for Lovely* and *Let's All Be Brave*

One of the major problems facing people today is loneliness. Friendships are hard to form and even harder to maintain. Isolation and superficiality are easier but deaden the soul. Respected pastor Scott Sauls here presents a Christian vision of deep friendship. This book is wise, biblical, and practical. It could help change your life.

RUSSELL MOORE

President, Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

Today's Christians have a reputation for shaking our fists at our culture rather than shining a light within it. What if instead we led with 1 Corinthians 13 love, risking relationships with those we might otherwise avoid—locally and across the globe? That's what Scott Sauls challenges us to do in *Befriend*. This timely

book is a guide for you and me to address relationship barriers we may not even be aware of and courageously engage heart-first in our world, drawing closer to Jesus as we do.

RICH STEARNS

President/CEO of World Vision

We Christians know that love is the “greatest of these,” yet we struggle to live out that love alongside other loved sinners. In this highly readable and timely book, pastor Scott Sauls draws on Scripture, pop culture, and his own life to illuminate the various and often unlikely people we are called to love. I hope and pray that this book will give more of us a deeper knowledge of our own belovedness in Christ, a knowledge that can set us free to love others well and with abandon.

KATELYN BEATY

Print managing editor, *Christianity Today* magazine,
and author of *A Woman's Place*

When I turned forty, I made myself a promise—to throw myself into a resource I had long neglected while frantically climbing Mount Significance—people and friendships. While I've made significant headway, my only regrets are that I didn't do this sooner, and that I didn't have my friend Scott Sauls' book *Befriend* as a treasure trove to guide me on the journey. *Befriend* is a book I will return to time and again . . . with friends, to both learn and be inspired in experiencing both the deepest longing and greatest challenge of my heart—true friendship.

BRYAN LORITTS

Lead pastor of Abundant Life Church and author of *Saving the Saved*

Scott teaches us about befriending others by showing us how graciously Jesus has first befriended us. *Befriend* is both wise and earthy, relevant and practical. But most of all, as Scott reveals his own need for Jesus, amid the very real questions of our generation, we too see our own need and our own questions. This leaves all of us looking to Jesus. Thank you, Scott.

ZACK ESWINE

Pastor of Riverside Church and author of *The Imperfect Pastor*

As Scott Sauls says in *Befriend*, “Real friendship happens when we move *toward* the people we are most tempted to avoid.” Sauls challenges us to break free of those things that hinder us from befriending others, not by our own strength and might, but by the power of God through love. If God so loved the world, shouldn’t we? *Befriend* helps us embrace this awesome calling and moves us one step closer to one another.

TRILLIA NEWBELL

Author of *Enjoy* (forthcoming 2017), *Fear and Faith*, and *United*

In an age of isolation, loneliness, and social fragmentation, there is a tremendous opportunity for the church to offer what Jesus offers: deep community to those who need it, namely all of humanity. With disarming candor and gritty realism, Scott Sauls demonstrates how to apply the gospel to befriend a wide range of broken image bearers . . . a group that includes you and me. A life-giving read for such a time as this.

BRIAN FIKKERT

Coauthor of *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself*

In a world of superficial acquaintances, Scott Sauls casts a compelling vision of a better way. In *Befriend*, he insightfully diagnoses what’s missing in our relationships and prescribes a practical and hopeful way forward. This book will challenge your assumptions of what friendships are with a fresh view of what they could be. Read this book with caution; it will move, convict, and stretch you to experience the kind of friendships God intended.

DARREN WHITEHEAD

Pastor, Church of the City, Nashville, and author of *Rumors of God*

Scott Sauls is the real deal! Honest, vulnerable, funny . . . In *Befriend* he teaches us how to lose control in order to find a better way—a way full of freedom, joy, intimate community, safe harbor, and warm hospitality for those who often live on the margins of the church and society by no fault of their own—the Way of Jesus. I hope you’ll read the book and take it to heart!

