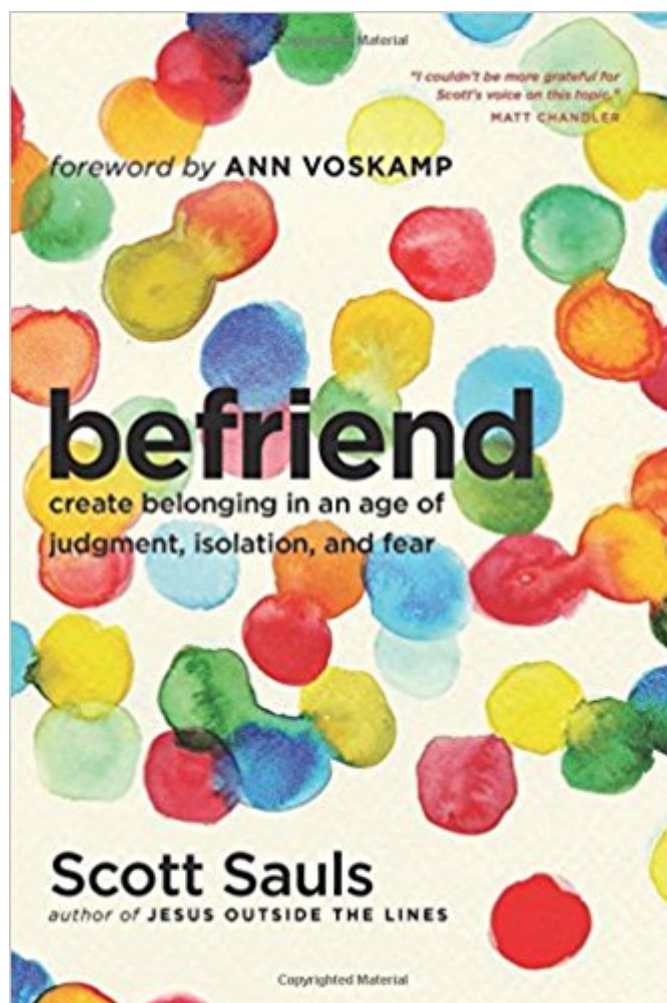


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# Befriend: Create Belonging In An Age Of Judgment, Isolation, And Fear



## Synopsis

2017 ECPA Christian Book Award Finalist (Faith and Culture category) Is real friendship too risky? We live in a world where real friendship is hard to find. Suspicious of others and insecure about ourselves, we retreat into the safety of our small, self-made worlds. Now more than ever, it's easy to avoid people with whom we disagree or whose life experiences don't mirror our own. Safe among like-minded peers and digital "friends," we really don't have to engage with those who can challenge and enhance our limited perspectives. Tragically, even the church can become a place that minimizes diversity and reinforces isolation. Jesus models a much richer vision of friendship. Scott Sauls, pastor and teacher, invites you to see the breadth of Christ's love in this book, *BeFriend*. Join Scott on this journey through twenty-one meditations to inspire actively pursuing God's love through expanding your circle of friends. Scott has met too many people whose first impulse is to fence off their lives with relational barriers that only end up starving their own souls. Yes, it's true: Real friendship is costly. Love does make us vulnerable. But without risk, our lives will remain impoverished. Join Scott in *BeFriend* as he summons you toward diverse friendship that can enrich your life and, in the process, reveal a better version of yourself.

## Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. (October 4, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1496400941

ISBN-13: 978-1496400949

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 90 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #26,575 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #26 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology > Ethics #46 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Living > Social Issues #47 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Ministry & Evangelism > Evangelism

## Customer Reviews

*Befriend* is extraordinarily well written, organized, and presented, making it strongly recommended, especially for all members of the Christian community regardless of their denominational affiliation. (Midwest Book Review) Sauls (Jesus Outside the Lines), senior pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church

in Nashville, Tenn., writes eloquently on the topic of befriending. He covers his bases thoroughly when challenging Christ followers to be proactive about their relationships in these 21 candid chapters. His message is tailored to inspire engagement with new people—both inside and outside the church—with courage and compassion, reminding Christians that it is all too easy to engage in digital, transactional, one-dimensional friendships when Jesus demands Christians move toward people with intent and self-sacrifice. Befriending, according to Sauls, is the kind of action that may include some initial friction, some hard surfaces, but over time these differences can result in richer, deeper relationships. Readers will learn how to practically seek new relationships with bullies, children, the dying, family members, and strangers. Each chapter is overflowing with compelling true accounts, biblical commentaries, and brief summaries to tie the overarching points together. This is a must read for those stuck in the world of digital-first relationships who seek to enrich their lives and the lives of those they come into contact with daily. (Publishers Weekly)

Scott Sauls is a pastor even through his writing. He doesn't preach; he cares for souls and gently reminds us of a better way, of the tension and beauty of following Jesus. Jesus was and is a friend. Scott not only writes masterfully about that but lives like Jesus in this way. (Jennie Allen, Founder/visionary of IF:Gathering) Scott has written one phenomenal book, direly needed for these times. Sharp. Informed. Culturally savvy. Biblical. This book will deeply change lives and start a befriend revolution. It's powerfully changed me, and I'm sitting here revived in desperately parched places—feeling a bit of a holy hush. These pages echo the heart of God. (Ann Voskamp, Bestselling author of *The Broken Way*) Books like *Befriend* have me hopeful that God's people are going to rise to the occasion of our moment in history with God's goodness and grace. I pray that as you read through each of these chapters, you might add more serious and diverse friendships to enrich and expand your view of what God is up to in our day. I couldn't be more grateful for Scott's voice on this topic. (Matt Chandler, Pastor of The Village Church) There could not be a better time for a book such as this one. (Elisabeth Hasselbeck, talk show host and author of *The G-Free Diet*) In this accessible book, Scott Sauls looks at virtually the entirety of the Christian life through the prism of friendship, and that's a well-grounded project theologically. When the gospel makes God our friend rather than our enemy, and we are also reconciled to ourselves—both our sin and our identity in Jesus, our friend—then we move out into the world in a new way. As Scott so ably shows us, Christian practice is to a great degree an exercise in friendship. This is a helpful, practical, and rich

encouragement to bring all of our life in line with the gospel. (Timothy Keller, Senior pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City) In *Befriend*, Scott Sauls provides real rescue from loneliness by highlighting what it means to be in real relationship and exposing the difference between "friending" and "befriending." In a world full of "likes," Scott points us back to love. There could not be a better time for a book such as this one. (Elisabeth Hasselbeck, Talk Show host, wife and mother, and author) As Scott so ably shows us, Christian practice is to a great degree an exercise in friendship. This book is a helpful, practical, and rich encouragement to bring all of our life in line with the gospel. (Tim Keller, Redeemer Presbyterian Church) Scott cares for souls and gently reminds us of a better way: of the tension and beauty of following Jesus. (Jennie Allen, founder of If:Gathering and author of *Anything*) A Christian vision of deep friendship. Wise, biblical, and practical. It could change your life. (Russell Moore, president of Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission) I am glad that Scott has taken such an honest look at something we all need more of: real friendship. (Jon Acuff, bestselling author of *Do Over*)

*Befriend* is an inspirational book. It encourages readers to befriend those different from us. I particularly enjoyed it because it spoke about how much impact a friendship can have. It's easy to live in a Christian bubble, not reaching out of our comfort circles. By befriending others we are living life like Jesus as he spent lots of time with "sinners" and provided them with his friendship.

this book is a picture of what happened to me. someone cared about me just the way I was.....good, bad and ugly. I long to pass that kind of caring along to those I come in contact with, especially those that are different from me. I highly recommend all read but even more...all practice what is laid out. thanks Scott.

