

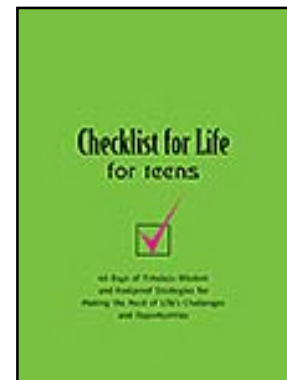
## Cliques, “Exclusive Offer”

Cliques are just social circles or a group of friends that you *hang-with*. When friends become too important, the possibility of a clique becomes a sign or symptom **that security or personal identify rests on these friends.**

Yes, we need friends; but friends cannot replace our Lord. In the *Checklist for Life*, the message is clear: “the more certain you are of your identify in Christ, the less need you’ll have to find identify in a clique or in anything else.”

### Christ had friends – and He still wants friends too.

Christ said, “If you are my friend, you will keep my commandments.” Besides this open-ended opportunity is the privilege to see such an offer made while Christ walked on this earth. He made friends with the those less favored or liked; and if Christ was here today, He would still be reaching out to the social outcasts, the poor, the rejected and all who have experienced anything less than acceptance.



As a somewhat *chicken & egg* arrangement is the question: did Christ choose these people or did these people choose (or trust) Christ? Without trying to answer that question, consider the basic condition that Christ died for everyone. In his sacrifice came the truth that everyone has value – or is precious – to God. The basic needs of those who are (or were) without is cause to look to Christ by faith; **these outcasts and rejected needed help...needed hope...and Christ was there.**

To recognize and understand this human-wide offering of God – salvation as a gift to all mankind – is not to suggest that you can have such far-reaching and soul-saving latitude or opportunity; but what it does exemplify (for each of us), is that we should not ignore the needs of others within our observation or reach. When our primary concern is on the acceptance of a few select friends (or clique), what we value above all else is their respect, attention, etc. **But when we don’t need or crave this rather fragile form of acceptance, opportunity abounds to give our attention to others** and to find great satisfaction in the acceptance and pleasure of God.

The basis for choosing Christ first – and the possible loss of friends as a consequence – is a BIG step in faith. Emotional maturity goes along with this choice but is strengthened by the presence of God in your life. You may struggle with insecurity (need for acceptance) and other set-backs...to the call to reach out to others (beyond your circle), but God can help.

**Remember that God loves you and is your source of strength...**

## Cliques, “Exclusive Offer”

### Homework:

#### Please try to do these:

- Consider your identity in Christ before joining a group
- Get a clear picture of who you are in Christ...
- Allow God to use you to breakdown the barriers of cliques
- Avoid being a part of any group that acts superior to others
- Make others feel welcome in your circle of friends
- Extend kindness to others

#### Things to Do:

- ✓ Write “I am a child of the King” and put it in your locker, wallet, etc.
- ✓ Ask God to show you any “blind spots” you have toward the way you treat others...remembering the model of Christ
- ✓ List specific things you can do to extend kindness to others...outside your circle
- ✓ Identify one person you judged or treated unfairly and attempt to befriend them if possible
- ✓ Sit next to someone in the cafeteria that you don't normally eat lunch with

Arthur Schopenhauer, a German philosopher, said: “We forfeit  $\frac{3}{4}$ 's of ourselves to be like other people.”

When your value and vision is focused on other people – even circles of friends – the certainty exist to give-up something that is you...your identity. **Be cautious with such possibility; as a person should be not be forced, compelled or persuaded to do something that conflicts with his conscience.**

Where does your conscience begin...and end?