JEREMY COURTNEY

CEO and president of Preemptive Love Coalition

Befriend is a book about the everyday work of being a neighbor. It is as practical as it is pastoral, inviting us to bridge indifference, suspicion, even hostility to love the world God so loved. Scott Sauls writes with refreshing humility and biblical wisdom: his is a voice to trust.

JEN POLLOCK MICHEL

Award-winning author of *Teach Us to Want* and *Keeping Place*

Befriend is a practical, winsome, and engaging book that explores the complexities of friendship in ways that are bound to make you uncomfortable and to inspire you to look at your friends anew. Grounded in theology and personal experience, Scott Sauls's book is a great daily devotional, small group study, or personal study on friendship and the gospel.

ALAN NOBLE

Editor in chief of *Christ and Pop Culture* and assistant professor of English, Oklahoma Baptist University

I've never seen Scott Sauls back down from a difficult topic. And I've never seen him miss an opportunity to make much of God's grace abounding in Jesus. In our age of judgment, isolation, and fear Scott shows us what a friend we have in Jesus.

COLLIN HANSEN

Editorial director of The Gospel Coalition and author of *Blind Spots: Becoming a Courageous, Compassionate, and Commissioned Church*

Befriend calls us to something beautiful, something important, something better. In an age where engaging, complex relationships are so easily passed over for effortless, superficial counterfeits, Scott Sauls calls us from the shadows of pretending into the light of real friendship. Anyone who has ever felt even the slightest emotional reaction to how they fare in the world of social media will find in this book a reasoned path to the truth about who we are and how we were made to relate to one another. I am so thankful for my friend Scott Sauls's wisdom, courage, and voice.

RUSS RAMSEY

Pastor, author of *Behold the King of Glory*, and content editor for *She/He Reads Truth*

I simply wasn't prepared for the power, impact, and deeply convicting thoughts included in *Befriend* by Scott Sauls. But the reality is that many of the most convicting words were spoken by Jesus before they were repeated by Scott. The scandalous and profound truth is that not only did Jesus speak these words, he lived them. This is where *Befriend* shines the focused spotlight. Steadfast in truth, agile in love. Like I said, I wasn't prepared, but I am propelled by what happened in my soul through this beautiful work of words.

DAN WOLGEMUTH

President/CEO of Youth for Christ USA

I'll be honest. This book scares me. Jesus said the heart of our life with God and others is relationship, but so many of us—me included—rarely come close to plumbing the depths of what true relationship is. Real love is terrifying. True intimacy makes you so . . . vulnerable. And selflessness is a kind of dying. In *Befriend*, Scott Sauls takes us on an emotional, honest, and at times raw journey we all need to take.

CAREY NIEUWHOF

Host of the *Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast*, author,
and founding pastor of Connexus Church

In an increasingly fractious age in which we reduce each other to soundbites, demographics, and stereotypes, burying ourselves deeper in social media silos with those who think like us, Scott Sauls gently and prophetically reminds us of the power of befriending those who are different, reminding of Jesus' habit of seeing the image of God in the "other." This is an urgent and healing book.

MARK SAYERS

Senior pastor of Red Church in Melbourne, Australia,
and author of *Facing Leviathan* and *Disappearing Church*

How can we begin to heal the wounds of division that plague our polarized society? It won't happen with another think piece or hot-take blog rant. No amount of tweeting or texting will solve it. It will only happen in the context of real, flesh-and-blood

relationships. This is why Scott Sauls's simple yet profound book *Befriend* is so valuable and timely. From a variety of angles and with a wide array of stories and examples, Sauls cuts through the partisan clutter and makes a compelling case for friendship as a way to break the stalemate.

