



WHAT MAKES A GOOD FRIEND?



What Makes a Good Friend?

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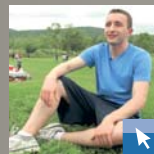
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CANADA

Fertility clinics are wrestling with the legal and moral dilemma of what to do with **frozen human embryos** whose “owners” can no longer be traced. One clinic alone is reported to be holding 1,000 viable embryos belonging to in vitro fertilization patients who have “essentially disappeared.”



IRELAND

Catholics getting married in Ireland had to choose between a religious ceremony and a civil ceremony until 2013, when **secular weddings** performed by a humanist group became an option. According to a Reuters news report, “pent-up demand from those who want more than a civil ceremony in a registry office but reject a religious wedding has created a major backlog” for providers of the newly available option.



WORLD

The United Nations has proposed the possibility of more people eating insects as a way to combat malnutrition. High in nutritional value and efficient in turning feed into food, **edible insects** represent “a promising alternative for the conventional production of meat,” says a recent report. The document recognizes, however, that “in some societies there is a degree of distaste for [insect] consumption.”



CHINA

Beijing’s **divorce rate** rocketed 41 percent during the first nine months of 2013 compared with the same period in 2012. Experts believe that the jump may have been caused by couples attempting to avoid a recently imposed 20 percent tax on capital gains from house sales. Under certain conditions a tax break is conceded to any divorced couple selling a second home.

close friends has decreased.

ship?

1. Show That You Really Care

True friendship involves commitment. In other words, a good friend feels a responsibility toward you, and he really cares about you. Of course, such commitment is two-way, and it requires hard work and sacrifice on both sides. But the rewards are worth the effort. Ask yourself, ‘Am I willing to give of myself, my time, and my resources for my friend?’ Remember, to have a good friend, *you* first need to be a good friend.

WHAT PEOPLE LOOK FOR IN A FRIEND

Irene: “Like cultivating a beautiful garden, building a friendship requires a lot of time and care. Start by wanting to be a good friend yourself. Be generous in showing affection and personal interest. And be willing to sacrifice your time when you are needed.”

Luis Alfonso: “Modern-day society encourages egotism rather than altruism. So it means a lot when someone takes a sincere interest in you without necessarily expecting anything in return.”

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

“Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them. Practice giving, and people will give to you.” (Luke 6: 31, 38) Here Jesus recommends true unselfishness and generosity. Such generosity nurtures good friendships. If you expend yourself in behalf of your friends without expecting anything in return, they will naturally feel drawn to you.

2. Be a Good Communicator

A true friendship cannot flourish without regular communication. So talk together about the interests you share. Listen to what your friend has to say, and respect his opinions. Whenever possible, commend and encourage him. At times, a friend may need advice or even correction, and that may not always be easy to give. However, a loyal friend will have the courage to point out a serious fault and offer tactful guidance.

WHAT PEOPLE LOOK FOR IN A FRIEND

Juan: “A true friend should be able to express his opinions freely but not get upset if you don’t agree.”

Eunice: “What I value most are friends who are willing to spend time with me and listen to me, especially when I have problems.”

Silvina: “True friends will tell you the truth—even if they know it will hurt—because they have your best interests at heart.”

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

“Everyone must be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger.” (James 1:19) Good friends always appreciate a listening ear. Monopolizing the conversation, however, conveys the message that we feel our opinions are more important than theirs. So be attentive when a friend wishes to share his innermost thoughts and concerns. And do not get offended if he is honest with you. “The wounds inflicted by a friend are faithful,” says Proverbs 27:6.



ARE YOU

WILLING TO FORGIVE?

—COLOSSIANS 3:13, 14

3. Have Realistic Expectations

The closer we get to a friend, the more likely we are to see his flaws. Our friends are not perfect, but neither are we. Therefore, we should never expect or demand perfection from the people we befriend. Rather, it is good to cherish their virtues and to make allowances for their mistakes.

WHAT PEOPLE LOOK FOR IN A FRIEND

Samuel: “We often have higher expectations of others than we have of ourselves. If we recognize our own mistakes and our own need for forgiveness, then we’re more willing to forgive others.”

