



[Lij Here: Just like the last three 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 —SO BE SURE TO SPEAK WITH LOTS OF SARCASM starting from the beginning.]

Welcome to our final night in the series *How to Be a Bad Friend*.

We have covered a lot of ground over the last few weeks. In Weeks 1 and 2, we talked about how to get rid of friends entirely by either not being there for them and by tearing them down with your words. In Week 3, we shared some ideas with you on how to lead them to make bad decisions.

So now, if you still have any friends, it won't be long before they are complete jerks just like you, and I am sure that you won't want to be around them for long, let alone forever. That actually leads me in to the topic for tonight.

If you can't seem to ditch your friends on this side of Heaven, there is always a way you can avoid seeing them for the rest of eternity:

DON'T SHARE JESUS WITH THEM.

The last thing you want is another person taking up space in Heaven, and that Jesus guy has made it really convenient for people to get in, so it seems like there is only one logical move here: **DON'T SHARE JESUS WITH YOUR FRIENDS.**

Look at this Bible verse with me ...

Romans 10:13–14 (NIV)

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

Right from the Bible itself, we learn that people won't be getting on the salvation train if nobody is telling them where to get tickets, so whatever you do, **DON'T SHARE JESUS WITH OTHERS.**

Now, you may think, "OK, I just won't go knocking door to door asking people if they have a moment to talk about Jesus." But that is not enough. There are many subtle ways that you can actually do this without thinking about it.

To get you to see what I am talking about, I want to share with you a story from the Bible of perhaps the worst and laziest believer ever. His name was Jonah.

Now, some of you who grew up in Sunday School may know that name as the guy who was swallowed by a big fish, and you may be wondering, "What does this guy's story have to do with teaching me how to be a bad friend?" Well, while he didn't have any friends in this story, he was certainly not very friendly, as you will soon find out. He also went out of his way to not share God with others, and that is what I want to highlight tonight.

So, without further ado, here are my final three tips on ...

HOW TO BE A BAD FRIEND, AND NOT SHARE JESUS WITH OTHERS.

Now, you see, the most ironic part of Jonah's story is that he was a prophet, which meant that his job was literally to tell people messages from God. He did this job among many other God-fearing people just fine, until one day God told him that he wanted him to go take a message to a land called Nineveh.

Nineveh was known as an idolatrous, proud, and ruthless nation. To go there and preach God's message might have meant opposition, judgment, and maybe even danger, so Jonah came up with another plan. He hopped aboard a ship going the entirely opposite direction, and this brings me to my first point: When it comes to sharing Jesus with people ...

1.) RUN FROM EVERY OPPORTUNITY.

It doesn't matter how small or big it is. Whether you are tempted to pray for your meal in the lunch room, or someone asks you a very pointed question

about what God is like; it could quickly open doors to others knowing about Christ. You don't want that kind of attention in the first place, but you especially don't want the other side of the coin either.

Like Jonah knew, there is a good chance someone may not see eye to eye with your answers or actions, so why make that additional drama for yourself? Whenever a situation arises, run the opposite direction. Do an eyes-open, mental, while-you're-chewing-your-food prayer, so that nobody notices.

If a friend asks about that event we posted on Instagram, change the subject. And if someone around you is crying, struggling, or broken, don't start any conversations with them that may lead you to talking about how God is your strength. Follow Jonah's action, and RUN FROM EVERY OPPORTUNITY.

Well, of course the most well-known part of the story happens next. He gets thrown overboard and gets swallowed by the big fish. He ends up going to Nineveh to do the job, but another great twist happens.

After just one day of walking around telling people that they had 40 days to turn or burn, they all start repenting at the drop of a hat. And Jonah 4:1 says this: *"But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry."* He proceeds to argue with God, saying that he knew God would pull something like this, and that it was a waste of his time.

He didn't shed a tear of happiness for the lives that would be saved, he didn't praise God for moving an entire nation out of its sin, and he ends up being more concerned about a plant than anything else (which we will get to in a bit).

This is because he didn't care for the well-being of others. He may have actually preferred to see the fire and brimstone coming down for his entertainment, we don't know, but we definitely did know that he did not care about what would be best for them.

And that should be your goal, as well. If you are not wanting others to know about Jesus, then my second point is this ...

2.) DON'T WANT WHAT IS BEST FOR THEM.

