



Being a Good Friend

Some Principles to Grow By



Miiko Gibson

This book is book is dedicated
to
Christy Michiko Gibson

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Scriptures quoted in the King James Version

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A Letter to Mothers

Dear Mother,

The principles in this book have been helpful to me and I wanted my young daughter to appreciate them. Hence I wrote this book for her.

Other mothers who read it thought their daughters might benefit from it. So I modified a little here and a little there, and the result is what you have in your hand.

The book assumes that you love and seek to obey the Lord. It also presupposes that you are actively watching over and seeking the hearts of your children.

Friendships, especially among women, are so important. I hope this book will also help *you* as you guide your daughter to make enriching friendships that glorify the Lord. She will certainly need some good women friends when she gets to be our age! Why not help her learn to make and keep friends now?

I've included discussion questions for each chapter at the end of the book. Perhaps you and your daughter will enjoy spending time pondering over some of the questions over a cup of tea.

Blessings to you!

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Contents

A Letter to Mothers	3
1. The Most Important People in the World	5
2. Friends are Gifts	9
3. We are All Different	13
4. Learn to Listen	18
5. Be Gracious	24
6. Sharing and Contentment	28
7. Love and Forgiveness	34
8. Prayer	42
Discussion Questions	45

Chapter 1: The Most Important People in the World

This book is about how you can be a better friend.

All of us need some help on how to get along with other people. And this includes our friends.

But before we talk about friends, you will want to remember that the most important people in your life are your family members.

God gave you parents to love you. He gave you parents to guide you, to teach you and to encourage you. (Deut. 6: 7-9)



He gave you parents to help you become a better and more beautiful girl.

Your father and mother love you more than anyone else in the world. Indeed, in this world, one of the most precious gifts while growing up is a loving relationship with your father and mother.

God also gave some of you brothers and sisters.

Some of you have just brothers while others have just sisters.

Then some of you do not have any brothers or sisters.



Family size does not matter.

For no matter how big or small your family is, you will want your family members to be the most important and special people to you.

One day, when you marry and leave home, your husband will be the most important person to you. (Genesis 2:24)

But for now, as you are growing from a young girl to a lovely woman, remember that your family members are the closest people in your life.

Your parents love you best. Trust them.



Scripture Referred to in Chapter 1

Deuteronomy 6:7-9

7And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

8And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

9And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Genesis 2:24

24Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Chapter 2: Friends Are Gifts

God also gives you friends.

And friends can be very dear and special.

The Bible tells you to choose your friends wisely. Until you are older and wiser, your parents will help you choose your friends.

Your parents, who love you very much, and who want to obey God, are the best people to advise you. (Proverbs 1:8-9)

They will help you decide whether or not a person will make a good friend.



Do you know why this is important?

The friends you choose will help you:

- Love God more (Proverbs. 27:17) or
- Love sinful things more (James 4:4)

When you and your parents pray about the kind of friends you should have (Philippians 4: 6) and God sends them to you, these friends are gifts from God.

When you receive a gift, especially a gift you've asked for, you don't usually toss it aside.

You cherish your gift.

If it's a pet, you make sure to feed it regularly and to keep it warm and safe. You don't take it for granted even after time has passed.

If it's a book or a game, you don't throw it around or leave it outside for the rain to damage it.

By taking care of the gift, you also honor the giver.

Good, godly friends are gifts from God.

You honor God when you don't take them for granted. You please God when you learn how to get along with them. You glorify Him when you reflect genuine and sincere love for the friends God has brought into your life.

The rest of the book will introduce to you some principles that will help you become a better friend to the friends God has blessed you with.



Scripture Referred to in Chapter 2

Proverbs 1:8-9

8My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

9For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

Proverbs 27:17

17Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

James 4:4

4Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Chapter 3: We Are All Different

How can you be a good friend?

