



FRIENDSHIP

LESSON 3

THE RX FOR HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS

HeartLine
CROSSLINE COMMUNITY CHURCH





Get Healthy: Friendship

Lesson Three: The Rx for Healthy Friendships

Look Back: 10 Minutes

1. Review the four components of touch points from lesson two. (Touch points are 1) individual 2) personal 3) encouraging 4) sincere) Which did you choose to work on? Share the results with your group.
2. Friendship requires initiation and response. Did you seek to improve the way you initiate or respond to friends this week? If so, how? If not, brainstorm a few easy ways to be a better initiator and a better responder (ex. Have a standing date on the calendar).
3. If you have unhealthy, unsafe friends in your life, did you prayerfully consider how God wants you to handle these friends? Did you do what *God* told you to do? (Note: it's easy to do what our feelings dictate, or what our friends direct, but only God knows you, your circumstances, and your friend(s).) Discuss.

Look Ahead: 50 Minutes

How can you have healthy friendships?

The answer may be less complicated than you think. In fact, it's pretty simple.

Be healthy.

Because healthy people have healthy friendships.

There are numerous benefits to emotional, relational and spiritual health. First, healthy people spot unhealthy ways of relating that unhealthy people often miss. This means healthy people have the ability to stop unhealthy friendship tendencies before they become habits, or avoid unhealthy friendships altogether.

Healthy people also have the ability to discern realistic expectations, and live with healthy boundaries. Healthy people don't expect an unhealthy gal to give what she's incapable of giving; healthy people understand that some of their relationships will be more giving, than receiving. And that's ok.

Healthy women know some friends are in our lives for mutual encouragement, some for mentoring (which is not a function of age, but of emotional, relational and/or spiritual maturity), and some friends grace our lives for a moment. Healthy women know God uses each of these types of friendships. Healthy women know which friend falls into which category.

Picture the various types of friends like this:

- Mutual Friends: Equal giving and receiving
 - Mentor Friends: One friend gives more than the other
 - Momentary Friends: Level of giving varies, but longevity is for a season
- 1. Can you identify these three types of friends in your life? Discuss how understanding the three different types of friendships can help you embrace realistic expectation of your friends.**

Friendships aren't stagnant. A gal who starts as a mentor friend can become a mutual friend. A woman who's a mutual friend can go through a difficult season and need you to be more of a mentoring friend, or vice versa.

Healthy women get this. *They live this.* **Therefore, healthy women have the capacity to genuinely love other women for who they are, just as they are.**

Which brings me back to our original question: how can you have healthy friendships? Answer: Be a healthy friend.

- 2. Consider the top 25 signs of an *unhealthy* friendship, listed below. Read the list carefully, and mark any that apply to your current friendships-- either on your end, or the other person's end, or both. (Note: please don't get discouraged if you mark more than a few. You've come to this Bible study to learn how to get healthy friendships. Go, you!)**

1. Compares/Competes
2. Jealous/Envious
3. Gossip
4. Possessive
5. Unrealistic or unexpressed expectations
6. Overly Needy/insecure/fearful
7. Drama Queen
8. Bad influence
9. Negative/critical/judgmental
10. Flaky/unreliable
11. Self-absorbed

12. Manipulative
13. Inflexible/Domineering
14. Clingy
15. Selfish
16. Disloyal/fake
17. Inconsiderate
18. Overly-sensitive
19. Inappropriate boundaries
20. Tries too hard to impress/never vulnerable
21. Indifferent/uncaring
22. Argumentative
23. Dishonest or withholds the truth
24. Hurtful/unkind
25. Holds grudges/unforgiving
26. Other: _____

3. Which of the above unhealthy friendship habits do you struggle with most?

Congratulations! We've just taken the first step toward having healthy friendships--identifying friendship behaviors that are not healthy.

Now that we've identified the problem(s), let's explore the solution.

Being an emotionally, relationally, and spiritually healthy person happens when we:

- 1. Can identify unhealthy ways of relating**
- 2. Can identify healthy ways of relating**
- 3. Stop relating in unhealthy ways**
- 4. Start relating in healthy ways**

Seems pretty simple, doesn't it? Let's consider a real life example: If we think gossip is no big deal (or we don't correctly assess our gossip, as gossip), we'll continue to gossip, and eventually damage a friendship, or lose it altogether. On the other hand, if we identify gossip as destructive, and choose to keep our mouth shut (can anyone say "emotional maturity"?), we save ourselves--and our friends--heartache and hurt.

