

Sharing Faith with a Friend

I've been thinking about God a lot, and I think I am opening up to God and letting him in a little more each day. But my friend's faith seems stronger than mine, and I'm cool with that. But he keeps telling me I need to read my bible more, pray more and spend more time with God. I feel so mad at him when he tells me these things because I'm just not there yet. What should I do?

It sounds like your friend is growing in his faith. Well, that's really cool and it sounds like you're supporting him in that. It's important to affirm his faith. That's just part of relationships. But supporting him in his faith is different than accepting his faith just because he wants you to. Don't get me wrong, I believe and hope for you that you will some day have a strong faith too. But the reality right now is that you don't. You can't force it, and neither can he. If you think about it, your faith is growing. Granted, it's not growing as fast as his and maybe it's not growing as fast as you or he would like. But there's definitely something going on in your heart.

It may be as simple as letting your friend know that you are open to learning more about God but that you don't want it pushed or forced on you. Your faith has to be your own. It can't be because of pressure from someone else. I really believe that when you do "come to faith" that your faith will be strong because you've really battled through a lot of the issues and you'll come through them with a greater understanding of God.

I think that what's behind his pressure is probably just a deep down desire for you to have a relationship with God that is meaningful. He's probably experienced some cool things in his life because of his faith and he wishes you could experience it too. I'm sure he really cares for you and wants what's best for you. He believes that a relationship with God will improve your life, offer you peace and joy, and ultimately impact your eternity. There's clearly nothing wrong with wanting those things for you. In fact, it's pretty cool that someone cares for you enough to be concerned with these deeper issues, rather than trivial surface stuff that really doesn't matter in life. So, I wouldn't be too hard on him. But it sounds a little like it's coming across the wrong way. He might not be sharing it in the most sensitive way or maybe his excitement about his faith comes across as being pushy.

It would be really good for you to sit down with him and simply let him know that you appreciate his care, but that you're feeling pressured to accept his faith. Let him know that you are exploring your faith and learning some new cool things, but you're just not where he is yet. Let him know that you want your faith to be because God really *is* moving in your heart and that you don't want to force it because you don't want to be fake with God. You should be real with God, and with your friend. There are too many "fake" Christians out there who are plastic and look pretty good on the outside, but they're just going through the motions because it's expected of them. I can tell that the last thing you want to do is simply go through the motions of being a Christian. You want to be authentic, and I think that's awesome. God desires that from all of us.

It might be really cool to ask your friend to pray for you and that your faith would be real and continue to grow. Still, be willing to talk about spiritual matters with him at times too. It's a big part of his life now and it would be difficult for him to not ever share about it with you. You'd be missing out on knowing that part of him, and if there's one thing I know about relationships it's that if someone feels like they can't talk about the stuff that's really important to them the relationship begins to suffer. There needs to be a balance. Bottom line... if your friend's faith is real, and it sounds like it is, he will want to express it. There's nothing wrong with that desire to share his passion for God. But you need to gently help him see how the way he presents it sometimes comes across the wrong way.

In the mean time, stay open to God and ask him to help you. Stay open to your friend too, and be willing to ask him spiritual questions, and talk to a youth pastor for more insight on a relationship with God. Reading your bible and praying are also good ways to learn more, so don't necessarily discount that part of your friend's suggestion. And if you want to learn more on what being a Christian is all about, please check out our other articles at www.lifepromotions.com.

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