



[**Lij Here:** Just like the last two weeks, 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 — as always, **BE SURE TO SPEAK WITH LOTS OF SARCASM** starting from the beginning.]

Hello again, students! It's time for another lesson in our series *How to be a Bad Friend*. If you have heard about our revolutionary tactics to shedding pesky friends, but you still haven't managed to scare them off, then tonight's tip may be just what you need.

Let me ask you all a few questions. By a show of hands, how many of you do the following:

- Tell your friends to do stupid things?
- Practice bad habits in front of them?
- Get them into questionable situations?

Excellent! Then what I know to be true is already at work within you. You see, if you haven't lost any friends yet in this series, then you are on track to doing the next best thing: bringing them down to your level.

What do I mean by that? Well, when you look at relationships closely, you will notice that they often have the ability to make or break those around them. We know this is true from the Bible itself.

1 Corinthians 15:33 (NIV)

“Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”

So, if you want to break your friends and have them be unsuccessful, lazy, or just make tons of huge mistakes, then you need to exude bad character. Just listen carefully, because I am going to tell you how. Here are three easy steps.

TO BE A BAD FRIEND, LEAD THEM TO MAKE BAD DECISIONS!

1.) OPENLY DISPLAY YOUR BAD HABITS.

The habits that you display around your friends will be ones they will sooner or later develop themselves. Unfortunately, this means the same for both good and bad ones, so don't be practicing good things like respect for one's parents, responsibility, or appropriate hygiene. Instead, focus on those not-so-great things like lying, swearing, cheating on tests, and being mean to others.

The old adage is, "Garbage in, garbage out." What you put in is what you get, and what you surround yourself with is what you become. If you keep telling your friend to do bad things and continuously get in trouble, you may just get lucky and they (or their parents) will decide that you two shouldn't be hanging out anymore.

2.) CONVINCING THEM THEY ARE MISSING OUT.

This step has literally been around since the beginning. Go back to Genesis and read the account of how Adam and Eve sinned for the very first time. There is an important detail that some people miss out on. It was totally their fault, but Satan played them. He dangled right in front of them that God was holding out on them, and that if they would partake of the forbidden fruit, they would be like God.

As soon as that lie started ringing in their ears, they were ready to justify any action.

So, when your friends start saying things like, "I don't think I should do that," or, "Isn't that against the rules?" just start putting on the old peer pressure and tell them about all the fun opportunities they will be missing out on if they start playing all goody two-shoes. I will never forget the time when my friends got me to ...

[[Lij Here](#): Might help to **tell a personal story** here about a time you gave in to peer pressure.]

3.) GET THEM INTO QUESTIONABLE SITUATIONS.

Once they are willing to blindly follow you and your logic, abuse that trust and take them places they never would have found themselves on their own.

Now, I'm not talking about actual "bad places," although those are good, too, but I mean having them be places at the wrong time, or without permission, or even when the wrong people are around. These could be parties where alcohol is being served, breaking into someone's pool at night, or street racing against some kids from school. They are all great situations that have a great potential for disastrous outcomes, and the best part is, there is no good explanation for them when they get busted other than, "Well, my friends ..."

(BREAK SARCASM)

This is not what friends do, but I believe you've picked up on that, and you've probably noticed that you or someone else have been treating someone that way. If you think this is all a bunch of after-school-special rubbish, then I pray that you would really take a moment and listen, because I don't want you to have that experience where you ask yourself, "What I am doing here? How did I end up in this situation?" Because 9 times out of 10, the answer is your friends.

Proverbs 13:20 says, *"He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the one who walks with fools will be destroyed"* (NIV).

This isn't just a fortune cookie. It's a fact of life, and we implore you to take it to heart. Instead of just ceasing to be a bad friend, we want to lead you to be the opposite.

As the Proverbs verse says, those who are wise can lead others toward wise actions. So, in the middle of your schools, these places where such horrible friendships are practiced, let's act counter to these awful trends. If you want to start being a good friend, then you need to do the following:

1.) SET GOOD EXAMPLES.

Nobody wants to see their friends fail, but if we are setting bad examples for them, we will only be throwing stumbling blocks in their way. In order to see them succeed, we must model the examples for them to stick to.

Study for tests, be respectful to coaches, keep off your phone in class, stay loyal to the person you're dating, and don't pick your nose and wipe boogers under the desks. They will see them not only as good paths, but they will have someone to confide in if they are having trouble keeping to them. Together, you can be strengthened on the journey of life, but you can't if someone is off in the ditch.

2.) CONVINCING THEM THEY DON'T NEED TO PROVE THEMSELVES.

It's not enough to not bully them into situations through fear of missing out. If someone isn't spreading the message that they are enough, they will bend to someone's message of falling in line with their behaviors.

Through your actions and words, let them know that you give them your respect and attention. Use your words to affirm them, and tell them that they don't need to pull stunts of any kind to make you think they are cool or want to spend time with them. Show them loyalty and love, so they won't be led to life-threatening ideas.

3.) SURROUND THEM WITH RIGHT SITUATIONS AND PEOPLE.

A real friend doesn't put others in situations they won't enjoy, could be endangered by, or even get in trouble in. They take them to places that would be beneficial.

That means things like going to class instead of sneaking out the back exit to play hooky, and inviting them to youth group instead of asking them to help you take some stuff to the pawn shop that you stole out of your stepdad's garage. But being a real friend is about more than just taking them to the right places. It means connecting them to the right people.

Instead of insisting that someone go out to lunch with the “cool kids” who are just going to swear or smoke, how about introducing them to people from your small group, or maybe even your small group leader?

What I am saying is that there are two different ways someone can express, “How did I end up here?” Your actions and introductions shouldn’t have a friend asking the question, “How on earth did I end up in this mess?” but instead, “Where would my life be headed if I didn’t have such great friends as these?”

Recently, I have reread the story of the Israelites in the Old Testament. On multiple occasions, they fell from God’s graces because their hearts were lead away to foreign false idols. Do you know why? It wasn’t because they were bored and wanted to try something new, or that God had been failing them. It was because of the people they did business with and who they married.

The people closest to them practiced these things, and lead them to follow them, too. Because deep down, whether they knew it or not, they had a sense of trust with these people that led them to let their guards down, and that would soon have them open and impressionable to their acquaintance’s habits and beliefs.

Friends can make or break each other. Are you being affected negatively by those around you? Are you leading your friends down a good path or a poor one? Let’s talk about this as we go into small groups.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. When was a time you got in trouble with your friends?
2. Why is it so easy to give into peer pressure?
3. What does it feel like to be in a bad situation? How can you prevent it from happening?
4. Where would you say your friends are taking you? Where could you end up because of the friends you have?

5. Are there any habits you need to work on fixing, or relationships that you need to be a better influence in?