**Intentional Relationships: The Friendzone**

*Portions of the content take from* [*Intentional Relationships For Singles*](http://www.intentionalrelationshipsolutions.org/)*, Chapter 9 and 10: Friendships and Intentional Friendships by Kris Swiatocho and Dan Houk*

***Scenario:***

*A lady is new to my church that I am interested in dating. I finally got the courage to ask her out. She told me no and explained that she liked me as a friend. Because she was new to the church, she wanted to take some time to get to know me. So how long will this take, I thought to myself? How am I supposed to keep seeing her at church and keep my romantic interest to myself? Should I just ignore her and hope the feelings go away? Should I go to a different church now? Or should I wait and see if her feelings change?*

First of all, we have all experienced being in the "friendzone." That place where you were either told after you broke up that they just want to be friends, or you never even got a date to begin with. In modern culture, it may also refer to a place I call "Friendationship" where one person is in love with the other hoping they will eventually also love them. In contrast, the other person only has friendship feelings and knows they will never have different feelings.

Often, a friendzone offers little hope of changing. It can be a place of discouragement. It is a place that most do not want to be in unless it's mutual. A place that leads to nothing. But is there a value to the "friendzone"?

***In the scenario:***

1. His dating technique is similar to the technique of the secular world. Tarzan sees Jane, Tarzan wants Jane, Tarzan gets Jane. We are in such an instant society that we make assumptions without any information when we don't get what we want right away. These assumptions can lead to a loss without you knowing it. We give up and do not wait on the Lord's direction or input.

There is value in waiting to get to know someone better before you date them in any culture. I call this an Intentional Friendship™. It's a place between generic friendship and dating. It's a period of time when you are both in agreement to get to know each other, asking more questions without the pressure of dating or the expectations that come with dating too soon. What would have been great is if she suggested an Intentional Friendship™. This way, he wouldn't have felt rejected, leading to a poor attitude. It would have given him some hope while still allowing them both to get to know each other.
2. He was concerned about how long it would take for her to get to know him well enough to go on a date. My question is, why wouldn't he be interested in getting to know her as well. The older we become as singles, the more baggage we carry. So the more we can learn about each other, the better we are when we enter into a dating relationship. Now how long this takes is really up to how much time they get to spend together as friends to get to know each other. In an Intentional Friendship™, you schedule time together such as talking or texting, getting coffee, or going on a hike. This way, you have the time to ask all the questions you want to know the answers to, get to experience being around them, and see them around others. This period will reveal a ton of information. Information that allows you to access if you do want to date.
3. He mentioned his concern about seeing her at church and how he was supposed to behave in the friendzone? Well, here is the thing, if she could be the one, building the friendship would be worth it. But like in all relationships, you need boundaries. If you are attracted to her, you will continue to be, and that is good as we need to be attracted to someone we want to date. But while continuing to get to know each other, you sense your interest is stronger, you want to spend more time with her than she seems to want to spend with you, or you find yourself manipulating things so you can sit next to her, show up at her activities, etc. then you are not on the same path. This is when you do need to guard your heart. This is when you do need to practice boundaries. It can also be a time to have a DTR: Determine the Relationship.

If, after a few weeks of conversation, group activities, etc., you talk with her again about going on a date and she still feels the same, then perhaps it is time to move on. While I don't think you need to change churches or go to a different service, you need to pray and ask God to help you and let go of your feelings to move on. I know it will be challenging, but you will survive. I promise.

*Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord! —Psalm 27:14 (NIV)*

**Value of the Friendzone**

1. Jesus valued it.

*"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." – John 15:12-15 (NIV)*

1. You can learn about each other. This will help in all opposite-sex relationships, including friends who eventually date and/or possibly marry.
2. This is a great time to practice boundaries.
3. You can discover how to communicate more effectively as most men and women communicate very differently.
4. It can teach you how to care for someone without a romantic attachment.
5. It can reveal areas that you need to change.
6. Friends in the friendzone can lead to dating relationships if you spend enough time getting to know each other and involve the Lord through prayer and direction, communication and accountability of others.

*Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.—James 5:16 (ESV)*

*For more information on Kris Swiatocho and Dan Houk and the* [*Intentional Relationships For Singles*](http://www.intentionalrelationshipsolutions.org/)*, please go to www.IntentionalRelationshipSolutions.org*