Proverbs 27:6 says, *“Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.”*

Let me spell out what that means for you. A friend will tell someone something that may hurt, in order to make them a better person. If they have a really annoying habit they are not aware of, have horrible breath, or need to know that one girl that he thinks has got the hots for him actually can't stand him ... they need to know, and it's going to feel like a wound, and it's not going to be easy for you either. But a friend has got to do what a friend has got to do.

Of course, we aren't about making friends in this series, so we will take the other option. But let me tell you that doesn't actually mean making smoochy lips. What this expression means is that you will deny those habits and let them continue to be that way. When they ask, “Do I have bad breath?” you say, “Oh wow man, you always be smellin' minty fresh.” And when he tries to “holla at that shorty” and she ignores him, remind him that she must just be playing hard to get.

Now, we can take this same principle over to the spiritual realm. If someone feels guilty over something they've done, don't tell them about the forgiveness open to them in Christ; feed them some bologna about how what they did isn't actually as bad as what other people do.

If you have a friend who is becoming more captive to a sinful addiction every day, don't speak out about that sin, because each person has the right to do whatever brings them pleasure in this life. If there is anything that may benefit others spiritually, but it would be at some kind of cost to you, be selfish and don't do it. Be like Jonah, and **DON'T DO WAN'T WHAT IS BEST FOR OTHERS.**

So finally, our boy Jonah decides that he is just going to go cool off on the side of a hill. While this was more metaphorically speaking, God actually provided him with some shade to physically cool off.

Out of nowhere, God made this leafy plant pop up to give Jonah some relief, and it says that Jonah was happy about it, but apparently he got too

attached to it, because the next day it withers up and dies, and he starts to throw another tantrum about it.

In this chapter of the Bible, he actually says three different times that he would rather be dead. He would rather have death than anything to do with God's plan to save the city. Not the job he called him to, not the miraculous saving from drowning, or even the shelter that he provided. He was thankful for none of it, and that is exactly how your outlook needs to be if you want to fail in reaching people for God.

3.) LIVE A LIFE LACKING IN GRATITUDE TOWARD GOD.

If we don't want people signing up for God's team, then we need to make it look like a losing one. Don't ever spend time publicly proclaiming that you are thankful for how the Lord has blessed you. In fact, do the opposite.

Complain about what you have been given, whine about what others have in comparison to you, and post on social media that life just plain sucks. It will grab people's attention, and they will either think you are a hypocrite or that God isn't there for you, and either way it keeps Him from being known.

[END SARCASM]

Sadly, we are all a lot like Jonah—though you may never be called to another country, and I hope you never get swallowed by a large aquatic animal.

We do make the same mistakes, though. We run from every opportunity, we don't want what is best others, and we live a life lacking in gratitude towards God. Why? Because we are spoiled, and we worry what others may do or think if we were actually so open.

It's our job to represent Jesus to those who are suffering, though. Paul says this in 2 Corinthians:

2 Corinthians 2:14–15 & 5:20 (NIV)

“But thanks be to God, who ... uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere... the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. ... We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

To put this in words that I once heard someone else say, “You may be the only Jesus someone ever meets.” In a world so full of terrible things, and uncommitted church attenders, there is a sea of people drowning in sin and despair. You may be the only person with a life preserver to come their way.

Are you going to sail right on by, or are you going to take the chance, however little it may be, to be Christ’s ambassador? Are you going to be a bad friend who doesn’t care for their eternal well-being, or are you going to be a true friend?

A final truth for you all: when you don’t share Jesus with your friends, you are letting another friend down, too. John 15:5 says Jesus calls us friends, and that is why he has entrusted so much to us, but that comes with real expectations.

Matthew 10:32–33 (NIV)

“Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.”

So, where do you go from here? Do you need to work on your relationship with Jesus? Have you ever even had a relationship with him? Let’s discuss this all more in depth as we move into small groups.

Let’s pray.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Tell about a time you were afraid to share something with someone or a group (a story, answer, or belief). Why did you feel that way? What did you end up doing, and why?
2. Which of Jonah’s three actions do you think is most common among your peers? Why is that?
3. Which one of these is hardest for you?

4. What does the expression “You might be the only Jesus someone ever meets” mean?

5. What are your fears about being open about your faith? Do they outweigh someone else living a life not knowing about what is available to them?

6. Based on just the life you are living, what testimony are you preaching without words?