

# 7 Things That Show How and Why Jesus Chose His Friends

When most people think of how to choose their friends they have more of a worldly, casual concept rather than a biblical one. In John 15:15, Jesus told his disciples He called them friends and not servants.

Since the Kingdom of God is based upon relationship and not ministry, it is important we know how to choose our friends wisely.

Many churches and even Christians attempt to engender friendships merely to have nice fellowship together. However, true kingdom fellowship should be with the ultimate goal of getting closer to someone to advance kingdom purposes.

Most folks are too quick to call someone a friend and/or choose friends just because they have a few things in common. Choosing friends should be a lot more important than just picking as a friend someone you merely work with or enjoy watching a football game with. Merely liking someone should not be the only criteria.

There are many people I would like to consistently hang out with. But when it comes to the kingdom, there is more to it than that. I have to ask myself if I am called to build with someone before I make a long-term commitment to him or her.

The reason is obvious: a person's destiny is often determined by those closest to them in regards to quality time spent, mutual goals and common purpose. You are whom you choose to "hang with" the most.

The following are some of the criteria Jesus had before He chose who would be His friends:

**1. He prayed about it.** In Luke 6:12-13 Jesus prayed all night before He chose the twelve closest people to Him. This shows His choice of a friend was not haphazard; neither should ours be.

**2. His friends lived lives of obedience to God.** In John 15:14 Jesus said "I call you friends if you do what I command you." It would be foolish for a believer to make their closest friends and confidantes peopl

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### **2. His friends lived lives of obedience to God.**

In John 15:14 Jesus said "I call you friends if you do what I command you." It would be foolish for a believer to make their closest friends and confidantes people who live purposeless lives before the Lord. This is not to say that we cannot have friends who do not follow Christ. Jesus at times spent time with sinners (Luke 7:34). However, He did not hang out with them merely to have a good time but to win them to His Father so they would eventually live a life of obedience. Also, these "sinners" were not the ones He invested the most time with unless they became His disciples. Paul encouraged Timothy to pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22).

Consequently, we should not be close friends with someone unless they are serious about pursuing the things of God.

### **3. Jesus chose His friends to be with Him in order to send them out.**

Mark 3:14 teaches that the primary expectation Jesus had at first with those He chose as friends was to spend time together. They had to learn to "do life" together, not just Bible studies and attend synagogue. However, the ultimate result of their proximity to Him was to be sent out to preach. After all, how could they proclaim a Jesus they did not know and how could they know Him unless they spent quality time with Him? No one should be quick to call someone a friend before they have spent much quality time with them and know them personally.

#### **4. Jesus chose friends He could share His heart with.**

John 15:15 teaches us that Jesus shared His heart with His friends who understood Him. In Matthew 13:11 Jesus told His friends "To you it has been given to understand the secrets of the kingdom of heaven but to them (non-friends) it has not been given." If someone cannot understand your heart or believe in your vision it will be difficult for them to be a true kingdom friend.

#### **5. Jesus proactively chose His friends.**

John 15:16 teaches us (in the context of His choosing friends) that people did not choose Him but vice versa. Although this passage is also referring to salvation, it also shows that His methodology for choosing friends was proactive (not reactive) based on their calling to build with Him. Consequently, we should determine in our hearts who we should pursue in a friendship. Don't merely pick those who desire to be close to you; proactively choose people based on a leading of the Lord. Not everyone who wanted to be close to Jesus were given that access; out of the multitudes He only had an inner circle of three, then 12, and then 70.

The others only had access to Him during brief moments of their lives. If you are going to be fruitful in the kingdom you cannot spend a lot of time with every person you meet. For example I do not feel guilty for not answering every Facebook message or email sent to me; if I did I would either suffer burnout, leave important work undone, or lose my primary focus and miss my calling.

#### **6. Jesus's friends received His hard sayings.**

In John 6:66-68 many of His disciples left Him because they could not receive the meat of the Word! His true friends were thus separated from those who were merely temporary acquaintances. Your true friends will stand by you even when God gives you a hard saying and/or call to do something that

is not understood by many other people.

## **7. Jesus's friends were those who stood by Him during His trials.**

Luke 22:28-29 shows that His closest friends were those who stuck it out with Him during His earthly trials. God will often allow you to go through a severe personal or ministerial trial to test those around you to demonstrate who your real friends are. You can only build with those who are faithful to you during difficult times and not only when things are going well.

