

Y-WoW Nation

Scripture: "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits..." (Psa. 103:1-2 KJV)

Friends with Benefits

*People were created to be loved
Things were created to be used
The reason why the world is in chaos
Is because things are being loved
And people are being used*

This quote penned by a wise but unknown author gets right to the heart of the matter concerning the chaos that is our culture. *Things are being loved and people are being used.* That's especially true of young people who've fallen for the latest trap the enemy has set for them—the *Friends with Benefits* trap. *Friends with Benefits*, aka FWB, is the current catchphrase used to describe acquaintances who engage in casual sex. The phenomenon has become so popular that it's recently served as the basis for two romantic comedies featuring some of Hollywood's biggest and brightest young stars. In "No Strings Attached", Academy Award winner Natalie Portman stars opposite legendary prankster Ashton Kutcher as former summer camp companions turned young urban professionals who agree to be friends by day and sex partners by night. Likewise, in "Friends With Benefits", former boy band front man, Justin Timberlake, plays opposite Mila Kunis as two up-an-coming professionals who want physical intimacy without the emotional entanglements of a committed relationship. While the notion of casual sex is not new, the boldness with which it's marketed to young people certainly is new and that's somewhat disconcerting. As such, it's only right that we deconstruct the phrase to understand what it really means to have a friend with benefits.

According to *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, a friend is "one attached to another by affection or esteem". Right off the bat, the word affection evokes comparisons to words like love, attachment, devotion, fondness and passion. These emotionally-charged terms clearly run counter to the premise behind casual sex (physical intimacy without emotional intimacy). By definition, friends have a degree of attachment and affection for one another, two things which are not supposed to exist in a FWB arrangement. Ironically, this is not the only contradiction in FWB mythology. Equally inconsistent is the

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use and application of the term “benefit”. *Merriam-Webster* defines a benefit as “something that promotes well-being”. While it’s true, within a God-ordained marriage, sex is a gift and a blessing which promotes well-being. Outside of marriage, sex is a sin. It’s hard to imagine a sinful act like casual sex as something that promotes well-being especially since sin separates us from God, the true source of our well-being. So in deconstructing the now familiar phrase “friends with benefits” we’ve discovered that at its core, it’s a fallacy—*it’s a delusion; something deceptive in appearance; a misleading or false notion.*

Now that we know the truth about the *lie* that is the FWB phenomenon, let’s examine what it means to have a real friend with benefits. As mentioned previously, a friend is “one attached to another by affection or esteem” and a benefit is “something that promotes well-being”. So in truth, a friend with benefits *is one who is attached to another by affection or esteem and who promotes well-being.* The Bible provides proof positive that God is the best FWB that a young lady could ever have. For instance, in the gospel according to John, we learn the depth and breadth of true friendship. John 15:13 states, “There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (NLT). Well, God has already proven Himself in that regard as Jesus, God the Son, gave His very life for each of us at Calvary (John 3:16). As if the depth of His love wasn’t enough to solidify His candidacy for the title of “The Ultimate FWB”, consider too that Jesus is the friend who will stick closer than a brother (Prov. 18:24). That’s important because the Bible is full of examples where friends *and* relatives betray one another. Some of the more notorious occurrences are shown here.

- Even my best friend, the one I trusted completely, the one who shared my food, has turned against me. (Psa. 41:9 NLT) *[An ailing King David wrote this psalm in reference to some friends who, like his worst enemies, visited him under the pretense of showing him mercy but who secretly harbored malicious thoughts towards him in their hearts.]*
- Jesus replied, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me.” (Matt. 26:23 NIV) *[Jesus made this remark in reference to His disciple Judas whose betrayal led to His arrest, trial and death by crucifixion.]*
- “My kinsmen have gone away; my friends have forgotten me. My guests and my maidservants count me a stranger; they look upon me as an alien. I summon my servant, but he does not answer, though I beg him with my own mouth. My breath is offensive to my wife; I am loathsome to my own brothers. Even the little boys scorn me; when I appear, they ridicule me. All my intimate friends detest me; those I love have turned against me.” (Job 19:14-19 NIV) *[Job made these grievous remarks after being shunned by his friends, relatives and servants during his many trials. Though they’d been happy to come around when he was healthy and wealthy, they abandoned him in his hour of need.]*