If we know what's healthy, and we *do* what's healthy, we have the prescription to get healthy. And be healthy. And stay healthy.

The Bible provides oodles of insight about healthy relationships. Did you know there are 59 verses about how we are to treat "one another"? (Don't worry. I didn't

know there were that many, either.) We're going to explore just a few, and make them personal.

Why take the time to personalize the scriptures? Because being healthy means we know the right thing to do, and then...We. Do. It.

3. Look up each passage and fill in the blanks that follow. (Note: you'll want to reference the list of unhealthy friendship habits listed on the previous pages).

a. 1 Peter 1:22 _____ one another deeply, from the heart.

- **Consider the list of unhealthy habits, which behaviors prevent us from obeying this command?**

- **Personalize the command by filling in the blank:** *When I _____, I am not _____ my friend deeply, from the heart, which is unhealthy. But when I _____ I am loving my friend deeply, which is healthy.*

(Example: When I am possessive, I am not loving my friend deeply, but when I freely encourage my friend to have other friends, I am loving her deeply)

b. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 _____ one another

- **Consider the list of unhealthy habits; what behaviors prevent us from obeying this command?**

- **Personalize the command by filling in the blank:** *When I _____, I am not _____ my friend, and that is unhealthy. But when I _____ I am _____ my friend, and that is healthy.*

c. Ephesians 4:32 _____ one another

- Consider the list of unhealthy habits; what behaviors prevent us from obeying this command?

- Personalize the command by filling in the blank: *When I _____, I am not _____ my friend, and that isn't healthy. But when I _____ I am _____ my friend, and that is healthy.*

d. James 4:11 Do not _____ one another

- Consider the list of unhealthy habits; what behaviors prevent us from obeying this command?

- Personalize the command by filling in the blank: *When I _____, I am _____ my friend, which is unhealthy. But when I _____ I am _____ my friend, and that is healthy.*

e. Galatians 5:26 Do not be _____ toward one another

- Consider the list of unhealthy habits; what behaviors prevent us from obeying this command?

- Personalize the command by filling in the blank: *When I _____, I am being _____ toward my friend, which is unhealthy. But when I am _____ toward my friend that is healthy.*

f. Romans 14:13 Do not _____ on one another

- Consider the list of unhealthy habits; what behaviors prevent us from obeying this command?
- Personalize the command by filling in the blank: *When I _____, I am _____ my friend, which is unhealthy. But when I _____ I am _____ my friend, which is healthy.*
- Consider the list of unhealthy habits; what behaviors prevent us from obeying this command?

g. Phil 2:3-4 _____ one another above yourselves (note: some versions say “others” rather than “one another”)

- Consider the list of unhealthy habits; what behaviors prevent us from obeying this command?
- Personalize the command by filling in the blank: *When I _____, I am _____ my friend, which is unhealthy. But when I _____ I am _____ my friend, which is healthy.*

5. Which of the above scriptures resonates most with you? Why?

6. After studying the “one another” verses, what changes will you make to be a healthier, more loving friend? Discuss.

Now that we've explored healthy and unhealthy ways of relating in our friendships, I want you to lean in and listen to what I'm about to say, carefully:

Unhealthy habits hurt feelings. Hurt feelings hurt friendships.

But I didn't need to tell you this, did I? You already know.

Have you ever considered *why* people (including you and me) relate in unhealthy ways in friendship?

Essentially, unhealthy patterns of behavior stem from the following:

- **Insecurity** (I'm insecure in myself, which affects how I relate to you)
- **Discontentment** (I'm discontent with my circumstance, which affects how I relate to you)
- **Selfishness** (I'm more concerned about me than you, which affects how I relate to you)
- **Pride** (I think I'm always right, which affects how I relate to you)
- **Habit** (I learned unhealthy habits of relating early on, which affects how I relate to you)
- **Ignorance** (I'm unaware of my actions, which affects how I relate to you. Note: this is a major reason for unintended hurt in friendships. A good friend doesn't mean to hurt us)

7. How have you seen these underlying issues cause unhealthy behavior in friendship?

None of us is perfect in the way we react, respond, or relate to our friends. Every one of us has room for improvement. But if you notice a *pattern* of relating, it's worth taking the time to figure out the root cause.