People need to read books that challenge their individualistic subjective realities. And this is that book. I would love non Christians to read this book, along with its intense scripture references, and apply this knowledge when trying to understand Christ in Christians. I would like Christians to read this book, and learn that loving people well starts with turning to Christ, rather than what they think they know. I would like people who have tried hard to love people well, but ended up burning bridges, instead of building them-to read this book. It is an easy read, but the content is raw and a beautiful example of the sacrificial love Christ calls us too. This book remains completely Christ center and scripture ridden, while being an advocate for the humanness that connects us all.

Powerful read.

This book is powerful. It takes your "Christian" beliefs and behaviors and turns them on their heads. I chose to read this as a one-chapter-a-day read and gave myself time to meditate and reflect on what Mr. Sauls wrote--I can honestly say, "Befriend" has challenged me, encouraged me and made me want to do better. I would recommend *Befriend: Create Belonging in an Age of Judgment, Isolation, and Fear* to anyone in business, parenting, ministry or simply living life.

Scott Sauls is the Pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church in Nashville. He seems to be a pastor in touch with today's world but still grounded in a commitment to Scripture. He would fall for me somewhere between Andy Stanley and Tim Keller, more committed to core evangelical values than Stanley but a little more progressive than Keller. This sense also comes through in the endorsements at the front of the book and in the foreword by Ann Voskamp. Sauls comes from a centrist evangelical position, with Matt Chandler on his right and Richard Stearns on his left (both endorsed the book). Sauls' centrist position serves him well in this book. I came to his book *Befriend* having never read any of his other work and having only heard him speak on a couple of occasions. I appreciate the heart that comes through in this book. *Befriend* is a collection of twenty one brief chapters, the bulk of which are directed at encouraging readers to befriend various kinds of people. We all know we are to befriend all sorts of people but Sauls, having laid a gospel basis for friendship in chapter one, is very effective at applying the need for friendship toward all for his evangelical audience. Sauls covers all sorts of groups, including often contrasting pairs (poor and rich, unborn babies and their mothers, conservatives and liberals). The book has an edge because most readers will come to a chapter that makes them uncomfortable, challenging their prejudices and lack of love. Because he is covering such a wide range of topics, the chapters are a bit uneven in terms of content, with some of them just pretty conventional in a way that will just be review for most believers. The best chapters are the ones covering issues Sauls has wrestled with deeply in his own life. Throughout the book, Sauls probes for the sweet spot of fidelity to the Bible combined with an open and loving heart. He most often succeeds in bringing this sense of grace and truth across in his writing. The book is well-suited for a small group, as it contains further Scripture readings and questions at the close of each chapter, but it may run just a bit long to be ideal for a small group. It may be best used by two or three friends who read it and discuss over coffee or a meal. Individuals of course, can also profit from a careful reading of the book. The last chapter, on the God who befriends you, is the best chapter in the book in my opinion and is a fitting

conclusion to a well-written and insightful book. For a people thoroughly connected but lacking community, Befriend gives us solid guidance.

If you are Christian who wonders if you want to be associated anymore with a Christianity that is so divisive, fearful, and/or angry, this book will show you that there are those, like Sauls, who are engaging difficult topics with understanding, intelligence, and grace. If you are Christian whose blood pressure and pulse often go through the roof as you try to discuss sensitive and cultural topics, this book will show you a better path - a path where you learn to listen to those with whom you disagree and then proceed with a Jesus-like mixture of clarity and kindness. If you are a person who has been hurt by Christians either personally or through what you've sensed in the media, this book might help heal some real wounds and give you a better understanding of the real Jesus.

Beautiful book, especially in the times we live in. Chapters are short so can be read daily at a very easy pace. This book made me think way more than I expected!

A great template for building relationships with anyone. I loved the connection between the ancient Jewish prayer of "Thank you God that I am not a woman, a slave, or a Gentile" with the first three converts in Philippi from Acts 16- I'm using it in an upcoming message on that text. Just so good.

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