



A Devotional

100 DAILY ACTS OF

*Friendship
for Girls*

Julie Fisk | Kendra Roehl | Kristin Demery

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*To our mothers and our daughters,
who inspired this book*

Introduction

Friends can be what make us happiest . . . or craziest. They can encourage us, help us when we're going through hard things, and push us to be better. Or they can hurt us, lie to us about ourselves and others, disappoint us, and keep us from reaching out for new friendships.

If you're reading this, you're probably interested in good friendships. Maybe you've been bullied or had trouble making friends. Maybe you have good friends, but you still fight now and then or accidentally hurt each other's feelings.

But God made us to enjoy friendships. How do we do that in a culture that doesn't always support friendships or that sometimes encourages unhealthy ones? We start by recognizing that friendship was created by God to honor him and benefit us. No matter what happens in life or how friends may fail us at times, he never will. He will always remain our faithful friend and the one we can learn from and talk to about anything and everything.

Friendship "works" when we turn to what God says about healthy relationships and apply those truths to our friendships. What does God say about how anger, conflict, disappointment, jealousy, and competition harm our friendships and what we can do in those situations? We

can find ways to be a good friend when life is hard or confusing or uncertain. Living God's way, we celebrate when our friends succeed, when they win, and when life is amazing.

This devotional will help you think through and find answers for the hard questions about friendship, help you build stronger friendships, and give you ideas for ways to celebrate your friends. Check out the Friendship in Action sections for fun activities you can do to strengthen your friendships or start new ones!

DAY 1

Honesty in Friendship

JULIE

Wounds from a sincere friend are better than
many kisses from an enemy.

PROVERBS 27:6

“I am so angry. What was McKinsey thinking? I’m never talking to her again!” Adrienna slammed her locker a little harder than usual as she turned to Brittany.

“I don’t think McKinsey knew that Ciara has been spreading rumors about you when she invited her along to the movie. I think she was trying to help you guys work things out, not betray you,” Brittany said. “You can’t be mad at someone who didn’t know the whole story and was trying to be kind.”

Adrienna frowned. It hurt a little that Brittany didn’t agree with her, that Brittany was sticking up for McKinsey instead of her. “I don’t know. Maybe McKinsey’s just as bad as Ciara,” she said.

“McKinsey’s been a good friend,” Brittany reminded Adrienna. “You don’t want to ruin that by jumping to conclusions. Remember that other time, with Lisa?”

That had been a bad mistake—a time Adrienna’s hasty temper had gotten her in trouble and nearly lost her a friend. Adrienna sighed. “I guess you’re right. Thanks, Brittany.”

Brittany smiled, and they walked together toward the doors leading to the bus line.

When we have a friend who loves us enough to correct us, we should not take that blessing lightly. It is so much easier not to confront than it is to gently hold our friends accountable. But the Bible teaches us that true friends will call us out on our wrong actions, unlike false friends

who may speak sweet words even as they push us to make choices Jesus doesn't want us to make.

Wouldn't you rather hear truth spoken in love from friends and family than listen to the fake sweetness of those who don't really care about you? But that requires wisdom on our end. We have to be willing to listen with an open heart, to accept correction, and to recognize that our friends and family are on our side, even when they tell us that we were wrong. Hearing truth may feel painful in the moment, but it's the only way that we can grow.

Things to Think About

Have you been ignoring a painful truth someone you love has shared with you sincerely and with your best at heart?

Have you been avoiding a painful conversation with someone you love about their behavior?

✿ DAILY ACT OF FRIENDSHIP ✿

Make a promise to your friends to tell one another the truth when they are doing or saying something ungodly or unwise.

DAY 2

The New Girl

KENDRA

Love your neighbor as yourself.

MATTHEW 19:19

“Dear God, please send me a friend,” Jamie prayed, looking around the crowded middle school cafeteria. Her stomach knotted as she looked from table to table, full of students laughing and talking. Everyone seemed to already have their own friend groups—and none of them noticed Jamie standing by herself.

Jamie’s family had just moved to this town. She hadn’t wanted to leave her old hometown and everything that was familiar. Even after a few weeks at the new school, she still hadn’t met anyone to talk to. Jamie started heading toward a lunch table in the corner. Maybe no one would notice if she sat there by herself.

“Hey, Jamie!”

Jamie turned to see Alisha, a girl from her local church.

“Want to sit with me?” Alisha asked. She nodded toward a nearby table.

Jamie followed Alisha to the table.

Over the next few weeks, Jamie started seeing Alisha more and more. They sat together in English class, and Jamie found Alisha in math. Soon Alisha introduced Jamie to other girls as well. Alisha was God’s answer to Jamie’s prayer.

Being the new girl is hard, but it can also make us pay attention in other situations where someone else might be new as well as feeling a little lonely. Even if you’ve never been the new girl, you can imagine what it would be like to walk into an unfamiliar place where you didn’t know anyone. When

we put ourselves in someone else's shoes, we are practicing compassion for others. When we take that compassion and act on it by including someone who is new or feeling left out, we put our faith into practice.

The Bible says we are to love our neighbor the same way we love ourselves. What if when you started a sports team or new school activity, you kept an eye out for someone else who is new? A simple smile and hello can help someone else feel welcome when they feel out of place. Who knows what could happen when we take that small step? We might make a really good friend.

Things to Think About

Have you ever been the new girl at school, at church, or in the neighborhood? How were you welcomed by others?

Can you think of someone who is new to your school, your church, or a program you are a part of?

✿ DAILY ACT OF FRIENDSHIP ✿

Look for someone who is new, whether at school, at church, or in the neighborhood, and be willing to say hello and include them in your group.

Friendship in Action

Plan a game night at your house and invite someone who is new to your school or town.

DAY 3

The Heart of a Friendship

KRISTIN

The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them.
People judge by outward appearance,
but the LORD looks at the heart.

1 SAMUEL 16:7

“Cannonball!” Chloe’s voice echoed off the backyard trees as she bounced up and off the diving board, tucking her feet underneath to make the biggest splash possible.

Surfacing, she heard the pool gate squeak as her best friend Dakota closed it behind her.

“Did you get a new swimsuit?” Chloe asked. “It’s so cute!”

Chloe liked her own swimsuit just fine. But watching Dakota walk toward the pool, she couldn’t help but think that Dakota’s new gray tankini looked prettier and much more flattering than Chloe’s faded yellow-and-purple floral swimsuit.

As Dakota jumped in the water and made her way toward Chloe, a bit of jealousy curled through Chloe, clouding the day. Instead of enjoying the sunny skies, sparkling blue water, and bright blue tiles under her feet, all Chloe could see was her own outdated swimsuit. Compared to Dakota, Chloe felt plain and awkward, and it spoiled her good mood.

But as the day wore on, Chloe gradually forgot about the jealousy she felt, instead focusing on the refreshing pool and how much fun she always had with Dakota.

We need to be happy for our friends when they have nice things, while also remembering that nice things are not what make us important or worthwhile. Like Chloe, you may sometimes wish things were different,

and the world around us doesn't make it any easier. Advertisements show us trendy clothes, beautiful people, and cool toys and gadgets. But instead of wishing we could possess something our friend owns or look the way she does, we need to remember that nothing can ever have greater importance than the inward beauty God gave us.

God made us the way we are—on purpose!—and he doesn't make mistakes. In fact, he doesn't see things the way we do at all—because he is looking at our heart. When he looks at us, he sees beauty, whether we're wearing the latest fashions or a piece we've owned for a while. Let's intentionally focus on the beauty of our friendships instead of worrying about what we have or how we look.

Things to Think About

Do you ever get jealous of your friends? How do you respond when you're tempted to compare yourself with someone else?

What are some things about you that your friends value? What does God say about you?

✿ DAILY ACT OF FRIENDSHIP ✿

The next time you feel jealous, remind yourself of the reasons you like your friend for who she is, regardless of what she owns or looks like.

DAY 4

Speak Up

JULIE

[The devil] has always hated the truth,
because there is no truth in him.

JOHN 8:44

“Mom, can we talk?” Ling’s heart pounded as her mom paused and looked up from washing the dishes.

“What’s up, sweetie?” Mom asked as she reached for the towel to wipe her hands.

“I think my friend Bella needs help,” Ling whispered, starting to cry. “But she asked me to keep what she told me a secret.”

“Oh, honey, let’s talk.” Ling’s mom gave her a hug, and they sat down at the kitchen counter together. “Remember how we promised not to keep secrets if someone might get hurt?”

Ling nodded. “That’s what I told Bella. And no one can help her if they never know.”

The devil loves to lie to us and to our friends, making us feel alone, ashamed, and unloved. He may convince us that we need to keep scary thoughts and feelings secret or trick us into thinking we are the only one who feels that way. But there are some secrets that should not be secrets. When a friend asks us to keep a secret like that, we may feel trapped, because we want to be a good friend and keep our word, but we also want to tell an adult we love and trust so our friend can get help.

The best way to stop Satan’s lies is to tell someone who knows God’s truth. A parent, grandma or grandpa, aunt or uncle, pastor, teacher, or another adult you trust is the perfect person to help because they can remind us of the truth. If a friend tells you a secret that is dangerous or makes you uncomfortable, find an adult you love and ask for advice. It’s

important to share those kinds of secrets, because that's how we reject the devil's lies and choose truth instead.

Things to Think About

Who is an adult you can trust to talk to when you or your friend is struggling with a secret that feels dangerous or uncomfortable?

Are you keeping a secret that needs to be shared with an adult you trust and love? Go talk to them today.

* DAILY ACT OF FRIENDSHIP *

Make a plan with a trusted adult for what to do when you learn a secret that might be dangerous, and agree on what you will tell anyone who asks you to keep a secret.

Friendship in Action

Are you wondering if you should talk to an adult about a situation involving you or a friend?

The answer is yes if:

- someone tells you that another person is hurting them (either with their words or actions);
- someone is hurting you;
- you or a friend are having thoughts about hurting themselves; or
- any other time you are unsure. Check with a trusted adult.

DAY 5

A Second Home

KENDRA

Don't be concerned for your own good
but for the good of others.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:24

Mandy and Veronica met at church—and they hit it off quickly. It wasn't long before Veronica asked Mandy, "Would you want to come and hang out at my house?"

"Yes!" Mandy responded quickly. Mandy's dad did not live at home and her mom was gone and working a lot, so Mandy was lonely and in need of a friend. She was happy to be invited.

Veronica and her mom, Claudette, soon realized that Mandy's home life was hard. They began to invite Mandy to their home often. They'd bake together, do crafts, and just spend time together. Veronica and her mom would also pick up Mandy on Wednesday nights for church.

Over time Veronica's house became a second home for Mandy, a safe space where she was shown love, compassion, and kindness.

Sometimes we may meet someone whose family is not the safe shelter it should be. When we meet someone like that, God wants us to be there for them, to notice others who may be hurting and in need of a friend. We can be the one who is there for other people going through a hard time.

God doesn't want us to just be concerned for ourselves and our own lives, but to also be concerned for others. This means we can all be on the lookout for other kids and people around us who are sad and lonely. We can be the ones to take an interest in their lives and offer comfort and support to someone in need. We can make our circles of love a second home for them.

Things to Think About

Who has been there for you when you were going through a hard time? How did they show you they cared?

Who around you may be in need of a friend?

✿ DAILY ACT OF FRIENDSHIP ✿

Look for someone who is lonely and be the friend who'll listen and invite them into your circle of friends or family.

DAY 6

Choose Your Words

KRISTIN

Those who control their tongue will have a long life;
opening your mouth can ruin everything.

PROVERBS 13:3

From Gabriella's bedroom window on the second floor, she could hear the neighbor girls gathered outside on the sidewalk. She and her friends had disagreed, and she'd stormed off.

Curious about what they were saying, Gabriella crept closer to the windowsill, careful not to let them see her peering out.

"Gabby's so bossy today," Lauren complained. "She thinks she's in charge."

Hearing the criticism made Gabriella's blood boil. Standing up abruptly, she faced the open window. "Shut up, Lauren, you brat!" Gabriella hollered. Her words echoed outside and through the house. Stunned silence greeted the angry shout.

Gabriella's sister Skylar ran into the room. "What's going on?"

As Gabriella turned to Skylar, she felt her rage shifting and bubbling over into tears. She felt sick inside over the way she had acted and the mean words she had yelled. Her temper had gotten the best of her, and now she had to face the consequences.

By the time Gabriella got her temper and tears under control, her friends had scattered. Ashamed, she headed to apologize to Lauren, now back at her own house.

Even when our friends accept our apology, we may still regret words said in a moment of anger. Words are powerful. Proverbs reminds us that if we aren't careful about what we say, the consequences can be long lasting. Words said in the heat of an argument can't be unsaid and can

lead to lasting damage in our friendships. Though anger can make us feel ugly on the inside, we still have the power to say—or not say—hurtful words that match how we feel. Disagreements can often be resolved calmly if we choose our words wisely, and we won't have to apologize later on for the things we wished we hadn't said. Rather than using our words to wound a friend, let's use them to encourage and reassure one another. Those are words we'll never regret saying.

Things to Think About

How do you respond when you have a disagreement with a friend or overhear something negative about yourself? Do you choose your words wisely or struggle to not say something harsh in response?

Have you said something to a friend lately that you need to apologize for?

✿ DAILY ACT OF FRIENDSHIP ✿

The next time you feel angry with a friend, try a breathing exercise to calm you before you speak to your friend.

Friendship in Action

To ease anxiety, try this breathing exercise: Breathe in deeply through your nose while counting to four. Hold the breath for four counts. Release it through your mouth in four counts. Rest while counting to four, then start the exercise again. Imagine that you are tracing the sides of a square: 4, 4, 4, 4.

DAY 7

Frenemies

JULIE

There are “friends” who destroy each other, but
a real friend sticks closer than a brother.

PROVERBS 18:24

“Marissa’s kind of a frenemy,” Liz said. She and her mom were walking their dog around the neighborhood, talking about Liz’s day. Liz had shared with Marissa that she was worried about an upcoming test, and Marissa had made fun of her in front of their classmates.

“What do you think *frenemy* means?” Liz’s mom asked gently.

Later, Liz and her mom looked up the word. The dictionary said it means “one who pretends to be a friend but is actually an enemy.”

“Is that the kind of person you should be spending time with?” Liz’s mom asked, putting an arm around Liz. “Is she really your friend?”

Liz thought for a minute. “I guess not,” she said. “I want to be friends with Marissa, but Marissa seems more interested in being popular than in genuine friendship.”

Most of us have accidentally hurt a friend’s feelings and had to apologize. But are we truly a friend if we intentionally do something we know will hurt another person? Probably not, right? If you’re wondering if someone is a frenemy, here are a few questions to ask:

1. How does she speak of others when they are not around? Does she make fun of others? Does she share someone’s private information so she can feel popular?

2. How does she handle disagreements? Does she turn them into drama by trying to get others to take her side? Does she make a big deal out of little things so others will pay attention to her?
3. Does she tell lies or stretch the truth, even about small things?

We should be friendly to everyone because Jesus tells us to be kind and generous. However, we should also be careful in choosing with whom we share our deepest emotions. God tells us to be wise about who we have as friends. If you think a person is unsafe or a “frenemy,” you can be kind to her, but still not give her access to your heart. And if you have ever acted like a frenemy yourself, today is a great day to begin acting like a true friend instead.

Things to Think About

When have you shared your heart with someone who is more frenemy than friend? What happened?

In what ways have you sometimes acted more like a frenemy than a friend?

✿ DAILY ACT OF FRIENDSHIP ✿

If you know a frenemy, be polite and kind but stop sharing your heart with her. If you've acted like a frenemy, write a note of apology.