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# **A Steady Diet of These 5 Foods Leads to a Serious Medical Condition**

Did you know that inflammation is among the root causes of major diseases? Cancer, arthritis, diabetes and obesity are only among the serious medical conditions that stem from inflammation. This explains why experts and health enthusiasts are pushing for anti-inflammatory diets to minimize risks.

If you love your health and you want to live longer, now is the right time to start paying attention to what goes inside your body. And if you want to save yourself from all those

expensive medical bills and prescription drugs, here are five of the many foods you have to limit or avoid in order to prevent inflammation.

**1. White flour baked goods.** Did you know that white flour is converted into white sugar once it reaches your mouth? Every time you eat anything made of white flour, the starches will break into the sugars immediately, causing your blood sugar to spike. Aside from this, white flour has high gluten content, making it difficult for some people to digest it, which can lead to inflammation.

**2. Red meat and processed meat.** According to a study conducted at the University of California-San Diego School of Medicine, red meat contains Neu5Gc, a molecule that humans don't naturally produce. This means that every time you eat red meat, your body develops anti-Neu5Gc antibodies. It's your body's immune response that can trigger chronic inflammatory response.

And if you're still not convinced, a 2007 report by the World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research disclosed that processed meat is among the primary causes of colon and rectal cancer.

**3. Cola.** Bad news, Coke and Pepsi lovers. The caramel coloring in brown cola has a chemical called *4-methylimidazole*, which is derived from ammonia—and it is banned in a lot of countries but not in the U.S. Aside from this, a 12-ounce can of regular cola has nine teaspoons of sugar, which can spike your insulin and cause chronic inflammation.

**4. Common cooking oils.** Most every time you cook something, you will need cooking oil to complete your meal. More bad news, people: Most common vegetable cooking oils that are stocked in your kitchen cabinet and are used in most homes and restaurants have high Omega-6 fatty acids and low Omega-3 fatty acids. Yes, you need fatty acids but an imbalance

between these two promotes inflammation and creates a breeding ground for serious inflammatory diseases such as cancer and heart disease.

**5. Feedlot-raised meat.** There will always be a massive difference between grass-fed and grain-fed beef. And sadly, most commercially produced meats are fed with grains such as soybeans and corn—a diet that strikes an imbalance between Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids. This means excess fat and translates to high saturated fats too. Aside from grains, cows are injected with hormones and antibiotics to help them grow faster and prevent them from getting sick.

The foods on this list are only some of the many foods that can cause inflammation. Therefore, watch what you eat and be careful with what goes inside your body. If you can say no or look for alternatives, then you should do so. The last thing you need is a long-term stay in the hospital, right?

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*For the original article, visit .*

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# 7 C's For Communicating With Teens

My wife, Susan, has always been really good at communicating with our five children, now ages 20-25. In fact, throughout the years, I've often sought her advice on how I should handle various situations with our kids.

So Susan has given me most of the material you'll now read below. I've compiled her wisdom into the 7 C's for communicating with teens.

**1. Be Calm.** When you approach a teen with a lot of emotion, such as anger, anxiety or enthusiasm, it can make a teen feel pressured to comply. That approach doesn't work because teens crave independence. They see themselves as older and capable and, as a result, they want to make more decisions for themselves. Instead, try approaching calmly and be open to discussion. This will take the pressure off the teen, and keep the conversation from escalating into opposition.

**2. Be Confident.** Teens can be very persuasive. And as their persuasive ability increases, you may lose your confidence and begin to doubt yourself. If your teen is persuasive and persistent, the confidence goes even more quickly as the teen wears you out! Stand firm and know when you are weakening. Enlist your spouse to pinch hit with you and interface with the teen for a while.

**3. Be Clear.** If you are making a request, make your request clear and have the details of the request firmly in your mind or, better yet, written out on paper. All children know how best to win over or distract their parents. Teens are children with a lot of years of experience. Do not let them distract you with other issues. Stick to the clear request you have outlined.

**4. Be Compassionate** Two other C's, Be Caring and Be Comforting, could also go under this heading. With all of the changes your teen is experiencing physically, mentally, and emotionally, it's really important to do your best to identify them in their feel what they feel ... and then comfort and care for them. Your teen is not looking for someone to lecture, but to listen to them. Ask them questions like, "So, how did that make you feel?" Or "That must have been so hard to go through that." Or "What can I do to help?" Then, be sure to listen. And always let them know that you love them no matter what and have their best interests at heart.