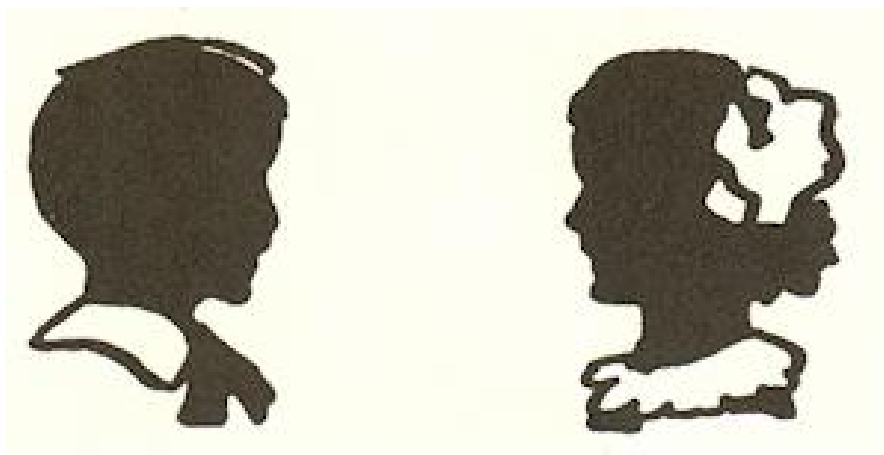
First, remember that everyone is different.

Look around you.

Can you see that God has made different species of birds and plants, insects and woodland creatures?

God is so creative. No two profiles, or fingerprints or heavenly stars are alike! (1 Corinthians 15:41)

When God made you, He made you unique. He made you special and for a reason. (Psalm 139:14-16; Ephesians 2:10)



When God made your friends, He also made them unique.

He made them special, and for a reason as well.

You and your friends are individuals.

Even when you and your friends share many things in common, you are all individuals who think and act differently.

So, to be a good friend, you must first remember that you and your friends are not alike in every way!

Don't always expect your friends to want to play the games you want to play.



Don't always expect them to like the music or books or food you enjoy.

For instance, some people like chocolate ice-cream.

Others prefer strawberry ice-cream.

No one is right and no one is wrong.

It is just an opinion.

A preference.

If someone likes chocolate ice-cream while you like strawberry ice-cream, it doesn't mean the person dislikes you.

It just means that her taste buds, that were created by God, are different from your taste buds.

And that is all right.

How boring this world would be if everyone liked yellow and no other color.

Or everyone just wanted to play soccer all the time.

Or everyone just wanted macaroni and cheese at every meal.

Everyone is different.

Enjoy the difference.

Rejoice in the difference.

You are all unique.



Scripture Referred to in Chapter 3

1 Corinthians 15:41

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

Psalm 139:14-16

14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

Ephesians 2:10

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Chapter 4: Learn To Listen

Have you noticed how babies and toddlers don't care whether or not their mothers are busy?

If they want something, they bawl or interrupt. It is not natural for them to be patient or to wait for their turn to speak or to say excuse me.

Now that you are older, your parents will have trained you to wait patiently for your turn.

Your parents will have reminded you not to interrupt when they are talking on the phone.

If you interrupt an adult conversation accidentally, you apologize or say pardon me.



But sometimes, with your friends, you may forget to listen as attentively as you should.

To be a good friend means you listen more than you talk.

I know how it is when you are excited, and you have so many ideas you need to share, or so many stories you simply have to tell.

I understand how you need to just get that word in.



Well, wait.

Give your friends a chance to share what they have in mind.

When they have something to say, listen to them.

Don't interrupt them. (Ecclesiastes 10:12)

Look at them in the eye when they are speaking to you.

You don't have to stare at them, but do give them respectful attention.

You show your friends you truly care for them when you listen carefully. (Philippians 2:3)



If you want to share an idea:

- Don't talk non-stop.
- Don't insist on your own way.
- Don't try to make everyone agree with you.
- Don't pout or sulk when no one agrees with you.
- Don't shed tears of frustration when there is no agreement.

Instead:

- Ask your friends what they think of the idea.
- Ask your friends if they have other suggestions.
- Say, "It's all right," if they don't care for your idea.