For instance, if you sense people think you're too needy, it will be helpful to address the insecurity driving the need. Maybe you struggle with comparison, jealousy or envy, in which case overcoming insecurity and/or discontentment is your ticket to emotional and relational health and better friendships. Or perhaps you have frequent conflicts with friends, and pride could be the reason why.

We'll talk about all of this more next week, but for now, just start to live sensitive to potential patterns of unhealthy behavior, and the feelings associated with it.

8. Let's end this week's lesson on a positive note--because after all, friendship is one of God's best gifts to us! Make a list of healthy, loving, positive qualities of a good friend. Write them down below.

a. Did you make a list? Good. Now, circle every quality you currently possess as a friend.

b. Pick one you didn't circle, and decide how you'll seek to be a better friend this week.

Life Application:

1. This week's lesson focused on the prescription for healthy friendships: Get healthy ourselves. Being an emotionally, relationally, and spiritually healthy person happens when we:

- 1. Can identify unhealthy ways of relating**
- 2. Can identify healthy ways of relating**
- 3. Stop relating in unhealthy ways**
- 4. Start relating in healthy ways**

Use the space below to process what it means to be a healthy friend, a little more personally. Can you identify any unhealthy ways you relate? How will you start relating in a healthier way? You may want to use your answers to question 8 as a starting point. Think it through, pray it through, and write it down.

Optional: Further Reading, Reflection and Bible Study

1. Read through the list of “one another” scriptures. Pick a few to look up and read in context.

Love one another: *John 13:34-35; 15:12, 17; Romans 12:10; 13:8; 14:13; 1 Thes 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thes 1:3; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 3:22; 4:8; 23; 4:7, 11-12; 2 John 1: 5*

Serve one another: *Galatians 5:13; 21; Philippians 2:3; 1 Peter 4:9; 5:5*

Accept one another: *Romans 15:7, 14* Strengthen one another: *Romans 14:19*

Help one another: *Hebrews 3:13; 10:24*

Encourage one another: *Rom 14:19; 15:14; Col 3:16; 1 Thes 5:11; Hebrews 3:13; 10:24-25*

Care for one another: *Galatians 6:2*

Forgive one another: *Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13*

Submit to one another: *Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5*

Commit to one another: *1 John 3:16*

Build trust with one another: *1 John 1:7*

Be devoted to one another: *Romans 12:10*

Be patient with one another: *Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13*

Be interested in one another: *Philippians 2:4*

Be accountable to one another: *Ephesians 5:21*

Confess to one another: *James 5:16*

Live in harmony with one another: *Romans 12:16*

Do not be conceited toward one another: *Romans 13:8*

Do not pass judgment on one another: *Romans 14:13; 15:7*

Do not slander one another: *James 4:11*

Instruct one another: *Romans 16:16*

Greet one another: *Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 13:12*

Admonish one another: *Romans 5:14; Colossians 3:16*

Spur one another on toward love and good deeds: *Hebrews 10:24*

Meet with one another: *Hebrews 10:25*

Agree with one another: *1 Corinthians 16:20*

Be concerned for one another: *Hebrews 10:24*

Be humble toward one another in love: *Ephesians 4:2*

Be compassionate toward one another: *Ephesians 4:32*

Do not be consumed by one another: *Galatians 5:14-15*

Do not anger one another: *Galatians 5:26*

Do not lie to one another: *Colossians 3:9*

Do not grumble toward one another: *James 5:9*

Give preference to one another: *Romans 12:10*

Be at peace with one another: *Romans 12:18*

Sing to one another: *Ephesians 5:19*

Be of the same mind to one another: *Romans 12:16; 15:5*

Comfort one another: *1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11*

Be kind to one another: *Ephesians 4:32*

Live in peace with one another: *1 Thessalonians 5:13*

Carry one another's burdens: *Galatians 6:2*

