

Questions & Answers

“One of my Church friends is not living some gospel standards. I’m worried about him. How can I help?”

LIAHONA

You can help by being a friend. Your friend might be trying to understand who he is and where he fits in. He needs someone to talk to, go to good activities with, and look to for an example. Without being self-righteous or critical, find opportunities to talk with him about times when you’ve lived up to your standards and been blessed.

Keep your standards high. Whatever you do, do not lower your standards in the name of helping your friend. Stay out of situations where the Holy Ghost will not be there to prompt you. Despite your friendship and concern, your friend may decide to continue making wrong decisions. You might have to associate with other people rather than be brought down too.

Take time to pray. Pray for your friend, but pray for yourself too. Pray for opportunities to help him, and pray that you’ll recognize those opportunities and be guided when they come. Pray that your actions will be motivated by a Christlike love for your friend, not just a desire to change him. Then act!

Don’t lower your standards in order to help your friend.

Pray that the Holy Ghost will help you know what to do, and then act!

Trust that Heavenly Father will work through you to make a difference in your friend’s life.

Invite your friend to participate in uplifting activities so he can feel the Spirit and have the desire to make good decisions.

Be an example of how keeping the commandments brings you happiness.

Don’t give up. Your friend probably won’t change all at once. It takes continual, sincere effort. In fact, you may never know what effect your words or example is having, but if you are reaching out to him, you are making a difference. The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob may have thought his son Enos was not paying attention to his teachings, but one day Enos remembered “the words which [he] had often heard [his] father speak,” and he repented (see Enos 1:3–5). Your words and example will have an effect, though it may not be right now.

Include your friend. Remember the Savior’s parable about the shepherd who left the 99 sheep to find the lost one. He did not just visit the lost sheep and then return to the flock alone. He brought that sheep back with him. (See Luke 15:4–7.) Invite your friend to activities with people who have high standards. These experiences will help him see the blessings of righteous living and feel comfortable with people who have high standards. Hopefully, he will recognize that the happiness he feels through these activities



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is better than the temporary pleasure he gets from disobedience.

As you try to help your friend, you can count on the Lord to help you because He wants your friend to make good choices too. As Nephi went about helping his people, the Lord told him, “I will make thee mighty in word and in deed” (Helaman 10:5; emphasis added)—and He did. Heavenly Father will work through you if you make your time and effort available to Him.



Keep being a friend. Your friend looks up to you and watches what you do. He probably wants what you have; he just doesn't know how to get it. You don't have to agree with all the things he says and does; just let him know you are there for him. It might be hard some days, but it will be worth it. Ask the Lord for help, and it will work out.

Stephanie C., 16, USA

I had a friend who was active for a long time in the Church. He always came alone because his family had decided they no longer wanted to come. I was impressed by his strength and courage. But then one day I heard that he no longer came to church. I felt strongly prompted by the Spirit that I should talk with him. I told him how impressed I had been that he had come alone to church, and I told him not to give up. That next Sunday he came to sacrament meeting and since then has continued to come to church. By being

faithful and living the gospel, we can be examples to our friends and give them the love and support they need.

Marina V., 18, Sweden



I really think it is best to talk to him. Be straightforward but gentle. I think it will require courage, and I think it would be best to do it after praying because you can get

help. I also have friends like this, and because I want to go with them to the celestial kingdom I am trying hard to lead them in a good direction. You may have to change yourself in order to have an effect on someone else. It is important that you strive every day to become a better person.

Eimi H., 17, Japan



I have a friend who didn't follow a couple of Church standards, and I regret not telling him how I felt about it. Tell your friend how you feel, and pray for him. Continue

being his friend as long as you don't end up doing what he is doing. If it is serious, talk to the bishop.

Deborah S., 14, USA

You need to be a good example to your friend. Invite him to attend a youth activity. It is more effective if you go with him. Share your testimony about what you have received when you have followed gospel standards.

Jared Q., 16, Philippines

With my friend I would try to do fun and wholesome activities that don't deviate from gospel principles. In this way he would see that there are many ways to have fun without doing things



Many of our young people are tugged in the wrong direction and enticed to partake of the sins of the world. Yearningly such individuals seek for the strength of those who have the ability to stand firm for truth. Through righteous living and by extending the helping hand and the understanding heart, you can rescue, you can save. How great will then be your joy. How eternal will be the blessing you will have conferred."

President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "An Example of the Believers," Ensign, Nov. 1992, 98.

that aren't right. I wouldn't support him in things that are wrong but would counsel him and strengthen him through my example. It would be good to talk to him and let him know you care about him and remind him that his weakness can become a strength (see Ether 12:27). Let him know that he's the one who has to make the decision but that you are there for support. You need to stay strong and not allow your friend's activities to influence your actions.

Jorge B., 17, Ecuador



An example is very important in these kinds of situations. We can also pray continually for our friends and seek out ways to help them. We can fast and ask

Heavenly Father to give us the right words to say to help them understand why living the gospel makes us happy.

Virginia C., 17, Uruguay

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

NEXT QUESTION

"How should I respond when my friends say that Jesus Christ was a great moral teacher but not the Savior or the Son of God?"

SEND US YOUR ANSWER, along with your full name, birth date, ward and stake (or branch and district), and photograph (including your parent's written permission to print the photo) to:

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Or e-mail: liahona@ldschurch.org

Please respond by May 15, 2007. ■