It is really all right if your friends don't like your idea! That doesn't mean it is a bad idea.

We are all different, remember?

Let me share with you a little secret.

The better you listen to your friends, the chances are they will better listen to you!

It works both ways.

So give it a try, and listen well.

And yes, there will be times when your friends think your idea is terrific.

When that happens, say “Thank you, I’m glad you like it!”

Of course when that happens, you feel happy.

And I'm happy for you too!



Scripture Referred to in Chapter 4

Ecclesiastes 10:12

12The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.

Philippians 2:3

3Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Chapter 5 : Be Gracious

In the last chapter, we talked about listening to your friends and not pushing your own idea.

You know how wonderful it is when your friends like your ideas.

Well, to be a friend means you be gracious and learn to support your friends' ideas in return. (Philippians 2:4)

For example, everyone, but you, wants to play “Hide and Seek”.

You are the only one who wants to play “School”.

You can respond in several ways:

- Say you don't like the idea and refuse to play.
- Sulk and then play unhappily or reluctantly.
- Run away and hide.
- Put your disappointment aside and play cheerfully.

The fourth response is not easy, but if you train yourself to be gracious and cooperative, then you will have more fun.

There is a big word that adults like to use.

The word is ATTITUDE.

Everyone can choose to have a good attitude or a bad attitude.

It is a choice.

If you decide in your heart that you will have a good attitude, nothing will disappoint you for long because you have already decided to be cheerful and cooperative even before you get together with your friends.



Children who have bad attitudes are usually unhappy.

These are the ones you hear whining and grumbling and complaining a lot. They are so hard to please.

Sometimes, they are described as being bratty. What an unpleasant term that is!

Children with bad attitudes usually end up with very few friends.

They are no fun to be with.

Choose to have a GREAT ATTITUDE. (Romans 12:10)

Be gracious.



Scripture Referred to in Chapter 5

Philippians 2:4

4Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others..

Romans 12:10

10Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

Chapter 6 : Sharing and Contentment

So far, what have you learned about being a good friend?

First, remember you and your friends are unique. God made you all that way.

Second, remember to be a good listener.

Third, remember to be gracious.

In this chapter, there is something else you need to remember.

Remember that everything you have or own actually belongs to God. (James 1:17)



Whether it is your clothes, books, toys or talents, everything originates from Him. *Every* good gift comes from our Father above.

When you remember this, two important thoughts come to mind:

- You can share freely.
- You don't ever need to envy your friends.

What does this mean?

It means you can happily share EVERYTHING God has blessed you with and you can be happy for EVERYTHING God has blessed your friends with.



What can you share?

You can share your toys, your games and your books.

You can share your talents.

You can share kind words and determine never to speak rudely to any of your friends.

You can share your time by listening well and by writing encouraging notes to your friends.

You can surprise them with little gifts.



Then, if your friends are better than you at some things or if they have something you wish you had, you will not feel discouraged because everything they have comes from God.

God has a purpose for you and for your friends.

Your friends will have things or talents you may never have.

But that is all right.

God expects them to use the talents He has given them in a responsible way. (Matthew 25:14-30)

He also expects you to develop and use whatever talents He has given you in a responsible way. (1 Peter 4:10)

When you remember this, you will always be content.

And a contented person makes a great friend.

Do you know why?

A contented person is never envious of another person.

A contented person can rejoice with another person.

A contented person is a joyful person. (Proverbs 15:15)

A contented person is a sharing person.

And it is more fun to be a joyful and sharing friend than a grumpy and selfish one. (Proverbs 15:13)

So do you see how important it is that you remember that EVERY GOOD GIFT comes from God?



Scripture Referred to in Chapter 6

James 1:17

17Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Matthew 25:21; 29

(A study of the Parable of The Talents is recommended)

21His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

29For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

30And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

1 Peter 4:10

10As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Proverbs 15:13

13A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

Chapter 7: Love and Forgiveness

I think this is the most important chapter in this book.