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- When Joseph arrived at Shechem, a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, "What are you looking for?" He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?" "They have moved on from here," the man answered. "I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams." (Gen. 37:14-20 NIV) *[This passage reveals the conspiracy which Joseph's older brothers devised to get rid of him because they were jealous of him. Joseph was their father's favorite son and he dreamed that he would someday be a great man. Consequently, Joseph's brothers hated him and sought to harm him.]*
- Some time later, he (Samson) fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels of silver" (v. 4-5). Delilah then said to Samson, "Until now, you have been making a fool of me and lying to me. Tell me how you can be tied." He replied, "If you weave the seven braids of my head into the fabric [on the loom] and tighten it with the pin, I'll become as weak as any other man." So while he was sleeping, Delilah took the seven braids of his head, wove them into the fabric and tightened it with the pin. Again she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and pulled up the pin and the loom, with the fabric. Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength." With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was tired to death. So he told her everything. "No razor has ever been used on my head," he said, "because I have been a Nazarite set apart to God since birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man." When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, "Come back once more; he has told me everything." So the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. Having put him to sleep on her lap, she called a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him. Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the LORD had left him. Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding in the prison (Judges 16:4-5, 13-21 NIV). *[In this passage, Samson's girlfriend, Delilah, tricked him into revealing the secret of his great strength. She then sold that closely guarded secret to Samson's enemies so that they could use it to capture, harm and imprison him.]*

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- At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, "Let me go to Hebron and fulfill a vow I made to the LORD. While your servant was living at Geshur in Aram, I made this vow: 'If the LORD takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the LORD in Hebron.'" The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he went to Hebron. Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'" Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter. While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, to come from Giloh, his hometown. And so the conspiracy gained strength, and Absalom's following kept on increasing. A messenger came and told David, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom." Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, "Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin upon us and put the city to the sword." (II Sam. 15:7-14 NIV) *[In this passage, King David's son, Absalom, is conspiring to steal the kingdom from him. Consequently, King David has to flee Jerusalem in order to save his life and to regroup so that he can fight to reclaim his throne.]*

Though the circumstances differ from one passage to the next, the thing that remains constant throughout is the fact that *people are fickle*. Friends will turn against you as they did David. Members of your inner circle will betray you as Judas did Jesus. Relatives, friends and neighbors may shun you as they did Job. Brothers or sisters may conspire against you as they did Joseph. A significant other may betray you as Delilah did Samson. And someday even your children, your own flesh and blood, may rise up against you as Absalom did King David. God forbid that any of these things should happen to you. However, in the event that they do, bear in mind you're not alone. It's happened before as you just read. And being that there's nothing new under the sun, more than likely, it'll happen again to someone somewhere at some point in time (Ecc. 1:9).

So, what's a girl to do? Who's she to trust? That's easy. Trust in the Lord. In His Word, He promised that He would never leave nor forsake you (Deut. 31:6, Josh. 1:5, Heb. 13:5). That means when friends walk out on you, He'll walk in and comfort you. When others betray you, He'll remain fiercely loyal to you. When relatives, friends and neighbors shun you, He'll stand by your side through the thick and the thicker. Better still, when others conspire against you, the Lord will cover and keep you. And when loved ones rise up against you, He'll shelter you or fight for you as the situation warrants. Now, that is a true-blue friend, one who's steadfast, dependable and faithful forever.

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Though God's brand of friendship is enough to crown Him "The Ultimate FWB", His credentials don't end there. Rather, He has a benefits package that's out of this world! Psalm 103 sheds light on some of the amazing benefits which God offers to those who love Him.

