



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

More Than Friends / Week 4

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

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STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

A breakup doesn't have to break you.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students understand that it's important to learn how to handle a breakup in a healthy way, even if they're not in a relationship right now.

SCRIPTURE

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others (Philippians 2:3-4 NIV).

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness (Philippians 2:5-7 NIV).

CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians in part to encourage them to live in Christlike selflessness. What does that look like? Well, when people hurt Jesus, offended Him, made fun of Him, and even crucified Him, Jesus continued to value those people and do what was in their best interest. Paul tells the Philippians—and now us—to have that same mindset. We are to view everyone (including those we date and then break up with) as Jesus does: with love, respect, and value.

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

We've been talking about dating, or whatever you want to call being more than just friends.

Every dating relationship is going one of two directions: You'll get married or you'll break up.

Which means that at some point, whether you're dating now or in your high school future, you're probably going to experience a breakup.

And if that's the case, it's probably a good idea to think about it and have a plan for it.

TENSION

Thinking about breaking up is about as fun as getting a tetanus shot. Nobody looks forward to it.

When it comes to ending a relationship, there are all kinds of ways to go about it.

When it comes to breakups, two things are true:

1. All breakups are tough.
2. Some are worse than others.

When it comes to breakups, how do we keep it from becoming a category five hurricane?



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TRUTH

To answer that question I want to look at what a guy named Paul said.

Whether it was friendships, work relationships, or family, Paul often wrote to his church friends and included some, "Here's how God wants you to treat the people around you," elements.

"Selfish ambition" simply means when it's our goal to make ourselves look better.

Paul is saying that this is a bad idea for everybody—but *especially* as a Christian, this is NOT something we should do.

It's so tempting to think of people who hurt us like they have no value at all—like they're worthless or terrible.

Sometimes the healthiest thing to do is get *out* of a relationship that isn't great for you.

You can handle the breakup in a way that it shows you care about the other person's life and what happens to them, even if this thing isn't going the way that you want it to.

If you are a follower of Jesus, you are a son or daughter of the Most High God.

Paul is saying that if you're a follower of Jesus, follow Him in the way you treat people. Have the same attitude toward them as Jesus had toward those who hurt Him.

APPLICATION

A breakup doesn't have to break you.

Decide you'll treat them with dignity. And decide you'll treat YOU with dignity.

These kinds of decisions don't come naturally.

LANDING

A breakup doesn't have to break you. Or them. And you can actually honor God by honoring them.

INTERACTIVE

This Interactive happens during the Tension. For this Interactive, do a quick Google search for "brutal breakup text screenshots." (Google's image search works great for this.) Find five brutal and hilarious (but appropriate) screenshots and then arrange them into a slideshow. When you get to

the Interactive in your message, cue up each screenshot one by one and quickly read them aloud before moving to the next. (Similar to Jimmy Kimmel's "Celebrities read mean tweets" bit.)



TEACHING SCRIPT

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A BREAKUP DOESN'T HAVE TO BREAK YOU.

INTRODUCTION

2 MINUTES

In this series, we've been talking about dating, or whatever you want to call being more than just friends.

To be completely honest, I didn't have much dating game in middle school. But that all changed in ninth grade when a really cute guy named Jacob was in my computer class.

When Jacob asked me to be his girlfriend, I practically jumped out of my seat. He was my first boyfriend!

But . . .

We never really went on dates. We couldn't drive or pay for things, and it was weird having my mom drive us around in her minivan. But it was still great! Our relationship was strong . . .

For two whole weeks.

Then it fell a part. Jacob actually kissed my friend Kristen. I found out and I dumped him, but I was still broken hearted about it. I remember sitting on my bed, telling my mom how hurt and upset I was, and how stupid he was.

She said something that really surprised me. She asked, "*Honey, what did you think was going to happen?*"

I'd never really thought about that before. I was fourteen. And it wasn't like I had envisioned us getting married, having kids, and retiring in Hawaii. But I'd never really considered the alternative to a happily ever after. What else could happen?

I guess my mom had a point.