**5. Be Consistent.** As you communicate with your child, be sure that you are always consistent in what you are saying to them so there is no confusion from one conversation to the next. And be sure that you and your spouse are on the same page so that one of you is not conveying something completely different to your child on a particular matter. It's also absolutely critical that your child sees you, their parent, leading a consistent life where your walk matches your talk.

**6. Be Courageous.** When tackling tough topics with your teen, you'll need to be courageous and get out of your comfort zone. Courageously speak truth into your child's life on topics like sex and pornography. Before you do, you may want to check out [3 B's Every Parent Must Know When Talking to a Son about Pornography](#) and [10 Things You Should Know When Talking to Your Child about Sex](#).

**7. Be Concise.** Teens are very cryptic; think text messaging. Long, complicated speeches are exasperating to them, especially after listening to seven teachers for seven hours every school day. If you are asking them to do something, make your request clear, firm, and concise. Do not make it a big deal. If they agree to your request, acknowledge it positively. If they do not agree, do not engage. Just walk away calmly without saying another word. This sends a message to your child that you expect it to be done without further

conversation. Of course, if it's not done, you'll need to address it with them another time.

Which of these C's do you struggle with the most when communicating with your teen?

**Mark Merrill** is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit [.](#)

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## **WATCH: 10 Steps to Get F.I.T. God's Way**

WATCH: 10 Steps to Get . God's Way

In this video, fitness model Kim Dolan Leto talks about how she went from her overweight 30s to the cover of top fitness magazines in her 40s.

Lorie Johnson/CBN Medical Reporter

One of the most photographed fitness models in America, Kim Dolan Leto, is speaking out about the one thing that took her from overweight in her 30s to the cover of the top fitness magazines in her 40s: her faith in God.

Leto's book, *Ten Steps to .* (Faith Inspired Transformation), brings a message of hope and empowerment to people struggling with their weight.

. teaches readers how to "get healthy, happy and fit God's way," and emphasizes spending time with God, treating one's self with care and kindness while renewing one's mind.

Leto shares illustrations on how combining faith with fitness

is the, “key to finding strength and results that last,” as well as an eating program jump start plan.

*Watch her interview with CBN News Health Reporter Lorie Johnson, and find out more by visiting her website.*

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## **Can We Overcome the Obstacles to Revival?**

Year after year I hear the same fervent prayers rising to heaven from many denominations and movements across the body of Christ: “God, pour out Your Spirit. Send revival.” And yet the outpouring we long for has not manifested. What gives? Doesn’t God want to send revival? Doesn’t God want to see the church wake up and rise up? Doesn’t God want to see the flood of souls come into the kingdom that results from an awakening?

Why won’t God answer our intercessory prayers? After all, James 5:16 says, “Confess your faults to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much.” Are our prayers not heartfelt enough? Do we lack persistence? Do we lack righteousness? Does God lack the power to bring revival to our nation? Of course not! So what gives?

There’s not one single reason, but there is a solution. Some of the challenges are in the culture and some are in the church. It’s up to the body of Christ, though, to recognize and overcome those challenges because lives are at stake.

Joseph Mattera, founder of Mattera International Ministries, bishop of Resurrection Church in New York and the U.S. ambassador for the International Coalition of Apostles, offers

a laundry list of modern challenges to awakening and revival.

“Many—if not most—evangelical and Pentecostal churches have only a lukewarm commitment to seeing the power of God operate in their midst,” Mattera says. “Even in Pentecostal churches rare is the evidence of the gifts of the Spirit and healing power of God in both the church services and the people’s lives.”

As he sees it American and Western Christianity is bowing more and more to the mindset of its culture, devolving into churches that offer nice programs and therapeutic messages run by corporate-style church governments and systems. In most cases, he bemoans, the simplicity and the power of the gospel has been replaced by this pragmatism and naturalism.

There is more than a single reason revival has not manifested, but one major culprit is division. I’ve long noticed a lack of unity in the body of Christ, and it has long grieved me. But the Holy Spirit has recently given me a keen awareness of the gravity of this lack of harmony. It grieves me deep in my spirit—and if it grieves me, I can only imagine how it grieves the Holy Spirit.