Daniel: “Accept the fact that your friends will make mistakes. When problems arise, we do well to resolve them quickly and try hard to forget.”

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

“We all stumble many times. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able to bridle also his whole body.” (James 3:2) Recognizing this simple truth can help us to be understanding toward our friends. That, in turn, will allow us to overlook minor faults and shortcomings that may irritate us. The Bible says: *“Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely even if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. . . . But besides all these things, clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union.”*—Colossians 3:13, 14.





ARE YOU REACHING OUT
TO PEOPLE OF ALL KINDS?
—2 CORINTHIANS 6:13

4. Widen Your Circle of Friends

True, we need to be selective about the people we befriend. But that does not mean narrowing our choice of friends to those of a certain age or upbringing. Taking an interest in people of all ages, cultural backgrounds, and nationalities can truly enrich our lives.

WHAT PEOPLE LOOK FOR IN A FRIEND

Unai: “Making friends with only those who are your age and have the same tastes as you is like wearing clothing in your favorite color all the time. No matter how much you like that color, at some point you may end up getting bored with it.”

Funke: “Widening my circle of friends has given me the opportunity to mature as a person. I’ve learned to get along with peo-

ple of all ages and backgrounds, and that has made me more outgoing and adaptable. And my friends really appreciate that.”

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

“So in response—I speak as to my children—you too open your hearts wide.” (2 Corinthians 6:13) The Bible encourages us to reach out to people of all kinds. This inclusive, impartial view of friendship can add variety to your life, as well as endear you to others. ■

Watch the whiteboard animation
What’s a Real Friend? at www.jw.org





DEATH

Where are the dead?

“Dust you are and to dust you will return.”

—Genesis 3:19.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY Some envision life in a Hereafter—heaven, hell, purgatory, or Limbo. Others believe in rebirth as a different life-form. On the other hand, those who reject religious concepts believe that death is simply the end of a person’s existence.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS Ecclesiastes 9:10 states that “there is no work nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom in the Grave, where you are going.” The Bible also explains what happens to both humans and animals at death. It says: “All are going to the same place. They all come from the dust, and they all are returning to the dust.”—Ecclesiastes 3:20.



What is the condition of the dead?

WHAT PEOPLE SAY Many have been taught that a person's experiences in the Hereafter depend on what he did while alive on earth. If he did good things, his reward would be eternal bliss; if he was bad, his destiny would be eternal torment. It is claimed that humans have to be cleansed of sin before being allowed into the presence of God after death. Those who are not cleansed are said to be forever deprived of that joy.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS The dead experience neither joy nor torment. Indeed, since they are unconscious, they cannot experience anything at all; neither can they help or harm the living. According to Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6: "The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing at all . . . Also, their love and their hate and their jealousy have already perished, and they no longer have any share in what is done under the sun."

"His spirit goes out, he returns to the ground; on that very day his thoughts perish."

—Psalm 146:4.

Is there any hope for the dead?

WHAT PEOPLE SAY It is commonly believed that once a person has been assigned to hell, there is no hope for him. Hell's torments are said to be eternal. Those in purgatory, on the other hand, are said to attain to heavenly bliss only after a fiery purging of their sins.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS After resting in death, the dead will be resurrected, or brought back to life, on earth by God's Son. The Bible says: "Do not be amazed at this, for the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out." (John 5:26, 28, 29) A person's conduct thereafter will determine whether he is granted everlasting life.* ■

"If a man dies, can he live again? I will wait all the days of my compulsory service until my relief comes."—Job 14:14.

* For more information on the resurrection, please see chapter 7 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses and available at www.jw.org.



JOSEPH PRIESTLEY

“His versatility, eagerness, activity, and humanity; the immense range of his curiosity, in all things physical, moral, or social; his place in science, in theology, in philosophy, and in politics; his peculiar relation to the [French] Revolution, and the pathetic story of his unmerited sufferings, may make him the hero of the eighteenth century.”—Frederic Harrison, philosopher.