What I'm going to share now will not only help you become a better friend. It will also help you become a better daughter and sister.

Remember, no one is perfect. (Romans 3:23)

You need the Lord Jesus in your life.

Have you ever asked Him to become your Savior?

If you have not, drop this book and talk to your father or mother about it now.



If you have asked Jesus to be your Savior, then you are a child of God. (John 3:16)

But even when you are a child of God, you will still sin.

You don't want to sin.

But sometimes, due to lack of self-control or some bad habits, you say and do things you know you shouldn't. (Romans 7:15)

When that happens, don't despair.

Confess your sins.

Repent.

God will forgive you.

And you can start all over again living the righteous life.
(1 John 1:9)

Remember your friends are also not perfect.

I should hope they are Christians and they love the Lord.

But as you may well know, being a Christian does not make you perfect!

You friends will have struggles. (Your parents struggle too!)

Sometimes they struggle more than other times.

So there will be periods or moments when they don't seem to be very kind, or gracious, or helpful. Do not be sad.



Try to understand them.

They are not mad at you!

They are having a “bad” day.

So forgive them.

Love them anyway.

The Bible says love covers a lot of sins. (1 Peter 4:8)

Do you know what that means?

It means you let love be like a thick blanket or a heavy cloak.

What happens when you throw a blanket over something?

You can no longer see that something, right?

The blanket is over it.

It is hiding it.

It is like that thing is no longer there.

Well, when your friends are rude or thoughtless, the best thing to do is to put a blanket of love over those things. (Colossians 3:14)

Forgive and forget the things that make you sad. Don't dwell on them. Neither do you want to repeat that matter to other friends. (Proverbs 17:9)

Learn to be patient and kind. (1 Corinthians 13)

Remember those times when you too had bad days and you too said and did foolish things.

Even as God has forgiven you, you forgive your friends in love. (Colossians 3:13)

Where there is much love, there is also much forgiveness!

A forgiving heart is a happy heart. (Proverbs 14:21)

A heart that bears grudges is a sad heart.

Forgive and be happy!



Scripture Referred to in Chapter 7

Romans 3:23

23For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Romans 7:15

15For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

1 John 1:9

9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 Peter 4:8

8And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

Colossians 3:14

14And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

Proverbs 17:9

9He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

4Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

6Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

Colossians 3:13

13Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Proverbs 14:21

21He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.

Chapter 8 : Prayer

Let us review how you can be a good friend:

- Remember that you are unique. Your friends are also unique. Rejoice in the differences.
- Remember to be a good listener and don't demand your own way.
- Remember to be gracious. Choose to have a good attitude.
- Remember God is the giver of all good things. So be content and share.
- Remember to love and forgive your friends when things go wrong.

Finally, the best thing you can do for your friends is to pray for them. You show love and care when you pray for them.

- Is there something they need?
- Are they sad about something?
- Are they not feeling well?
- Did they lose something?

Pray to God for them.

Our God is a faithful God, and nothing is too small for Him.

Do you think He will also hear and answer when you pray about your friendships?

Of course He will. (1 John 5:14,15)

He will be delighted to.

After all, He is our very best Friend and He knows all about friendships.

In fact, He loved us so much, He laid down His life for us!
(John 15:13-14)



How wonderful is our precious Lord, our Savior and Friend!

Well, we have come to the end of this short book.

There are still many more things to learn about being a good friend. I might write more about them one day.

But for now, I hope the principles contained in this book will help you learn to become a better friend than you already are.

I wish you many wonderful, fun and happy friendships as you learn more about the Lord and grow in His likeness.

God bless you!



Scripture Referred to in Chapter 8

John 5:14-15

14And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

15And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

John 15:13-14

13Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Discussion Questions and Activities

Chapter 1: The Most Important People in the World

1. Who should be the closest people to you? Why?
2. Why should you trust your parents?
3. List five ways your parents show their love towards you.
4. What are some ways you and your family can do together to keep close as a family?