Maybe you've never thought about it this way, either. But the truth is, every dating relationship is going one of two directions: You'll either get married or you'll break up. There really aren't many other options. And the likelihood of marrying the person you are dating now is . . . low.

If you search the Internet, you can definitely find stories of people who married their high school sweetheart. It isn't that it never happens. It's just that it isn't *common*. Most statistics say around 2% of high school sweethearts make it to the wedding day.

So, your odds aren't great.

Which means that at some point, whether you're dating now or in your high school future, you're probably going to experience a breakup.

If you're here with your boyfriend or girlfriend, take a breath. This isn't a "Go breakup" talk. I'm just saying that statistically speaking, a breakup *could* happen to you.

And if that's the case, it's probably a good idea to think about it and have a plan for it.

TENSION

3 MINUTES + INTERACTIVE

Thinking about breaking up is about as fun as getting a tetanus shot. *Nobody* looks forward to it. *Nobody's* sitting around thinking, *The dating thing is fine, but I can't wait to break up with someone one day!*

Because breaking up stinks.

When it comes to ending a relationship, there are all kinds of ways to go about it. Some are not so healthy, like . . .

- **Sending a not-so-subtle text message.**
-



INTERACTIVE

The Interactive for this message happens right here in the script. Check out the Communicator Guide that precedes this script to find out what to do here.

- **Ghosting.** You know what this is. It's when people don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, so they just stop answering texts, stop liking your stuff on social media, and stop returning phone calls. They don't respond to *anything*. This may feel like it preserves the other person's feelings, but let's be honest: If there was a conversation to start dating, there probably needs to be a conversation to stop dating.

Everybody responds to ghosting differently. Some people wait silently, and some people text ferociously. Some people stalk the other person on social



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media. But everybody analyzes: *What did I do wrong? Why did they do this?* And on and on we go.

That's because it feels like rejection. And rejection is always painful.

- **Public war.** You've probably also seen a breakup go down in a very public way. It gets dramatic, doesn't it? There are two sides, and each person is trying to recruit everybody to their side. They try to convince all of the mutual friends to trust their side of the story. Both sides try to make the other look as bad as possible.

Two hurt and angry people who used to like each other *a lot*, are now inviting others into their fight. *That, my friends*, is a mess that has the potential to make a lot of people hurt and angry.

That's why we're talking about this. Because when it comes to breakups, two things are true:

1. **All breakups are tough.**
2. **Some are worse than others.**

And no, there's no magic formula that changes that and makes breaking up a good time for everybody! It is, however, possible to control the level of damage.

Think of it like a hurricane or a tornado or an earthquake. No one signs up for them. None of them show up and make a town *better*. But some cause minimal damage, while some destroy everything.

Communicator Note: If your town or area has been hit by a natural disaster recently, then maybe don't use this example. So sorry!

When it comes to breakups, how do we keep it from becoming a category five hurricane? Is there a way to date someone—and then stop dating someone—that can minimize damage?

TRUTH

5 MINUTES

To answer that question I want to look at what a guy named Paul said. Paul was an apostle. He was one of the earliest and most famous Jesus-followers. He also happened to write a big chunk of the New Testament.

Whether it was friendships, work relationships, or family, Paul often wrote to his church friends and included some, "Here's how God wants you to treat the people around you," elements.

And since the person you date (and possibly break up with) fits in the "people around you" category, we're going to look at some of his amazing advice.

In a letter to the Christians at Philippi, Paul says this:

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“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit” (Philippians 2:3a NIV).

Let’s stop there. **“Selfish ambition” simply means when it’s our goal to make ourselves look better.** It’s something we do all the time, but *particularly* when we’re hurt by a relationship.

Have you ever seen somebody go through a breakup and then . . .

- Blast that person on Instagram?
- Tell everyone who will listen about how awful the other person was?
- Pretend that they’re totally fine and didn’t really like the person anyway?
- Spread lies or tell secrets about that person?

It’s all part of selfish ambition, of trying to make ourselves look better. And Paul is saying that this is a bad idea for everybody—but *especially* as a Christian, this is NOT something we should do.

He goes on:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others (Philippians 2:3-4 NIV).

