

God's Wisdom for Friends

August 18, 2019



Open: What qualities are important to you in a friend? What makes these qualities rise above others?

Read & Discuss: Proverbs 18:24 and 20:6

1. Why might a man of many companions "come to ruin" (18:24)? How have you experienced this in your own life or observed this happening in the life of others? What does Proverbs 18:24 teach us about how we're to view and value various types of relationships in our lives?
2. Proverbs 20:6 starts by reminding us that we can easily think we're a better friend to others than we really are. What's a good way to make sure we're correct in our evaluation of ourselves as a friend? How can we cultivate faithfulness within our friendships?

Read & Discuss: Proverbs 27:17, 6, 9

3. How do we effectively sharpen each other through relationship? How have you experienced this with your friends? How might we grow to do this better?
4. The words "wounds" and "kisses" in Proverbs 27:6 are not meant to be taken literally. How would you restate this proverb without using the words "wounds" and "kisses"? Describe a time when you received a negative "kiss" from an enemy or a positive "wound" from a friend.
5. Proverbs 27:9 says that one way friends bless us is with their counsel. Because we fear offending we can be afraid to give counsel, and because of our pride we can resist counsel. What would help us be better at giving or receiving counsel in our friendships?

Read & Discuss: Proverbs 17:17 and John 15:13-15

6. These verses speak of the fact that friendships are to be characterized by love. What do we learn from Jesus' example of what it means to love our friends? In our world where relationships are often treated as disposable, what should it look like to love our friends "at all times" (Pr. 17:17)?

Apply: What's one way that your practice of friendship needs to shift in light of these proverbs? What will you do about it?

Pray: Pray that God would help us all in Neighborhood Church to be better friends to each other—and that our friendships would exist with the goal of sharpening each other and moving us all toward greater Christ-likeness.

Proverbs 18:24

A man of many companions may come to ruin,
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (ESV)

Proverbs 20:6

Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love,
but a faithful man who can find? (ESV)

Proverbs 27:17

Iron sharpens iron,
and one man sharpens another. (ESV)

Proverbs 27:6

Faithful are the wounds of a friend;
profuse are the kisses of an enemy. (ESV)

Proverbs 27:9

Oil and perfume make the heart glad,
and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel. (ESV)

Proverbs 17:17

A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for adversity. (ESV)

John 15:13-15

¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. (ESV)