QUICK FACTS

- ▶ Joseph Priestley was born in 1733 near Leeds, England.
- ▶ As a scientist, he was credited with the discovery of several gases.
- ▶ As a political theorist, he promoted freedom of speech, worship, and education.
- ▶ As a minister, he rejected many traditional doctrines, including the Trinity and the immortality of the soul.
- ▶ In 1794, Priestley fled to the United States, where he died less than ten years later.

WHAT did Joseph Priestley accomplish that was so noteworthy? His discoveries and writings have influenced the way people view the role of government, the nature of God, and even the air we breathe.

Whether writing about science or religion, Priestley rejected theories and tradition in favor of facts and truth. Let us see how.

HIS SEARCH FOR TRUTH IN SCIENCE

After meeting American scientist Benjamin Franklin in 1765, Joseph Priestley—who had only dabbled in science as a hobby—began to conduct experiments with electricity. The following year, his fellow scientists were so impressed by his discoveries that they elected him to the prestigious Royal Society of London.

Next, Priestley turned his attention to chemistry. Within a short time, he discovered several new gases, including ammonia and nitrous oxide (laughing gas). He even infused water with carbon dioxide, thus inventing carbonated water.

In 1774, while experimenting in southern England, Priestley isolated a remarkable gas that made candles burn more brightly. Later, he placed two ounces (60 ml) of that gas in a glass along with a mouse. The mouse

“If science is the pursuit of truth, then Priestley was a true scientist.”

—Katherine Cullen, biologist

survived twice as long as it would have in a glass filled with regular air! Priestley himself inhaled the gas, and he said that he “felt peculiarly light and easy for some time afterwards.”

Joseph Priestley had discovered oxygen.* Yet, he called the gas dephlogisticated air, assuming that he had discovered ordinary air that lacked phlogiston, a hypothetical substance that was thought to hinder combustion. Priestley’s conclusion was wrong, but many still consider this discovery to be “the very pinnacle of his lifework.”

HIS SEARCH FOR TRUTH IN RELIGION

Just as Priestley believed that preconceived theories hindered scientific truth, so he concluded that tradition and dogma hindered religious truth. Ironically, during his lifelong search for Bible knowledge, Priestley adopted some ideas that were in conflict with what the Bible really teaches. For instance, at one point he did not believe that the Bible was miraculously inspired by God. He also rejected the Bible’s teaching of Jesus’ prehuman existence.

On the other hand, Priestley exposed false religious teachings that were, and are to this day, widely believed by mainstream religions. He wrote that the truth taught by Jesus and his followers was later corrupted by falsehoods—including the false teaching of the Trinity, the erroneous belief that the soul is immortal, and the worship of images, which is actually condemned in the Bible.

Priestley’s religious ideas and his support of the American and French revolutions incensed his fellow Englishmen. In 1791, a mob destroyed his home and laboratory, and Priestley eventually fled to the United States. Although particularly remembered for his scientific discoveries, Joseph Priestley believed that learning about God and His purpose was of “superior dignity and importance.” ■

* Earlier, Swedish chemist Carl Scheele isolated oxygen but failed to publish his discovery. Later, French chemist Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier gave oxygen its name.

TRUTH OR TRADITION?

Priestley discovered that many traditional religious beliefs contradict what the Bible says. Consider a few examples:

Tradition: Jesus is equal to God.

Bible Truth: Christ Jesus said: “The Father is greater than I am.”—John 14:28.

Tradition: The soul is immortal.

Bible Truth: “The soul who sins is the one who will die.”—Ezekiel 18:4.

Tradition: Images may be used to worship God.

Bible Truth: “I am Jehovah. That is my name; I give my glory to no one else, nor my praise to graven images.”—Isaiah 42:8.



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In 1791, rioters destroyed Priestley’s house and laboratory



GUM DISEASE

ARE YOU AT RISK?

IT IS one of the most common oral diseases in the world. Yet, this disease in its initial stages may not cause any immediate symptoms. This dangerous subtlety is characteristic of gum disease. The *International Dental Journal* lists periodontal disease among oral disorders that pose “a serious public-health problem.” It adds that the impact of oral disease “on individuals and communities in terms of pain and suffering, impairment of function and reduced quality of life, is considerable.” A discussion of this widespread condition may help you reduce your risk of gum disease.

