**Social Development**

“Life is not a popularity contest!” This statement usually comes from a person who prides himself in being a Christian, but who often struggles to get along with others. Luke 2:52 tells us that one of the ways Jesus developed from childhood to manhood was that He grew in favor with man. It is important for a young person to learn to interact with others in a positive way and to be able to establish healthy relationships. God in His infinite wisdom offers some valuable insights into some personality traits that not only please Him but will foster positive feelings in folks around us as well (James 3:17).

**Pure** – Not everyone will agree with your principles, but they will respect you for living by them.

**Peaceable** – People have enough drama in their lives. They will appreciate a person who is not confrontational and can get along with just about everybody. “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men” (Romans 12:18).

**Gentle** – Your friends have to deal with plenty of hotheads. Your calm under pressure and kindheartedness will be a breath of fresh air. “Let your speech be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person” (Colossians 4:6).

**Reasonable** – Willing to yield. You’re the kind of person who doesn’t have to have your way all the time. “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3-4).

**Full of Mercy** – Everybody messes up once in a while and your friends are no exception. They will appreciate having a friend who forgives easily and doesn’t hold grudges. “If you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Matthew 6:14).

**Full of Good Fruits** – If you are good hearted and generous on the inside, it’s going to show on the outside, even if you’re not trying to toot your own horn. People will value a caring friend, even when they are not the direct recipients.

**Unwavering** – If you’ve ever been around a moody person very long, it can be unnerving. The best friend is solid, consistent, reliable, dependable. “…there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24).

**Without Hypocrisy** – A two-faced person is dishonest. True friendship is a matter of trust. Peter warns us to put aside “all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander…” (1 Peter 2:1).

In short, a person who has developed character that reflects the wisdom of God is the kind of person who is a blessing to anyone fortunate enough to know them. But let’s face it. Some in the world are going to dislike our children no matter what they do. That being said, if our kids are alienating good hearted folks with obnoxious behavior, shame on them! Life is not a popularity contest, but we need to teach our children to be the kind of people who can have a positive influence on others. That is simply the wisdom that is from above (James 3:17).

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