



Friendationship
by Kris Swiatocho

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"Friendationship"...What is That?

The Urban Dictionary says that Friendationship is “the state of a relationship wherein the two people are clearly ‘more than friends’ but won't admit or don't know if they are a ‘couple’ or not.” There are several people online that say they coined the word including a good friend of mine who is a successful singer and writer. Several years ago I was sitting with her in a Dallas, TX coffeehouse (we were both in town speaking at different Churches) drinking a strong cup of decaf when I heard her talked about her friendationship. I was like, what did you just say? She went on to say you know, Christian friends with or without benefits depending on how you define it. You are somewhere between a friendship and a committed relationship. You aren't going forward or backward. You are somewhat stuck. She had decided she wanted out. She was tired of this in between place. She wanted more.

So why would anyone want to be in a friendationship? Why would anyone want to be stuck? Why would anyone want to be in a relationship whether friend or romantic without knowing where you stand and where you are going? I decided to do some research on the subject. I was so amazed at how many people are in these relationships. But my question to all of them was... why?

Here are some of their answers:

1. “Being in the middle is safe.”

So many singles are afraid to take the next step in their relationship. Part of this is because if you are a Christian and are in a committed relationship, the next step should be marriage. For some, they are simply not ready. So instead, they stay in this middle of road, the safe place. The place where there is no real responsibility.

Biblically, Christians have no reason to casually date. We should either engage in friendship or in courtship for marriage. This does not mean that every person that you have a commitment relationship with you will marry. It just simply means there is no middle of the road. You are either just friends or dating for the purpose of seeking marriage. You both know and understand where you are in the relationship. You are trusting the Lord for your friendship and where it might lead.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Colossians 3:23

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters...

Proverbs 16:3

Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.



Psalm 37: 3-7

Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.

2. "I can enjoy the benefits... without the commitment."

Doesn't this kind of thinking reflect a life without Christ? I couldn't believe that people actually would admit this to me. But for some, their walk is either weak or they simply do not care about the other person. This has to be one of the most selfish ways to live. From my own experience, I think being alone is so hard that people are willing to take anything beyond a friendship (hopefully without having sex) to get their needs met.

I know this firsthand because I have been in my own friendationship. I loved the attention I was getting: the back rubs, hand holding, tickling and touching, sitting close on the couch - plus special presents at birthdays and Christmas. How about the trips home to see the parents, disclosure of personal information, and staying over-night at each others home? Of course there are questions and comments from friends: "When are you guys going to get serious and make a real commitment?" At the same time, there are those who assume you are dating and wonder when the wedding date is.

But where is God in this? Do we not see how this type of relationship is not only ungodly but also all about me? When you truly care about another person, you are "other focused." You want the best for them, not yourself.

Matthew 5:28

But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

1 Corinthians 7: 8-9

Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

3. "I wasn't aware that I was in a friendationship!"

I talked with several singles who had this type of relationship but were simply not aware it had a name. They knew they were more than friends but also knew they had not talked about being committed or a future marriage. They were simply hanging with their buddies but shared some of the romantic things you do in a committed relationship. They didn't think this was wrong and had no plans of changing. It was only when I shared what the Lord says that they realize maybe they need to reevaluate. Maybe they are happy where things are but perhaps their friend is hoping it gets more serious. Maybe, these girls realized, they did need to define where they were as friends so they could go forward.

Hebrews 10: 24



And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

2 Peter 3:14

So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

4. "I am hoping it turns to a real commitment...towards marriage."

Most of the people I interviewed that were in friendationships were waiting on it to change to a romantic relationship were women. They seriously thought, one day he will just change and be in love with me. In the meantime, I will allow our friendship to be a bit more. I will cook him dinner, cuddle on the couch, hold his hand, do things for him (like his laundry), be his buddy, run his errands, and so on because one day, he will realize what a great catch I am.

The problem? If he was really interested in a committed relationship you would have known it. These are the times you have to learn to guard your heart. Now, like the previous paragraph, if you are in this friendationship for selfish reasons, that is something you have to talk with God about. But for most women, they are simply in it, waiting on the man to change. In the meantime, their hearts break. And worse case, he may start actually dating someone. And who could blame him? You never asked to define your relationship and you never talked about boundaries, so you have no grounds to ask why.

