



Introduction:

[Introduce yourself, your group, or anything else you want to tell your students here.]

We're kicking off a brand new series [today/tonight] called ***Squad Goals***. This is a series about the relationships we have in our lives, specifically our friendships.

[Note: Below, I gave a personal illustration about my best friend, and to introduce the friendships-as-“squad” concept. Use your own story here. Read my story as a way to spark your memories and creativity to create your illustration.]

My best friend in the whole world growing up was Mark Mujwid. I grew up in the land of cheese and cows: Wisconsin. And of course, my best friend Mark lived on a dairy farm. He was a stud, got up in the morning to milk the cows and hustled home every day to milk the cows every night. Some of my favorite memories in the world – in fact, almost every single one from them growing up, include Mark. I suppose I had other friends, but none quite like him.

- We loved the same stuff! We grew up playing Star Wars toys. Return of the Jedi had just come out and between the two of us, we had pretty much all of them.
- We used to play BB gun wars in his barn. We would shoot real BB guns at each other. You might be thinking ... where were our parents during this whole thing? Good question.

- We even ended up playing college football together. We spent hundreds of hours in the gym together. He was working out, and I was watching him workout. (smile) It was great!
- We made student films together - I even have a scar right next to my eye when we made a homemade grenade as a movie prop and it went off accidentally.

The more I think about it, the more I wonder why all of my memories with Mark include dangerous things. BB guns and grenades? What kind of a friendship was that?

I tell you what it was ... it was the best. Mark had my back, he was my friend, he loved me and he loved Star Wars. He was the BEST. [End of my illustration.]

As I think about about Squad Goals, and talk about friendship – I can't help but think about him [your bff from childhood], and also what makes a great friendship.

What does a “squad” look like? A squad can be...

[Note: Here, it's your choice how you want to describe a “squad”; you can just give verbal examples, or you can download examples from Google Images and show slides. I used four slides to describe “squads.” I used slides of the Avengers, the Kardashians, a sports team, and one random and super funny slide of a group. Use your imagination and have some fun with this.]

But, we also know the pain of being outside of a squad too. Can anyone relate to...

[Note: Here, it's your choice how you want to describe what it feels like to be outside of a “squad.” Again, you can just give verbal examples, or you can download examples from Google Images and show slides. For example, try searches for “left out,” “left out of the group,” “left out of the

party.” If you use slides, I’d recommend that your last slide be a funny one.]

So what does it take to make a great squad? What does it take to have the kind of friends that have an amazing closeness?

Those are the kind of friendships I want you to have. That’s the kind of squad you should build. First up, let’s talk about types of friends:

Some of you have 1000’s of friends – but really, Facebook friends and followers aren’t what we’re talking about. Let me break it down:

[Note: Use the included jpeg file “**Social Circles**” as you describe the different levels of friendship. Or, you can create your own graphic to suit your tastes.]

>> **Acquaintances (outer circle)** – These are people you meet in passing, or maybe have one class with. These are people your parents introduce you to. Acquaintances are casual, occasional, surface relationships. You don’t really know them and are not known in that group. This is a wildly diverse group of people of all sorts, Christian, non-Christian, work relationships, people you met once at a concert (“I met this one guy at Coachella, we’re like best friends now” [indie girl voice]), old, young, all of the above. You have 100’s ... maybe some of you even 1,000’s of these type people in and through your life. Acquaintances!

>> **Friends (next circle)** – Friends are inside the acquaintances circle, and there are some key differences. Friends know you. You go to the movies together. You are on the same football team or are in the choir or school play. You hang out and have a good time, and you are known ... you follow each other on Instagram ... but known mostly in fairly general

ways. You should be friends with all sorts of people. Lots of people fall into this relationship category. Next up:

>> **Close Friends (next circle)** – Close friends up the ante even more. You like hanging with them, you see them often. If they need a ride somewhere you can call on them. When you need someone to talk to ... I mean text since no one actually uses their phone as a phone, right? You text them. You like every one of their photos on Instagram even if they aren't great and laugh at some inside jokes you have together. You only have a few close friends ... and I suppose it is more important that these are positive friends, because these are the people in your life that begin to influence you significantly.

>> **Your Squad (inner circle)** – This is what I want to concentrate on today. Your inner circle. The place where you feel the most known. You've journeyed together, laughed together, confessed together, done a lot of life together. If you're posting a picture on Instagram with people ... it is with these people. If you request someone in your cabin at Summer Camp, it is these people. Your squad is who you invite to your birthday party.

>> **BBF (dot)** – I suppose there's one further level as well - your BFF is the one from the squad who you would literally take a bullet for. I love you so much I would jump in front of a speeding train. If you're older it may be your husband or wife, if you're younger it may be a brother or sister.

Every once in a while, these circles get messed up, like where someone falls into the path of a subway train in NY, and a complete stranger jumps in to save him almost costing him his life. It is big news because he gave a stranger the qualities of a best friend.

OR it can be when someone buys your drink at Starbucks, and you're like what??!!

But for the most part, you've got people that you sort of know (acquaintances), people in your circle (friends), and people in your inner circle (squad). I think the stuff we cover today will be helpful for all of them, but really I want to concentrate on how to build a great squad.

3 Ways to Build a Great Squad

1. A great squads require SELF-SACRIFICE.

It is easier to live for yourself. Some people think that the purpose of your squad is to make **you** more popular, or make **your** life easier, and that the world revolves around **YOU**. But that couldn't be further from the truth!

This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.
John 15:12-13

What would it look like if you laid down your own motives or agenda for your friends? Now, each of these three principles include an action step – a form of expression for you to work on with your squad this week.

The expression of self-sacrifice is Service.

2. A great squads require LOYALTY.

A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need.
Proverbs 17:17

But loyalty doesn't mean letting your friends get away with things ... the Bible teaches that we need to be loyal to helping our friends become who

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