Chapter 2: Friends are Gifts

1. How should you choose your friends?
2. Who are the best people to help you choose your friends? Why?
3. Can you think of a time a friend encouraged you to love God more?
4. Can you think of a time a friend wanted you to do something that you knew was unwise?
5. What kind of friend do you want? Why?
6. What is a gift?
7. How should we take care of gifts special people give us?
8. Why should we learn how to be a good friend?

Chapter 3: We are All Different

1. What does it mean to be an individual?
2. Are you unique and special? Why?
3. Are your friends unique and special? Why?
4. Why is it important to remember that you and your friends are all individuals?
5. Think of a time when you and a close friend had a different idea about something.
6. Would you rather have friends who are very much like you or very different from you? Why?
7. When it comes to the Word of God, we do not compromise. We do not tolerate untruths. List some of the truths you and your family will never waver from no matter what other people think or feel.
8. But when it comes to individual tastes, is it all right to be tolerant and understanding? Why?

Chapter 4: Learn to Listen

1. Do you still interrupt your parents or brothers and sisters when they are talking to one another?
2. Why do you think it is rude to interrupt?
3. Why do you think people interrupt other people?
4. Can you think of a time when you were a good listener?
5. Can you think of a time when you were a bad listener?
6. When you are talking, how do you feel if no one pays attention to what you are saying?
7. When your friends are talking, how can you show you are interested in what they are saying?
8. When you listen well, what are you actually saying to your friends?

Chapter 5: Be Gracious

1. How do you usually respond when your friends don't like your ideas?
2. Is that a good response? Why?
3. What does it mean to be gracious?
4. Can you think of a time when you decided to be gracious when you really didn't feel happy about the decisions your friends made?

5. Can you think of a specific time when you were not gracious at play?
6. Do you like playing with friends who are always grumpy and complaining? Why?
7. Can you name a few people you know who seem to have a great attitude about everything? Are they fun to be with? Why?
8. What you are outside is really an expression of what you are inside. If you think you have an attitude problem (and many of us do to some extent!), then work on the inside first. Ask your parents to help you!

Chapter 6: Sharing and Contentment

1. Is there any reason why anyone should be proud (*in the arrogant sense*) about her possessions or her talents? Why?
2. List 5 things you are thankful God has blessed you with.
3. How can you share with your friends some of the things God has blessed you with?
4. Think of a friend. What has God blessed her with that you don't have? Are you happy for her?
5. How does sharing make you a good friend?
6. How does contentment help in a friendship?

Chapter 7: Love and Forgiveness

1. Are you perfect? How do you know that?
2. Can you think of anyone who is perfect?
3. How can we reach Heaven if we are not perfect?
4. Why does everyone need Jesus? Do you need Jesus?
5. Are you a Christian?
6. Are Christians perfect?
7. What kind of sins do you struggle with?
8. What do you do when you disobey your parents and God?
9. Does God stop loving you when you sin? How do you know?
10. Does that mean you can keep on sinning?
11. What should you do when your friends are unkind to you?
12. Should you repeat thoughtless remarks made to you to other friends? Why?
13. Can you think of a time when you forgave your friend?
14. Can you think of a time when a friend forgave you?
15. Why should you have a forgiving spirit?
16. Can an unforgiving person be a happy person?

8. Prayer

1. Try to pray as a family at least once a day.
2. Try keeping a prayer journal for one month and see how faithful God is.
3. Think of the last time you prayed for a friend. How did God answer your prayer?
4. Do you think God wants us to pray? Why?
5. Take time to pray for two friends today.
6. Not everyone has found a good friend or two yet. If you do not have any at this stage, you and your parents may want to pray about it. Don't be surprised when God sends you one or two godly friends! God cares about you in *every way!*
7. Ask God to help you be a good and faithful friend. Ask Him to help you apply the principles found in this book.





“A Mother-and-Daughter Book”

Thank you for purchasing this book!
I welcome your comments and suggestions.
“Being a Friend” is the first in the series of
“A Mother and Daughter Book”
Other titles are in the works.