

Let me break it down this way: if you hang around the dumpster, you're going to attract a lot of flies. Translation: if your surroundings and daily patterns STINK, you're not going to attract a lot of great-smelling friends! I want you to glance back at your list of friends. Are they friends that really help you grow in Christ, or are they friends that became important for some of the wrong reasons? There's a huge difference between "Christian friends" and "friends who are really Christian." I really don't think any relationships in our life are NEUTRAL. So which direction are your current friends taking you spiritually?

Let me say it differently: you're not going to attract the friends you really want if you continue to settle for the friends who don't make you better. Now let me say something unpopular, something difficult to accept. Sometimes finding the right kind of friend will mean you have to face times of loneliness. Now I didn't say you're alone. God tells us that He wants to stick closer to us than a brother. It is incredibly important that you never confuse feelings of loneliness with actually being alone. When Christ really is your Best Friend, He is as close as your next conversation. As a matter of fact, I don't think I've ever known a great man or woman of God who didn't OFTEN experience loneliness. In fact loneliness helped deepen their authentic friendship with Jesus.

Sometimes you have to take a step of faith in this friendship category. You might have some weekends where you don't know exactly what you're going to do because you're still trying to make the right kind of friends. Hey, this book is called *The Dare* for a reason. The best way to attract a "soul-knitting friend" to yourself is by cultivating a soul-knitting relationship with the Lord first. He's pretty tough to beat. What other friend can always finish your sentences and promises you "abundant life"? Besides that, He's probably the only Friend who took nails in His hands and feet for you. Just remember: Sometimes loneliness is God's cry for friendship time with you.

DAILY DARE...

- (1) How is loneliness different from being alone?**
- (2) Being totally honest with yourself, how have negative (or neutral) friendships COST YOU in your relationship with Christ?**
- (3) What can you prioritize or do to begin CULTIVATING deeper "soul-knitting friendships" with a couple of Christian friends?**

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