

## Session 2: Friendship, Boundaries, and Red Flags

From the Singleness and Discernment Series

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### The Purpose of Friendship in This Season

Friendship is not filler. In seasons of singleness, friendships can be lifelines of joy, encouragement, accountability, and growth. But they must be chosen with care.

Jesus called His disciples friends (John 15:15). Genuine friendship is characterized by love, sacrifice, and mutual honesty—not flattery, codependence, or competition.

*“Two are better than one... for if they fall, one will lift his fellow.” —Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 (ESV)*

In singleness, deep friendships can teach us how to communicate well, express needs in healthy ways, and build a community that doesn’t revolve around romantic validation. But even good friendships can become harmful if boundaries are blurred.

### Biblical Friendships: Models for Today

The friendships of David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, and Paul and Timothy reveal the richness and purpose of godly companionship:

- **Support in Difficult Times:** Ruth stayed with Naomi through grief and uncertainty. Jonathan protected David amid danger. Paul stood by Timothy in ministry trials.
- **Loyalty and Trust:** Jonathan risked his future to defend David. Ruth clung to Naomi with selfless devotion.
- **Spiritual Growth:** Paul mentored Timothy, encouraged his calling, and strengthened his faith. True friends help each other follow God’s will.
- **Selflessness and Sacrifice:** Jonathan gave up his right to the throne. Ruth left her homeland to care for Naomi. These friendships remind us that love often comes at a cost.
- **Companionship and Joy:** In isolation or transition, faithful friends offer joy, laughter, and belonging.

Friendship in this season is not a substitute for a future relationship; it is a calling all its own.

### Emotional Boundaries: Wisdom + Grace

Emotional entanglement without clarity can lead to confusion, heartbreak, and spiritual stagnation. Sometimes, what feels like closeness is an unhealthy dependency, or worse, a one-sided emotional attachment mistaken for God’s leading.

Ask yourself:

- Am I carrying more emotional weight than this friendship is built for?

- Have I communicated clearly, or am I sending mixed signals?
- Is there space for the Spirit to speak, or am I clinging too tightly?

*"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." —Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)*

Healthy boundaries protect not just our hearts, but our purpose. They help us relate without compromising our convictions.

### Red Flags in Friendships or 'Almost' Relationships

Sometimes what looks like a friendship is really a low-commitment placeholder. Whether romantic interest is involved or not, here are signs of imbalance or manipulation:

- **Unequal investment:** You give more, feel drained, or notice inconsistent effort.
- **Flattery or guilt tactics:** One person dominates through charm or passive pressure.
- **Lack of spiritual alignment:** They don't walk with Christ or subtly pull you away.
- **Compromising situations:** Emotional or physical lines are crossed "accidentally" or often.
- **Drama cycles:** There's constant conflict, jealousy, or anxiety.

*"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness?" —2 Corinthians 6:14 (ESV)*

Discernment helps us spot these red flags early, before patterns become pain.

### Boundaries Are Not Barriers

Boundaries are not about building walls; they are about protecting what's sacred. They make space for trust, freedom, and truth.

Jesus had boundaries. He withdrew from crowds, corrected His closest friends, and didn't entrust Himself to everyone (John 2:24). If He modeled it, so can we.

### Reflection Questions

1. What kinds of friendships have shaped your singleness so far?
2. Are there any friendships where boundaries need to be strengthened, or lovingly reset?
3. Have you ignored any red flags? What might healthy confrontation or distance look like?
4. Do you confuse intensity for intimacy? How does Scripture invite you into truth-based connections?
5. Are you guarding your heart with wisdom or trying to handle things on your own?

### Closing Prayer

Lord, help me walk wisely in every relationship. Give me the courage to set boundaries without guilt and the eyes to see what is from You, and what is not. Remove what distracts or drains me, and bless my life with friendships that glorify You. May my heart be open, but guarded in truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.