BRETT MCCRACKEN

Author of *Hipster Christianity* and *Gray Matters*

Scott Sauls understands a vital truth and writes about it with refreshingly accessible but persistently gracious challenge: the gospel comes alive for us more through the risk of relationships than through assent to theological precepts and moral teachings. Making ourselves vulnerably present to others in genuine friendship is God's way of taking on flesh and blood among us. After all, this was the way of Jesus. In today's cultural environment tenuously held together by thin lines of social connection, *Befriend* offers faithful encouragement and wisdom on the importance of genuine friendship, thankfully perhaps not yet a lost calling for the church.

THE REV. R. LEIGH SPRUILL

Rector, St. George's Church, Nashville, Tennessee

Christ's people must avoid two sacrifices: love on the altar of truth, and truth on the altar of love. Scott Sauls's voice is a refreshing alternative to the bombast that fills our airwaves and, sadly, many of our pulpits. With keen insight and elegant prose, Scott shows us how to engage our world in a winsome yet subversive manner.

MATT SMETHURST

Managing editor of The Gospel Coalition

We live in the most connected generation in history, and yet we may be the most disconnected generation in history. My friend Scott Sauls calls Christians to something deeper, to be intentional about friendship in a way that is a catalyst for change. This is the kind of soul-level relationship Jesus calls us to, one of risk and sacrifice. If Christians read and apply what Sauls

is saying, they will become life-giving agents of grace in their communities.

DANIEL DARLING

VP of Communications for the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, author of *The Original Jesus*

In a culture that's become more fragmented and lonely, Scott provides what many of us are longing for . . . a roadmap to deep, life-giving relationships. The journey to *Befriend* will surprise us and challenge many of our assumptions, but it's exactly what we all need.

DAVID SPICKARD

President and CEO of Jobs for Life

Nothing encapsulates the understanding of Jesus and the intentional living of those who follow him more than the words *love* and *belonging*. In *Befriend* Scott Sauls gives us the courage to embrace the “us” into belonging, a belonging that echoes in the depths of true friendship. *Befriend* is an anatomy of friendship; one that leads to love, one that leads to life.

GREG FROMHOLZ

Documentary and video director, founder of Rubicon Ireland, and author of *Broken: Restoring Trust between the Sacred and the Secular*

befriend

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an age of judgment,
isolation, and fear**

Scott Sauls



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FOREWORD BY ANN VOSKAMP

WHEN WE MOVED UP HERE to this neck of the woods and settled in on our farm, there was an old farmer who lived to the west of us and his older brother who lived to the east, and this is what we were told:

The old farmer worried that his older brother felt the ache of aloneness when he woke up in his empty house down by Johnson's Corner, so the farmer made sure one of his kids always dropped off a bucket of milk every night and left it there by his brother's front door. Said his herd of cows produced enough milk, so he wanted his brother to swallow down and taste it, that this was a place flowing with the milk and honey of kindness and that none of us are ever alone.

Turned out, though, that the older brother was mighty concerned that the farmer didn't have enough to offer around the table for his posse of kids, so the older brother made it a habit to head up after nightfall and leave a couple dozen eggs at the old farmer's door—washed eggs of shades of white and paling green and earthy brown. Said his flock of hens produced enough eggs, so he wanted his brother to know that all needs are tucked underneath an attentive wing of provision and that none of us are ever alone.

Then one night in early spring, so the story goes, right after the song of the frogs had returned to the marsh at the back of Mr. Knapp's farm and the whole dark world was being serenaded by a rising, croaking glory, it happened that the old farmer himself headed east with a bucket of milk and the older brother was heading west with a crate of eggs, and somewhere south of the bridge that crosses the Maitland River, the two brothers ran right into each other. Came

FOREWORD

face-to-face with each other in the shadows. Recognized the other simply by how similar the other's face looked to his own.

In the bluing light, the two sat down on the warm earth and listened to the symphony of frog songs and the slow opening of each other's lives. "It is best to be with those in time that we hope to be with in eternity" (Thomas Fuller).

It is best to befriend those now who we hope to be his friend for all eternity.

It is best to consider anyone a friend who drives us closer to God.

The story goes that when the sun crept up over the horizon, it found the two brothers face-to-face there where McNaught Line meets Creamery Road, found them sitting at the crossroads.

The truest Story never stops telling us:

Wherever our roads cross with others' roads, we can experience the power of the Cross.

Wherever our roads cross with others' roads, the Cross can be lifted high and lift us both up and into him.

Wherever our roads cross, the Cross can make even us friends.

I don't know if there is anyone better qualified to write this book than Scott Sauls, because I don't know a man who better incarnates the crucified Christ to everyone he meets. Scott is the very rare man who befriends everyone he meets because he walks with Christ as his friend, carries Christ's cross as his friend, extends Christ's grace and truth as the relief of friendship. Because Scott Sauls lives as a man who knows that when his path crosses anyone's, the presence of the Cross can change everything.

When my husband and I have questions that are wrestling us down, Scott is the friend we turn to. When we need a prayer warrior in the middle of the night, Scott is the friend we turn to. When we need a fellow pilgrim's hand, a redeemed saint's mind, and a pastor's heart, Scott is the friend we turn to. In the midst of a family crisis, during seasons of desperately seeking clarity, and on uphill roads through long hard nights, Scott has faithfully, time and time again, befriended our family with deeply insightful wisdom, glasses-of-cold-water refreshment and encouragement, and an extraordinarily

BEFRIEND

humble and vulnerable heart that beats like Jesus, the one who calls even us friend.

Scott can write this book, one direly needed in these times, because he is a man, a father, a thought-leader, a pastor, a cultural voice, a friend direly needed for these times.

The tone of our world wounds us in a thousand ways.

The discourse of our world attempts to continuously throw us off course.

Our exchanges with one another desperately need to change—because we all are exhausted with the ache of aloneness.

And the electrifying book Scott is offering us at this crossroads has the uncommon power to completely change the dial and frequency of our personal exchanges with culture and our world—by changing the frequency of how we communicate like Christ.

In an age of isolation, judgement, and fear, these enlightening, fresh words offer the profound hope of ushering in more of a Kingdom age—an age of belonging by grace, through self-giving love, in the power of Christ.

That old farmer and his older brother—they could have missed each other in the middle of their dark nights. They could have missed meeting each other's aloneness, they could have missed meeting and caring for each other's unspoken brokenness, they could have missed letting their meeting be a holy place of rising up in the power of the Cross.

Do not miss the truly life-changing power of the words in your hands, words that echo the Word. Whoever's path you cross is meant to be transformed by the power of Cross.

So turn these rare pages with C. S. Lewis right there at your ear: "Friendship is not a reward for our discrimination and good taste in finding one another out. It is the instrument by which God reveals to each the beauties of all the others."

Who knows who you may meet along your own shadowed roads, whose face may remind you of yours and his, who you may turn to in your aloneness and smile at the unexpected relief of "friend."

Chapter One

A CASE FOR BEFRIENDING

REAL FRIENDSHIP IS HARD.

There are other, less real versions of friendship. The less real versions are “less” because they are less costly, less committed, less disruptive, less scary, less gritty, less gutsy, and less out-of-our-control than *real* friendship. But here’s the rub:

Less real versions of friendship are also *less rich*. In the short run, they feel better and smoother than real friendship. But in the long run, they leave us lonely and alone. And it is not good to be alone.¹

Less real versions of friendship take several forms.

Digital Friendship

In today’s world of social media, relating to others through screens has become a chief way—and for some of us, *the* chief way—to seek connection. For example, it is not uncommon for a group of teenagers to be in the same room together as they “chat” through text messaging and social media without having a single face-to-face conversation with each other. On social

media, we “friend,” “like,” and “follow” each other, sometimes without ever actually meeting each other. As a weekly blogger, I have what is called an online “community,” but it falls short of being a *true* community because self-disclosure flows in only one direction: from my keyboard to other people’s screens.