- He forgives all of our sins
- He heals all of our diseases
- He saves us from death
- He surrounds us with love and tender mercies
- He fills our lives with good things
- He renews our youth like the eagle's
- He gives righteousness and justice to those who are treated unfairly
- He reveals His character to us
- He reveals His good deeds to us
- He is merciful and gracious towards us
- He is slow to get angry with us
- He is full of unfailing love towards us
- He will not constantly accuse us or remain angry with us forever
- He has not punished us for all our sins
- He does not deal with us as we deserve
- His unfailing love toward those of us who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens is above the earth
- He has removed our rebellious acts as far away from us as the east is from the west
- He is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those of us who fear him
- He understands our weaknesses
- He understands the brevity and fragility of our lives
- The love of the LORD remains forever with those of us who fear him
- His salvation extends to successive generations of those of us who are faithful to His covenant, to those who obey His commandments

(Psalm 103:2-18)

Surely, this is a benefits package worth having—forgiveness, health, salvation, everlasting love, mercy, good things, justice, pure intimacy (closeness), patience, compassion, grace, unfailing love, tenderness, understanding and generational blessings. Those are meaningful benefits which only God above can provide. And He offers them to each of us *freely*. All He asks in return is that we love Him. That's the hallmark of a real FWB relationship—reciprocity. It's mutually enjoyable, mutually satisfying and mutually beneficial. It enhances each partner's overall well-being. More importantly, a real FWB relationship is neither sinful nor shameful. And there's no possible way that it could end with either party being damaged, scarred, misused, abused, humiliated or otherwise hurt.

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Life does not always imitate art. Though both “No Strings Attached” and “Friends With Benefits” ended with the main characters falling in love and living happily ever after, presumably, that may be a rare occurrence in real life. More than likely, quite the opposite is true. So be smart enough to avoid this trap of the enemy altogether. Furthermore, now that you’ve seen God’s blue prints for both friendship and benefits, be careful about whom you afford a place in your life and the type of treatment that you accept from him, her or them. For your own sake, know exactly **who** you are—a young lady created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Moreover, know **whose** you are—a child of the Most High God (I John 5:1). Next, know **what** you are—a modern-day Eve, the crown of all creation, and a present from God to mankind (Gen. 2:20-23). Finally, know **what you’re worth**—you are a pearl of great price (Matt. 13:44-46). Taken as a whole, you, my sister, are a gift to be treasured. You’re not a toy, an amusement or a game to be played. You are, in fact, a priceless gift to be treasured. That being the case don’t ever let anyone devalue you or dupe you into believing that you deserve anything less than God’s absolute best. And the truth of the matter is God’s best will never be rooted in sin. To reiterate, *the life and love that God has planned for you will never be rooted in sin*. Rather, those things will emanate from your relationship with Him. Your destiny, your soul mate and every good and perfect gift that God has in store for you will flow out of your relationship with Him. So fall in love with the Lord and stay close to Him not just because He’s the source of all that you want and need, but because it’s what God desires. More importantly, it’s what a covenant relationship (a binding and everlasting relationship) requires.

In conclusion, don’t let the enemy rob you of the life that God has planned for you—the abundant life which Jesus died for you to have (John 10:10). Instead, be wise and strong as this poem suggests and enjoy the rewards of a life truly blessed.

Be blessed.

Elle Bailey

Wise & Strong

A Poem for Young Women

Be wise like a woman
Be strong like a man
Be faithful to God
And for righteousness stand

Time will reveal
God's plan for you
A life filled with love
And sweet dreams come true

So wait for the Lord
To give you His best
Don't forfeit your gifts
By failing the tests

Don't fall for tricks or
Traps the enemy sets
Live honorably
So you'll have no regrets

Set goals and dreams
Reach for the skies
Shoot for the stars
Keep your eyes on the prize

Ask, seek and knock
It's all within reach
Your future is bright
Like a day at the beach

So be wise like a woman
Be strong like a man
Be faithful to God
And for righteousness stand

If you wait for the Lord
He'll give you His best
You deserve that and more
Never settle for less

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