

If you ask me to be your friend you ask a skylark to come to the earth. I'm unreliable and not committal. I guarantee more of a hurting hand than a helping hand. Sometimes I think these things and wonder why on earth should I be friends with people and enter into deep relationships. I have a few really good friends and the reason they are really good is because I've gone through burning fire with them. Paul Tripp and Timothy Lane from the Christian Counseling Educational Foundation in Philadelphia write about these questions in their book *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making*. They coauthored this book in order to give a picture of the redemption and hope Christ gives in our relationships whether that be with a friend or family member.

They start out by discussing how sin has broken our friendships with God and man. They get down to the dirty truth that the motives in our relationships have mal intent without Christ. After I realize how much I am capable of hurting people in friendships all I want to do is runaway and hide thinking that people are better off without me, but the truth is Trip and Lane say is that we humans were made for fellowship and growing together. Another point they make is Jesus is our ultimate friend that we are called to imitate. Though we be skylarks he is the air that enwraps us giving us the air we need to breathe--the unconditional love we need to give, which he inundates in our hearts. Trip and Lane state to their audience that because of Christ we can have reconciliation in our fallen friendships. Because Christ was forsaken by God and man we have community with God that penetrates into our relationships with fellow men. They touch on the worship of God through friendships, communication, hope, mercy, forgiveness, and so on. I found it helpful that they went in depth with these basic biblical themes to places in our everyday lives giving examples of different scenarios of different people in their different relationships. It is quite humbling and explains so much the trials in friendships.

In the time of dormitories friendships are bound to happen so is joy and pain. But we are to be encouraged by the example of Christ and that we are given the ability to confess and bear each other's burdens. Through growing in this intense time we come out with gems and find that these gems are little bits of what we will have in heaven when relationships are restored to perfection. If you find yourself looking across the masses in the Great Hall with a sigh, wondering where your friends are be encouraged by this book and take the risk of making a big mess.