There are many positive aspects to digital friendship. But by itself, digital friendship fails as a substitute for true friendship. Unlike true friendship, relating to others through screens makes it easy for us to hide. It allows us to put forth only the best, most attractive, most “together,” edited, and screened version of ourselves. When digital friendships become the main way we relate to others, a subtle but significant shift happens. Instead of entering the messiness of having real friends, we settle for having (and being) followers and fans. The chief drawback is that we never really get to know people, and they never really get to know us. Our digital friends are experiencing part of us but not all of us. When online relationships take priority over real friendship, the result is usually more loneliness and isolation, not less.

Transactional Friendship

My friend and mentor of ten years, Tim Keller, describes another less-than-real form of friendship: transactional friendship. Real friends see each other as long-term companions and give to each other the rare gift of long-term loyalty. Instead of using each other, they serve each other. Instead of keeping score with each other, they support, champion, encourage, serve, forgive, and strengthen each other. In real friendship, the flourishing of other people takes priority over our own goals and ambitions.

In contrast, transactional friendship isn’t really friendship. Unlike real friendship, transactional friendship treats other people as a means to an end. When we relate this way, we come to view people more as resources than as human beings. Instead

of loving and serving them as we would in a real friendship, we *use* them to advance our careers, build our platforms, gain access to their social circles, increase our self-esteem (I feel important now, because I am connected to *her*), impress others (Selfie time! Hey, everybody, look at how important I am, now that I am connected to *him*), and so on. The pitfall of transactional friendships should be obvious. As soon as a relationship feels more costly than beneficial to us, as soon as the presence of the other person in our lives ceases to advance our personal goals, we discard the other person. Or, if the opposite is true, the other person discards us.

One-Dimensional Friendship

Friendships are one-dimensional when they revolve around a single shared interest and not much else. The shared interest can be anything: a hobby, a career path, a common enemy, an educational philosophy, a set of religious beliefs, and so on. One-dimensional friendships prioritize *sameness*, so views and convictions and practices are never challenged and blind spots are never uncovered. Friendships like these can't offer the natural, redemptive, character-forming tension that diversity brings to our lives. When celebrities limit their friendships to other celebrities, parents to other parents, married people to other married people (single people, too), athletes to other athletes, Republicans to other Republicans (Democrats, too), Millennials to other Millennials (Gen Xers and Baby Boomers, too), Christians to other Christians, white people to other white people (people of color, too), thinkers to other thinkers (feelers, too), affluent people to other affluent people, and so on, a poverty of friendship will be the outcome. One-dimensional friendships, while having the appearance of connection, can also be quite shallow—unless the single dimension that initially attracts us to each other develops into other broader and deeper dimensions.

A Case for Befriending

In his magnificent book on human connection, *The Four Loves*, C. S. Lewis says that all true friendship *begins* when one person looks at another and says, “You, too?”

Starting a friendship around a common interest or passion is natural, and it is not in itself a bad thing. Consider David and Jonathan, for example. One was the son of a humble shepherd, the other the son of a king, and they became the best of friends. Though their social and economic situation was very different, their friendship nonetheless began with a “You, too?” And theirs was the most solid “You, too?” that any two people can have. Because David and Jonathan both loved and were sold out to the Lord, they became the best of friends.

Although their friendship *began* with a foundation of “You, too?” the connection between David and Jonathan grew in depth, breadth, and layers. A shared love for God matured into a reciprocal transparency, vulnerability, love, and loyalty between them that would later move David to adopt Jonathan’s son, Mephibosheth, after Jonathan died in battle. Mephibosheth was a young man, crippled in both feet. But his special needs, rather than being a deterrent for David, became a motivation to mercifully take him in for the Lord’s sake, and also “for Jonathan’s sake.”²

This kind of friendship—the multilayered kind that exposes us to the grit of our own and each other’s lives; the kind that positions us to love across the lines of our differences; the kind that leads us to lay down our lives for each other’s sake—works a lot like two pieces of sandpaper being rubbed together. The friction causes sensations that initially irritate and burn. Yet, over time, the effect on both pieces of sandpaper is the same. Both become smoother, not in spite of the friction but precisely *because* of it.