Facts About Gum Disease

There are different stages of gum disease. The initial stage, called gingivitis, is an inflammation of the gums. Bleeding gums may be a sign of this stage. This may occur during brushing and flossing or for no apparent reason. Also, bleeding during a gum examination may be indicative of gingivitis.

Gum disease that progresses from this stage is called periodontitis. At this point, oral structures that support your teeth, such as bone and gum tissue, begin to be destroyed. This form of gum disease may not cause symptoms until it reaches an advanced stage. Some signs of periodontitis may be gum pockets; loose teeth; gaps forming between teeth; bad breath; receding gums, that is, gums that are pulling away from the teeth, giving the teeth a longer appearance; and bleeding gums.

Cause and Effect of Gum Disease

Several factors can increase the risk of gum disease. Dental plaque, which is a thin film of bacteria that regularly forms on the teeth, is the most common cause. If plaque is not removed, the bacteria can cause gum swelling. As this process progresses, the gums start to separate from the teeth, allowing the bacteria-laden plaque to grow under the gum line. Once the bacteria has infiltrated to this point, the inflammatory process advances

by destroying bone and gum tissue. Dental plaque, either above or below the gum line, can harden into calculus (or what is commonly known as tartar). Calculus is also covered with bacteria, and because of its hardness and adherence to the teeth, it is not as easily removed as plaque. Therefore, bacteria can continue to affect the gums adversely.

There are other factors that can contribute to your risk of having gum disease. These may include poor oral hygiene, medications that suppress the immune system, viral infections, stress, uncontrolled diabetes, excessive alcohol consumption, tobacco use, and hormonal changes because of pregnancy.

The effects of gum disease can have other implications for you. A painful mouth or the loss of teeth from gum disease can hinder your ability to chew your food and enjoy it. Your speech and appearance may suffer. Also, research has shown that oral health is closely related to overall health.

Diagnosis and Treatment of Gum Disease

How do you know if you have gum disease? You may notice some of the signs already mentioned in this article. If you do, it may be wise to consult a qualified dental professional who can assess the health of your gums.

Is gum disease treatable? In its early stages, gum disease may be reversed. If gum disease progresses to the point of periodontitis, then the goal is to halt the progress of the disease before it continues to destroy the bone and tissue that surround the teeth. Dental professionals use specialized tools that can remove

plaque and calculus from your teeth, both above and below the gum line.

Even if you have limited or no access to professional dental care, the key to reducing your risk of this subtle yet potentially destructive disease is prevention. Proper and regular oral self-care is the best prevention to reduce the risk of gum disease. ■

ORAL HYGIENE

Brush at least twice a day. Some may need to brush more frequently, perhaps after each meal, in order to reduce the risk of gum disease



Use a brush with soft bristles, combined with gentle, short strokes



Gently floss daily, using either dental floss or, if necessary, a device, such as a specially designed brush or a toothpick that cleans between the teeth



How to Control Spending



THE CHALLENGE

A look at your bank statements and bills reveals that your money is slipping away like sand that slips through your fingers. You have been married for only a short time, and your spending is out of control. Is your spouse to blame? Not so fast! Think as a team, and consider some factors that may have caused *both* of you to get into this predicament.*

* Although this article is directed to newlyweds, the principles discussed apply to all married couples.



WHY IT HAPPENS

Adjustment. If you were living at home before you got married, you may be new to the world of paying bills and sharing expenses. It could also be that you and your spouse have different approaches to money. For example, one might be more inclined to *spend* while the other is more inclined to save. It takes time for a couple to adjust and develop an agreed-upon method of handling money.

Procrastination. Jim, now a successful businessman, admits that when he was a newlywed, his poor organizational skills cost him dearly. “Because I delayed paying bills,” he says, “my wife and I ended up spending thousands of dollars in late fees. We ran out of money!”

The “invisible money” trap. It is easy to overspend when you cannot see the money leaving your wallet or purse. That may be the case if you handle most of your transactions by credit or debit card, Internet purchasing, and electronic banking. The lure of easy credit can also make it easy for newlyweds to overspend.