This is tough to do in regular life. But it’s especially tough when breaking up. **It’s so tempting to think of people who hurt us like they have no value at all—like they’re worthless or terrible.**

But the truth is, they aren’t.

And you know that, because at some point you felt like they were awesome enough to date. **And just because the relationship isn’t working out now doesn’t change that they’re a valuable human being.** And basically Paul is saying, “Treat them that way.”

It’s important to note that this doesn’t mean the breakup *shouldn’t* happen. **Sometimes the healthiest thing to do is get out of a relationship that isn’t great for you.**

However . . .

- You don’t have to keep talking to them or pretend things are normal.
- You don’t have to see them all the time or seek answers to all your questions.
- But you *can* decide to handle the breakup in a respectable way—in a way that assigns value to the other person.

You can refuse to wish bad things for them or say bad things about them. You can look out for what’s best for them.

You can handle the breakup in a way that it shows you care about the other person’s life and what happens to them, even if this thing isn’t going the way that you want it to.



TEACHING SCRIPT

Paul doesn't stop there. He goes on to say: *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5 NIV).*

He spends the next few verses unpacking what that means. But for the sake of this conversation, let's focus two ideas.

1. The first one is important if you have been broken up with (or if you ever get broken up with). Something you may not notice about Jesus through Scripture is that *He never forgot who He was*. And although He didn't use His status to get what He wanted, Jesus was the Son of God. And He never forgot that. No person He met, and no rejection He experienced, changed that.

The same thing is true for you. **If you are a follower of Jesus, you are a son or daughter of the Most High God.** You are royalty. Don't let someone you date make you feel like anything less! Walk with your head held high! Does a break up hurt? Sure. But it doesn't have to break you down and make you forget who you are.

2. The rest of what Paul says to the Philippians shows us something important about Jesus' attitude. He continues:

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness (Philippians 2:5-7 NIV).

Even when people hurt Jesus, offended Him, made fun of Him, and crucified Him, Jesus cared for those people. He looked out for their interests. Not only did He *want* what was best for them, He *did* what was best for them.

And Paul is saying that if you're a follower of Jesus, follow Him in the way you treat people. **Have the same attitude toward them as Jesus had toward those who hurt Him.** Again, that doesn't mean you can't ever break up with someone. It just means that you still see that person as Jesus does: *loved, respected, and valued.*

APPLICATION

2 MINUTES

Now, just because I told you that a breakup will probably happen at some point in your life doesn't make it any easier. I get that. But hopefully you can see that it doesn't have to be catastrophic. Think of it this way:

A breakup doesn't have to break you.

So whether you're dating someone now or you hope to in the future, here are a few things you can decide before a breakup happens that could help minimize the damage.

TEACHING SCRIPT

- **Decide you'll treat them with dignity.** That may mean you have to set some rules for yourself. Maybe for you that means deciding you're not going to try to build an army and start a war. Make rules like, "I refuse to talk bad about them, in person or on social media." Or, "I refuse to treat them in a way the would dishonor them."
- **Decide you'll treat YOU with dignity.** No matter who does the breaking up, everybody feels hurt in some way. And when you're hurting, you're more likely to make decisions that make things worse in the long run.

Refuse to do anything that will hurt *you* because of the breakup. Maybe that means . . .

- Not going to a party they're going to be at.
- Not dating someone new immediately just for payback.
- Refusing to spend all your time obsessing over their social media.

Whatever it is, you can treat yourself with dignity.

But here's where it gets tricky: **These kinds of decisions don't come naturally.** Your natural response will always be toward selfish ambition, toward hurting someone else to make yourself feel better. That's why you're also going to need people by your side to help you stick to your decisions. People who will call you out when you want to lash out at your ex, and encourage you when you want to dishonor yourself. That could your small group leader, your parents, or just a few close friends.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

In our culture, most people (teenagers *and* adults) don't handle breakups well. But that doesn't have to be your story!

A breakup doesn't have to break you. Or them. And you can actually honor God by honoring them!

When you treat others better than yourself, you demonstrate the character of Jesus. You show people what He's really like. And while it won't come naturally and may not be easy, it's possible to weather the storm and have stronger faith and character on the other side.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS