



[(E) Lij (ah) Here: As a hook to get the students' attention and really thinking about what they are doing wrong in relationships, the first half of these messages intentionally offer bad advice—**SO BE SURE TO SPEAK WITH LOTS OF SARCASM** starting from the beginning.]

Hello students! Here at PCC, we try really hard to help you have a better quality of life, and for the next four weeks, we are going to focus on an area that has been known to cause lots of strife in young people's lives: friends

Do you have so many friends you can't keep them all straight? Is keeping up with everyone around you becoming a burden? Could you use a little less drama from some of your more needy peers? Are there too many dog-filter selfies on you Instagram feed?

Well, we have the solution for you ... LOSE THEM!

But, you may ask, "How do I do such a thing? Some of these people I have known since 1st grade, and I see them every day at school. Plus, I can imagine that if it took a lot of work to build these relationships, then it may take some serious work to undo them."

I have good news for you today. Losing friends is simple: all you need to do is be a bad friend. Over the next month, I am going to introduce to you four easy steps to becoming a bad friend.

Tonight's is one of the simplest ones, and it has been proven time after time, so much so that the Bible even agrees on this fact. Let's take a look.

Proverbs 17:17 (NIV)

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity."

What, this verse is saying is that, practically by definition, a friend is someone who should always be there for you, especially in hard times. So, if we don't want to be a good friend, we want to do the opposite of this. Therefore, our tip for you tonight is this:

IF YOU WANT TO BE A BAD FRIEND ... DON'T BE COMMITTED!

This means you should not be there for them in any way! Let's break down three major ways you can do this.

1. PHYSICALLY

Wherever they are, don't be. You can sit with other people at lunch, forget to meet up with them to play ball after school, or even stop going out to places they usually hang out. Just try your best to never actually be around them, unless you want something (like to use their new Nintendo Switch or to score a ride in their prom group's limo). Once you've got what you want, go right back to being a ghost.

If you can't help but actually be around them because of classes or whatever, then you need to go to the next level, which is to not be present

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2. MENTALLY

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Here is a brilliant piece of psychology to use against your soon to be ex-friends: if you aren't able to become non-existent to them, then don't acknowledge their existence. Don't answer texts, hold the door, or ask them what they did last weekend.

The goal here is to practically give them the silent treatment, but don't withhold your words entirely yet!

Physical and mental absence are great, but nothing works better than this last step. I must warn you, though, it's pretty vicious, and there is almost no turning back from it. To really push someone away, I suggest neglecting them ...

3. EMOTIONALLY

You need to let them clearly know that you have no intentions to care about their well-being. The second you sense them trying to talk about their problems, say things like ...

"I think you are making this all up in your head."

"Are you always this needy for attention?"

“You’re really bringing down my mood with all this depressing garbage.”
“I don’t care! Bug someone else with your problems!”

These will make sure that you not only get rid of this person, but you will build a reputation that you are not a person to be sought after when it comes to friendship. Isn’t that really what we’re after here?

[BREAK SARCASM]

I know it’s been humorous to hear me say these things, and I hope you all know that I don’t actually suggest behaving like this. But perhaps through it, you can see not only how easy it is to be a bad friend, but also that you may be guilty of being a friend who isn’t committed.

I know that I have been an uncommitted friend. I am reminded of a time when I was particularly unfair to my friends.

[\[Author Note: Here, I shared a story about a time when I was a bad friend moving off to college without giving even a hint of my plans to a best friend until weeks before move-in day. We all have these stories. Feel free to share your own story about not being present as a friend, family member, or spouse.\]](#)

In this world, we need each other, because there are times of trouble, or as the Bible verse we have already looked at puts it, “*times of adversity*.” Life has a way of standing against you at times, and that’s what close friends are for—not just when life is easy and fun.

We are called to be friends who are not shallow and only look out for ourselves, or turn and run when things get sticky. Jesus Himself said in John 15:13, “*Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.*”

This doesn’t necessarily mean literally taking a bullet for someone, but it does mean putting your own desires to death, to be unselfish.

Sometimes, the things we want are not just different from what are friends would like, but can often be the exact opposite of what they need. What do

I mean by that? Here are some examples from your world:

- You turned down an invite from a friend who wanted to go out. I know you may feel like staying home and playing video games by yourself, but they may really need that time out of the house with someone their own age.
- We all like to be in control, so it tends to come naturally to only think about yourself and talk about your own interests. However, it goes a long way when you let someone else control the direction of a conversation. Be able to let someone share about their favorite show, movie, books, or whatever; even if you have no interest in partaking in them yourself.
- Perhaps you have some friends who are going through a lot right now. I know people sharing their struggles and emotions can feel overwhelming, and at times, uncomfortable, but it's that person's reality, and they are looking for someone they trust to help guide them in it and help them build enough courage to get real help. Are you going to shut them out because that is where you draw the line of what you want to participate in?

This reminds me very much of a story from the Old Testament, one of two friends named Jonathan and David. Some of you may know this one, and I'm sure there are those of you who do not know anything about them at all, so I will just run over the most important facts of their relationship.

Jonathan was the son of the king. This king was not very fond of David, because he felt threatened by David, who would one day take over his throne.

Jonathan didn't care about who would wear the crown someday, because he and David were best of friends.

Just this small fact would be enough to breed rivalry in some of your friendships. However, more deadly details were evident. If your father were so sick of someone that he was plotting to murder them, then you would think twice about how closely you would associate with them, am I right? Well, that was exactly how Jonathan's father felt toward David, and Jonathan couldn't let that slide. He knew that he must warn David. He

could lose his relationship with his dad, his privileges, maybe even his head, but it didn't matter to him, because he knew that "*a friend loves at all times.*"

Jonathan didn't say, "Looks like too much trouble," or, "Sorry, David, but the kingdom could be mine now if I play my cards right." He was a committed friend, one who was there for his friend through thick and thin, because he didn't think of just himself or his comfort.

Do you have a relationship in which you have been more concerned with personal comfort, rather than commitment? Which ways have you neglected them: physically, mentally, emotionally? How can you be more present for your friends?

Let's pray.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. When was the first time (that you can remember) that you were betrayed by a friend?
2. How does it feel when someone pushes you to the side in a relationship? What message does it send?
3. What are the different types of ways someone can be absent in a friendship?
4. In what ways are you guilty of not being a committed friend?
5. What specific changes do you need to make toward which friends in order to be "a friend at all times"? Make a commitment to righting that wrong this week.