Whatever the cause, money issues can tear at the seams of your marriage. “Most couples report money as a top problem, no matter how much they have,” says the book *Fighting for Your Marriage*. “Money is a ripe area for conflict.”

Like weeds in a garden, debt that is ignored will simply grow—and grow



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Resolve to cooperate. Instead of blaming each other, work as a team to bring spending under control. Decide at the outset that you will not allow this issue to drive a wedge between you.—*Bible principle: Ephesians 4:32.*

Set up a budget. Write down all of your expenses, no matter how small, for a month. That will help you to figure out where your money is going and to identify any unnecessary expenditures. “You have to stop the bleeding,” says Jim, quoted earlier. “That’s a saying in medicine *and* in business.”

Make a list of your necessary expenses, including food, clothing, rent or mortgage, car payments, and the like. Put a ‘price tag’ next to each category, projecting how much it will cost you within a given time, perhaps a month.—*Bible principle: Luke 14:28.*

“The borrower is a slave to the lender.”
—Proverbs 22:7

Allocate funds each month for separate expenses (food, rent, fuel, and so forth). Some do this by putting cash in envelopes, one for each expense category.* If an envelope becomes depleted, they will either stop spending in that category or transfer money from another envelope.

Rethink your view of possessions. Happiness does not depend on having the latest things. After all, Jesus said: “Even when a person has an abundance, his life does not result from the things he possesses.” (Luke 12:15) Often, your spending habits indicate whether you believe those words.—*Bible principle: 1 Timothy 6:8.*

Make adjustments. “Things like cable TV and going out to eat may sound affordable at first, but they can hurt financially in the long run,” says Aaron, who has been married for two years. “We had to learn to say no to some things in order to live within our means.” ■

* If you pay electronically or by credit card, keep a written record in each envelope, rather than cash.

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another.”
—Ephesians 4:32.

“Who of you wanting to build a tower does not first sit down and calculate the expense?”
—Luke 14:28.

“Having food and clothing, we will be content.”—1 Timothy 6:8.



**MICAH AND
MEGAN**

“Even if one person in a marriage handles the finances and pays the bills, *both* should be fully informed about their financial status. Communication goes a long way in preventing problems.”



**DAVID AND
NATALEINE**

“Plan ahead. Don’t assume that all the money you have in the bank is available to spend. If you don’t keep money in reserve, you’ll never be prepared for emergencies, such as car repairs.”



The Dung Beetle's Navigation Skill



EXCREMENT serves many purposes for the dung beetle. The insect eats it and lays its eggs in it. Some males will offer a large piece of it to a female dung beetle, hoping to attract her. Competition for fresh manure is intense. Researchers once observed some 16,000 beetles swarming onto a pile of elephant dung and removing it in just two hours.

Some types of dung beetle escape from the crowd by forming the feces into a ball, rolling it away from the main dung heap, and then burying it in a soft spot. The beetle rolls its ball in a straight line, since this gives it the quickest getaway and avoids the risk of having the ball stolen by other dung beetles.

But how does the dung beetle keep from going in circles, especially at night?

Consider: Previous studies have shown that dung beetles can navigate by the

light of either the sun or the moon, yet they can also hold to a straight line even on clear moonless nights. Researchers in South Africa discovered that the beetles do this, not by seeing individual stars, but by using the band of light produced by the Milky Way galaxy. According to the journal *Current Biology*, this is “the first documented use of the Milky Way for orientation in the animal kingdom.”

Dung beetles, says researcher Marcus Byrne, have “an effective visual navigation system which can operate in the dimmest starlight, using limited computational power.” He adds: “They therefore have the potential to teach humans how to solve complex visual processing problems.” For example, a drone might be programmed to search a collapsed building by mimicking the dung beetle’s navigation system.

What do you think? Did the dung beetle’s ability to navigate come about by evolution? Or was it designed? ■

Did you know? Dung beetles loosen and nourish the soil, spread plant seeds, and keep fly populations under control.

Galaxy: NASA, ESA, and the Hubble Heritage (STScI/AURA)-ESA/Hubble Collaboration; beetles: © Rolf Nussbaumer/age fotostock

