

MONDAY: A Friend Loves at All Times

Life is full of choices. Sometimes they are obvious because one choice is right and one is wrong. But most of the choices we make in life are between something that would be okay and something that would be far better. It takes wisdom to make the right choice, but more than that—it takes wisdom to make the *better* choice.

Our theme this week is one you probably think about often—friends. “You will not lead a wise life unless you are great at choosing, forging, and keeping terrific friendships.”¹



We call many people in life “friend”—those who go to school with us, those who have “friended” us on social media, and so on. It’s typical to call a large group of people “friends,” but many of these people are more like acquaintances.

An acquaintance is someone who you know but who is not a close friend. An acquaintance may be someone you would sit with at lunch, play with at recess, or work with on a project. A person you hang out with may become a friend, but friendship goes much deeper than just hanging out.

1. When have you discovered that not everyone you hang out with is your true friend?

Since God created friendship and wired us for it, we need to look at what He says about it to really understand it. This week we will look at what friendship is and why it is important.

2. Read Proverbs 17:17. What does this verse tell you about how a true friend acts? When has a friend of yours acted like the friend mentioned in this verse? _____

3. Read Proverbs 18:24. What happens to people who surround themselves with unfaithful friends? Who is the truly faithful friend mentioned in the second half of the verse? _____

A true friend is someone unique. A true friend is not loyal to you because they *have* to be (e.g., because you are related) or because you have something they want, making you useful to them.

Think about It: “Friendship brings something into your life that nothing else can bring.”²

1. Timothy Keller, “Friendship,” sermon, May 29, 2005, in *Proverbs: True Wisdom for Living*, Gospel in Life (website), Redeemer Presbyterian Church, MP3 format, 38:00, <https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/friendship-5396/>.

2. Keller, “Friendship,” sermon.

TUESDAY: The Benefits of Good Friends

“You are *not* who you chose to be. You are what your family makes you. You are what your friends make you. It is your community that shapes you.”¹

1. Read Proverbs 12:26. If you are trying to honor God with your life, how should you choose your friends? Where do those who are not following after Jesus end up? _____

2. When have you done something wrong with a friend that you probably would not have done on your own? _____

Proverbs helps us understand the **benefits of good friends**.

3. Read Proverbs 27:9b. What is one of the benefits of a good friend? When have you experienced this benefit in your life?



4. Read Proverbs 27:6a. What does a true friend do for you, even though it may seem harmful at first? How is this action from a true friend actually beneficial? _____

Life is full of times when we need advice, even correction. An honest friend can help us see ourselves and our circumstances more clearly. A true friend cares enough about you to stop you from walking off a cliff. When a friend warns you that the way you are going will hurt you and other people, the words may hurt in the moment, like being wounded. Such a friend is willing to hurt you like a doctor hurts a patient when setting a broken bone or doing surgery. An honest friend is willing to do and say what is hard right now if it leads to your long-term good.

5. When have you been a good friend to someone by saying words that were hard to hear but helpful? When has a good friend done this for you? _____

Think about It: Read Proverbs 13:20. How can you develop wisdom? _____

1. Timothy Keller, “Friendship,” sermon, May 29, 2005, in *Proverbs: True Wisdom for Living*, Gospel in Life (website), Redeemer Presbyterian Church, MP3 format, 38:00, <https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/friendship-5396/>.

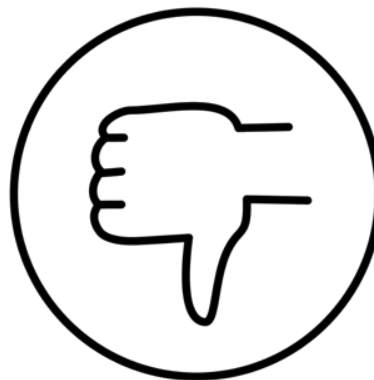
WEDNESDAY: The Problem of Wrong Friends

Through Proverbs, God helps us understand the benefit of good friends—a truth we studied yesterday. Through Proverbs, God also helps us understand the **problem of wrong friends**.

1. Read Proverbs 13:20 again. What does this verse say happens to the person who befriends a fool? _____

Verse 20 gives us quite a contrast. Friends can help you toward wisdom or friends can hurt you.

2. What are ways a foolish friend could hurt you? _____



3. Read Proverbs 14:7. What should you do when you encounter a fool? _____

You should avoid a fool because the wrong kind of friend can drag you down.

4. Read Proverbs 23: 20–21. Whom should you *not* befriend according to these verses? Why should you not befriend them? _____

“Friends” who overeat and drink too much are not showing wisdom. They are on a path that leads them down to poverty and ruin. If you go with them on that path, it will take you down as well.

5. Read Proverbs 22:24–25. Whom should you *not* befriend according to these verses? Why should you not befriend them? _____

Think about It: Read Proverbs 13:20. (Try memorizing it.) Based on your study of the verses above, what would you change about the kinds of friends you are keeping? What would you change about the kind of friend you are being to others? _____

THURSDAY: Walk Away

Having wrong friends can bring you many problems.

1. Read Proverbs 24:1–2. Whom do you sometimes want to be friends with? Why should you *not* want to be friends with them? _____

2. Read Proverbs 1:10–15. What are the wicked people in these verses talking about doing?

What should be your response when you are tempted to go along with them? _____

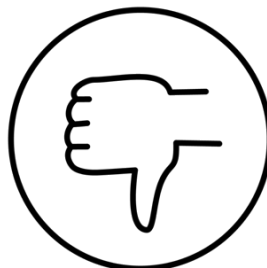
People often talk about falling in with the wrong crowd. We all have the option to *not* fall in but to **walk away**.

Every time you see a Walk/Don't Walk sign at a street crossing, remember that God can give you the power to walk away from any friendship that is pulling you toward foolishness and sin.

On Monday we looked at Proverbs 17:17. Read it again to remind yourself of how a true friend acts. Don't be fooled by words alone. Someone can say they are your friend and say they love you, but if the direction they are going is away from God, they will pull you away from God too. If you care about them, be loving enough to tell them the truth—that they are not on the path of wisdom.



Think about It: Are you helping your friends thrive as followers of Christ? _____

Friday: Connection Reflection

1. What idea stood out to you this week as we looked at what a true friend is? _____

2. What stood out as we looked at the benefit of good friends and the problem of wrong friends?

3. What is one of the hardest things you face when it comes to friendships? _____

4. Which verse was your favorite from this week? Write the verse and its reference. _____
