

Friendships March 5, 2023

OPENING QUESTION

What is the longest friendship you've ever been in? What makes this person such a worthy friend?

Brainstorm some good friendship or "buddy" movies many of you know in common. What qualities or values of friendship are highlighted in these examples?

Sometimes, friendships are easy and natural, while at other times we find friendships to be hard to find or challenging to navigate. Many of our friends are the result of proximity and time, while fewer are the result of deliberation and intentional effort. In Proverbs, we see that friends are valuable gifts from God, worthy of careful consideration and cultivation. As we examine our own friendships for how they shape and form us, and our own actions as friends, we want to gain wisdom about How to Live within friendships in God's world in God's ways.

READ Proverbs 16:28, 17:9, 22:24-25, 23:20-21, 24:21-22, 28:7, 29:3

These proverbs highlight some warning signs in friendships

Discuss each proverb and the wisdom about friendship it shares; then consider:

- Do you have friends who exhibit some of these values or behaviors? Why do you think Proverbs warns against these?
- Although Proverbs advises these are unwise people to be friends with, why do we find ourselves in relationships with people who have these characteristics and behaviors? (In other words, what attraction do some of these negative traits carry? Or what circumstances cause us to remain in relationships like these?)

READ Proverbs 18:1,24; 22:11, 27:6,9-11,17

These proverbs highlight or illuminate valuable qualities in friends

Discuss each proverb and the wisdom about friendship it shares; then consider:

- Knowing that this is God's wisdom showing what He values in our friendships, what do these help you see about God's character?
 - Take a moment to praise God for the valuable friendships He's placed in your life!
- How do we cultivate friendships with these qualities? In other words, how can you be a friend like this, and how do you keep friends like this around?

After reading and discussing here, are there any friendships in your life that you now realize need to have more or less priority?

- How can you lovingly make this change, honoring the person while the relationship shifts?

Considering all of this wisdom on friendship, how can you grow as a friend?

- How can you reach out this week to a friend and exhibit some of the wisdom of Proverbs?

DAILY TIME

Proverbs 26
Proverbs 27
Proverbs 28
Proverbs 28
Proverbs 30
Proverbs 31

As you read each day, consider:
What do these proverbs show me about God and His character?
Where do they highlight my need to confess and receive God's forgiveness?
Where can I ask for help to live out the wisdom I see that I need?

Brunch Bunch Potluck!

Fulton Heights, March 12
[Encounterchurch.org/events](https://encounterchurch.org/events)

SIGN UP TO SERVE!

[Encounterchurch.org/serve](https://encounterchurch.org/serve)

NOTES AND QUOTES

Friendships in Biblical Narrative:

- Jonathan and David
1 Samuel 18:1-3; 19-20
- Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
Daniel 1-4
- Jesus with Mary, Martha and Lazarus
Luke 10:38-42, John 11
- Peter and the apostles
John 21:1-14
Acts 11:1-18
- Paul and Barnabas
Acts 13:1-15:41
- Paul and Priscilla and Aquila
Acts 18:1-28, Romans 16:3

FROM THE MESSAGE

From Proverbs 13:20, Dirk built the idea that our friendships have significant influence over us. Some relationships form us toward wise living, and sometimes we are harmed by the collateral damage of relationship with foolish people.

Dirk described three levels of relationship we might categorize our interactions into: Intimate (people who know us well and love us), influential (folks who have influence over our actions, and are influenced by us), and care (folks we care for but who do not have influence over us).

- When you consider your relationships of influence, are these folks characterized more by wisdom or foolishness?
- Do you have any relationships you realize may have an outsized influence in your life?

When we consider being fully known and fully loved, no one knows and loves us better than Jesus. Do you consider your interaction with Him to be a relationship?

- What would make your relationship with Jesus more like your relationship with your friends?

EXTRA Read Luke 10:38-42

How does Jesus exemplify the wise friendship traits discussed above?

Jesus had a close group of friends through his whole ministry (the twelve disciples), yet was closer with three (Peter, James and John). How does this pattern highlight or expand any of the wisdom on friendship from Proverbs?

CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Spend time in prayer for one another, if possible, about the things you have discussed here.

PRAYER AND CARE

Reminders for the week ahead:

Proverbs

16: 28 *A dishonest man spreads strife,
and a whisperer separates close friends.*
17: 9 *Whoever covers an offense seeks love,
but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.*
22: 24 *Make no friendship with a man given to anger,
nor go with a wrathful man,
25 lest you learn his ways
and entangle yourself in a snare.*
23: 20 *Be not among drunkards
or among gluttonous eaters of meat,
21 for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty,
and slumber will clothe them with rags.*
24: 21 *My son, fear the Lord and the king,
and do not join with those who do otherwise,
22 for disaster will arise suddenly from them,
and who knows the ruin that will come from them both?*
28: 7 *The one who keeps the law is a son with understanding,
but a companion of gluttons shames his father.*
29: 3 *He who loves wisdom makes his father glad,
but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.*

18: 1 *Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire;*

Proverbs 13:20
Whoever walks with the wise
becomes wise,
But the companion of fools will
suffer harm.

Luke 10:38-42
Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

he breaks out against all sound judgment.
18: 24 *A man of many companions may come to ruin,
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*
22: 11 *He who loves purity of heart,
and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend.*
27: 6 *Faithful are the wounds of a friend;
profuse are the kisses of an enemy.*
27: 9 *Oil and perfume make the heart glad,
and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.*
10 *Do not forsake your friend and your father's friend,
and do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity.*
*Better is a neighbor who is near
than a brother who is far away.*
11 *Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad,
that I may answer him who reproaches me.*
27: 17 *Iron sharpens iron,
and one man sharpens another.*