The anointing will flow in our churches when we come to the unity of the faith. Sure, we may disagree on whether the gifts of the Spirit have ceased or whether women can preach, but we can still unite under the Apostles Creed. And if we want revival—not just powerful meetings but sustained revival that brings true change—we must unite.

I am convinced that disunity in the body of Christ is causing more problems than we can see even with a discerning eye. I am challenging you—and challenging myself—to be in one accord and of one mind (Phil. 2:2), to put on love that binds us together in perfect harmony (Col. 3:14), and strive side by side for the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27), even with those who have small differences in how they view the Rapture, spiritual


gifts and other issues that aren't central to the gospel of Christ.

Having said that, let me offer a balancing word here. Pursuing unity doesn't mean tolerating compromise or sin in the church to avoid stirring the waters. Unity doesn't mean we ignore deeper issues that will ultimately bring destruction to people's lives. Unity doesn't mean preaching a gospel of inclusion. We cannot compromise the gospel. There is no revival without repentance. Unity and repentance are baselines.

I believe a fresh move of the Spirit is coming, but I believe it will take place in our response to desperation. I believe desperation is the ultimate key to overcoming every obstacle to revival.

We see plenty of examples in the Bible of God answering desperate prayers. Jairus was desperate for his daughter's healing (Matt. 9:18-26). The woman with the issue of blood was desperate for her own healing (Luke 8:43-48). Blind Bartimaeus was desperate for his sight (Mark 10:46-52). All of these received what they cried out for. Throughout Scripture we find that when people cry out to the Lord in desperation, the Lord hears their cries and delivers them. It may not happen overnight, but it happens consistently.

America is just not desperate enough yet. But the desperation that brings revival starts with a remnant making an appeal to heaven. Are you part of that remnant?

 *Adapted from The Next Great Move of God by Jennifer LeClaire, copyright 2015, published by Charisma House. Pockets of revival are breaking out across America as intercessors are being called to once again "appeal to heaven." This book serves as a means to fan the flames of revival and equip you to sustain it. To order your copy click [here](#).*

## **Prayer Power for the Week of May 25, 2015**

Continue to cry out to God on this Memorial Day and the week following for a move of God that would shake our foundations and establish us once again as a nation under God. Cry out for personal repentance and revival. Pray that believers would unite across denominational lines in oneness of humility, prayer and purpose, so that God would hear our prayers and heal our land. Thank Him for His protection and past provision in spite of our turning away from Him. Pray for fervent prayer warriors to rise up calling for a harvest of souls, laborers for His harvest field and worldwide revival (Matt. 9: 18-26; Luke 8:43-48; Mark 10:46-52).

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## **Roma Downey and Mark Burnett Personally Invite Charisma Readers to Watch A.D.**

This week's episode of *A.D. The Bible Continues* (Sunday, May 24, 9/8c) will cover one of the most significant and pivotal events in the book of Acts—the conversion of the persecutor, Saul of Tarsus. While travelling on the road to Damascus to persecute Christians, Saul has a life-changing vision and encounter with Jesus that eventually leads to his sudden “turning point” and newly-found ministry as Paul The Apostle (one of the most influential figures in Biblical history).

By integrating dramatic history, Episode 8 tells the full story of this New Testament record of the conversion (Acts 9) from Saul's point of view—an event that is an important element of Christian history as it shows the Lord's plan for human redemption.

Watch this preview video as series creators Roma Downey and Mark Burnett personally invite *Charisma* readers to watch Episode 8.

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## 6 R's That Can Help Revive Your Marriage

Initially, George balked at the idea of 6 “R” words for a stronger marriage. “Making relationships work,” George insisted, “is about nothing more than ‘listening to your gut.’”

He continued, “Checklists can throw you right off. My preacher told me that legalism leads to bondage, and the last thing I want to do is to stifle my marriage.” Bravely said, George.

But how’s that working for you? So does that mean you’re utilizing that freedom to shower your beloved with all kinds of imaginative attention? Are you leveraging that flexibility to grab any creative idea that pops up in your head and run with it? Is your love unfettered by the constraints of checklists, Top Tens, brainstorming and other people’s experience?

“Well,” George answered, sheepishly, “that’s why we’re meeting for breakfast this morning. I’m kind of stuck in the marriage department. My gut tells me that Linda and I are drifting apart.”