Ephesians 4: 15-16

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Proverbs 4:23

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

So what is the solution?

DTR (Define the Relationship). I know this sounds cliché but it's so true. I know firsthand the value of those serious talks with your friends. If you are in a friendationship, STOP. There is no value to either party, only eventual hurt and pain. Take some personal time and ask the hard questions. Remember: love like you want to be loved. Would you want someone to date you only to get some of their needs met but with no commitment?

Here are a few questions you can ask each other.

Q: How would you define our friendship?

Q: What are you expecting out of our friendship?

Q: I feel this way about you? How do you feel about me?

If you are not headed towards a committed relationship, then share some things that need to change. Be honest and let them know that you enjoyed these things but know without both of you committing to real relationship that could lead toward marriage, it's not healthy and could be dangerous. Dangerous in not only unrealistic expectations but also



in where it could lead physically.

Remember, you have to guard your heart. You have to take responsibility of protecting yourself. If you both agree that marriage might be in your future, take the steps toward that. A great resource is 101 Questions To Ask Before You Get Engaged by H. Norman Wright. This will help "define your relationship." Plus, check out my site for a huge list of other resources to help define your relationship as well as personal growth.

Remember, while you are in these "friendationships" you may miss an opportunity for the right person to come along, simply because they think you are dating someone else. Or, you may be in these friendationships hoping the person will change and fall in love with you when deep down inside you know if it's going to happen, it would have already.

Next step? Practice boundaries.

I value all my friendships with men as I believe the Lord gives us specific guidance regarding opposite sex friendships. He tells us they are important because friends with the opposite sex teaches us about them which can help in ALL relationships whether work, family, friends or romantic. But because we are by God's design, created to marry for the most part, we have to be careful of our friendships. They must have boundaries. These boundaries protect not only us but the other person. These boundaries help us define our relationships, they determine the course of all friendships. By having clear boundaries we are communicating where things are. The better the communication, the better the relationship.

1 Corinthians 6:12

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

If all my relationships with men are clearly friendships only and not friendationships, then I will recognize when there might be "something more." And I think that is worth waiting for. Don't get ahead of God. Don't settle for something short of God's ideal plan. And for those of us who struggle with the need for physical affection, the need to do for others, for that affirmation... get a dog. Just kidding! Seriously though, I find spending extra time with my nieces and nephews (who think I am the greatest, who give big hugs) helps a lot. I find serving the Lord, serving through ministry, and helping others also fills in this need. Visit a nursing home, watch the babies at church, help fix someone's home or go on a mission's trip and God will fill that empty heart with more love than you could imagine.

And oh, sometimes after you have had the DTR conversation, you have to have it again as time goes by. For some reason we are creatures of habit and can fall right back into the "friendationship." Don't be discouraged.

Blessings as you seek God in all things, including our friendships.

Kris Swiatocho is the President and Director of TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries and FromHisHands.com Ministries. Kris has served in ministry in various capacities for the last 25 years. An accomplished trainer and mentor, Kris has a heart to reach and grow leaders so they will in turn reach and grow others. She is the author of three books: Singles and Relationships: A 31-Day Experiment (co-authored with Dick Purnell of Single Life Resources); From the Manger to the Cross: The Women in Jesus' Life; and the most recent, Jesus, Single Like Me with Study Questions (includes a leader's guide and conference/retreat of the same name). Kris is currently working on her fourth book: FAQ's of Singles Ministry coming this fall 2012.

TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership



development conferences and seminars. [Click here](#) to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.

FromHisHands.com Ministries is Kris' speaking ministry. If you've ever heard her speak, you know that Kris is the kind of speaker who keeps the crowd captivated, shares great information and motivates people to make a difference in the lives of those around them! She speaks to all church audiences on everything from "first impression" ministry to women's topics to singles and young adults. She can speak on a Sunday morning, at a woman's retreat or for a single adults conference. Bring Kris to your church today!

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