Real friends not only agree but disagree; real friends not only applaud each other’s strengths but challenge each other’s

A CASE FOR BEFRIENDING

weaknesses; real friends not only enjoy life together but struggle through life together; real friends not only praise one another but apologize to and forgive one another; real friends not only rally around their points of agreement but love and learn from their points of disagreement. When this happens—when friendship grows beyond one dimension to many dimensions—a poverty of friendship is replaced by a richness of friendship. Digital, transactional, and one-dimensional friendship is replaced by real friendship. Everybody matures and grows. And when everybody matures and grows, everybody wins.

C. S. Lewis captured the heart of this version of friendship—real friendship—when he said the following:

To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable.³

There you have it. Real love, real friendship, is vulnerable. And risky. And costly. And discomfiting. And disquieting. And agitating like sandpaper sometimes.

But the alternative is a heart that ends up in a relational casket or coffin. And who wants that?

Befriend is a collection of twenty essays. Each essay attempts to explore a unique picture of *real* friendship. All of the stories are true, but some of the names and places have been changed to protect privacy.

BEFRIEND

You will notice a common thread in each account of real friendship: real friendship happens when we move *toward* the people we are most tempted to avoid. These are the people who are best equipped to challenge our perspectives, push our buttons, and require us to put on love.

Love, the Bible tells us, is the supreme virtue among all virtues. It is patient and kind. It does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. It never fails.⁴

Do you know what else never fails? Or, better said, *who* else? *Jesus*. Jesus never fails.

As we take this journey of real friendship together—as we learn a little bit more about what it could look like to be those who befriend and who create belonging in a world of judgment, isolation, and fear—the icing on the cake is that we will encounter Jesus in the process.

Let's encounter Jesus together, shall we?

How to Read This Book:

The Best Option: In Community

The best way to read this book is in community with others. If possible, invite one or more people on this journey with you. Even better, invite people whose perspectives, whose ways of seeing the world and God, are in some ways different than your own: people of a different generation, a different gender, a different political persuasion, a different Myers-Briggs or enneagram profile, a different ethnicity or culture, a different career path, a different religious tradition, a different income bracket, a different level on the org chart. Then, over time and as you invest in this conversation together, watch how Jesus works in you because of them, and in them

because of you. I can almost guarantee that both you and they will be changed.

The Second-Best Option: As a Daily Study

The second-best option is to read a chapter a day as a personal study. Each of the twenty-one chapters is intentionally short enough to be read easily in a day. Research suggests that it takes twenty-one days to develop a habit, so as a bonus, by the end of this book, you will have gone a long way toward developing a habit of looking at others with an embracing mind-set.

The Third-Best Option: Just Read

The third-best option would be to read *Befriend* as you would any other book . . . alone in your favorite reading spot. It's much better to read a book alone than to not read it at all!

Whatever way you choose to engage these pages, I pray that God will bless you in this journey. Please feel free to respond to anything in this book with your thoughts, encouragements, and disagreements. I can be found at Christ Presbyterian Church—my beloved community of friends—in the great city of Nashville, Tennessee (<http://christpres.org>).

*Your friend,
Scott Sauls*



SUMMARY: There is real, loyal, across-the-lines-of-differences friendship, and there is lesser, surface-level friendship. Lesser friendship leaves us distanced, isolated, and afraid. We become the best version of ourselves, and we come to know Jesus best, through real friendship.

BEFRIEND

SCRIPTURE: 2 Samuel 1:26; John 15:12-17

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends (John 15:13-14).

TO CONSIDER: Right now, how would you describe most of your friendships? Would you say that most of your friendships are one-dimensional or real? What scares you, and what excites you, about plunging into the rest of this book?