George has all the good intentions in the world. He loves Linda. He is faithful, respectful and shares responsibility when it comes to the children, but he senses this inexorable

slipping away when it comes to a heart-level connection with his wife.

He's right, it's not a checklist that's going to make a marriage stronger. It's a man driven by love and commitment to put some great ideas into practice.

I shared the following 6 "R" words with George. "They're not a checklist," I told him, "so much as a series of intentions." But they are a series of intentions that must be put into practice.

**1. Recommit.** Commitment works best as a daily initiative. Like most things that are good for us, commitment to our spouse benefits from being re-upped every morning. We all tend to default to *me first* if we're not intentional. So we recommend beginning each new day with a deliberate act of kindness to get the ball rolling. It's not about us.

**2. Refresh.** Sometimes it's as simple as refreshing the screen on a computer to get all the data up-to-date. Other times, refresh is more like changing a clogged filter in the HVAC or throwing out a tray of ice that's all fused together. No matter how we approach refreshing, it's always about sweeping away the cobwebs and making sure our love and our attention to our spouse is constantly reimagining and moving away from what is stale and mundane.

**3. Remember.** We recommend huddling up together with your wife and reading your wedding vows again. We love to see couples recapture the raw thrill of anticipation for sharing the same room, building a life together. Remember what made you ask her out in the first place. Now determine what it is that would motivate you to ask her out again ... and do it.

**4. Renovate.** Sometimes things wear out. Is your conversational life boring? Have you forgotten how to have fun? Get creative and make something happen. Have you stopped dreaming together? Build some new dreams.

**5. Romance.** Sometimes it's our romance that needs renovation. When did you last give her flowers? Have you swept her off her feet recently? Do you flirt? Do you tell her how much she gets under your skin? Have you ever thought about trying once again to win her love all over again?

**6. Recalibrate.** You may have been married just a couple of years or you may be 40 years in. Regardless, you have changed physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, and so has she. What worked when you were dating may need updating, reconstructing, reimagining and recalibrating today. Maybe you need to dial it down; maybe you need to dial it up. One thing's for sure—all our settings could use some thoughtful readjusting.

How could you recalibrate your marriage for the better?

**Derek Maul** *is the author of five books, a nationally recognized men's resources, a committed encourager and a pilgrim in progress. He divides his time between writing and traveling to speak about the fully engaged life.*

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## **Birmingham Boy Sees 26 Diseases Instantly Cured in Miraculous Healing**

Paul the apostle didn't want us to be ignorant of spiritual gifts. In his first letter to the church at Corinth, he explained that there are various gifts of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor. 12:4). He goes on to list them:

“To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another

the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But that one and very same Spirit works all these, dividing to each one individually as He will" (1 Cor. 12:8-11).

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A little while later in his letter, Paul exhorts us to follow after love and desire these spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy (see 1 Cor. 14:1). For many years, I was in a ministry that put a heavy emphasis on prophesying and discerning of spirits but we didn't see any healings or working of miracles. In fact, we were actually taught that we should not desire spiritual gifts.

Nevertheless, I still believed that signs and wonders follow those who believe (see Mark 16:17). I just didn't see what I was believing for—until recently. I've been in meetings in recent days where I've seen the gifts in operation that Paul lists in 1 Corinthians 12 and it has stirred a hunger in me to follow his instruction in 1 Corinthians 14 to earnestly desire spiritual gifts.

Of course, it's all for God's glory. I believe God wants to uncap the wells of the supernatural, but He needs us to press in and earnestly desire to see those wells uncapped. One way to stir your desire is to watch healing testimonies from days gone by.

During a recent School of the Prophets at Awakening House of Prayer in the Fort Lauderdale area, Ron Teal told me about an RW Schambach video in which he describes a little boy in Birmingham, Alabama, who was instantly healed of 26 diseases

and deformities in an A.A. Allen meeting during the Voice of Healing Movement.

I made the mistake of watching this at midnight when I got home from the meeting. It messed me up. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (see Heb. 13:8). If He can heal a little boy of 26 diseases and deformities in the 1950s, He can heal the hard cases today. God is looking for yielded vessels who will earnestly desire spiritual gifts and build the faith the exercise them for His glory.

Check out the video and let it stir your faith to the supernatural to manifest in the church again and help awaken the church.