

*Ephesians 4:15-16 ESV - 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

*In Paul's analogy of the believers as a body, who is our head? As a member of His body, we are to "grow up" in every way. Based on this passage, why do we need one another to grow up?*

If one part of the body is not working properly, we all suffer. Our friends need truth more than flattery to grow up and sometimes that means wounds not kisses. But it begins with a heart check on our part.

*Have you been tempted to correct someone to demonstrate that you are right, and they are wrong? If you find yourself more concerned with proving your point than keeping your friend from harm you are not speaking truth in love but in pride or arrogance. If you have a friend whom you feel needs correction, spend time praying that God would give you His heart for them before you speak.*

## **WRAP-UP**

Your friends impact the direction of your life, for better or worse. Wise friends reflect a godly character and are willing to set aside their own agenda to walk with you through the difficult times in your life and help you find the right path in life. But fair-weather friends, or fools, will lead you down the wrong path if you let them. Choose your friends wisely.

## **MEMORY VERSE**

*Proverbs 17:17 ESV - 17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

## **PRAYER (20 MIN)**

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life

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*Challenge- Take some time to thank someone who has been a friend to you.*

# **“Friendship”**

## **Wisdom #2**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The book of Proverbs directs us in how to live well in God's world. In it, we find instruction in many areas of life. The first we are considering is how we choose our friends. The friends you spend time with will have an impact on the direction of your life, for good or for bad. So, let's give thought to the types of friends we have and the kind of friend we want to be.

## **Ice Breaker**

How did you choose most of your friends? Shared interests, life stage, status, location, or just by chance?

## **Key Passage**

*Proverbs 13:20 NLT - 20 Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.*

## **STUDY QUESTIONS**

### **1. Character**

When we study the wisdom of Proverbs, we find it is full of what we might call, common sense. But sometimes our actions defy common sense, and we need a reminder. This proverb contrasts associating with wise friends versus foolish ones.

*Proverbs 13:20 NLT - 20 Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.*

*Hebrews 10:24 NLT - 24 Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.*

We are told if we walk with the wise, we become wise. When you walk with someone you are on the same path, you have a shared direction in life. When you spend time on the same path, you talk with one

another and seek their counsel. The response of a wise friend should follow the advice found in Hebrews 10:24 to motivate one another towards love and good works.

*Who do you regularly “walk with”, or spend significant time with? What are some of the ways you have encouraged one another in making wise or godly choices in life?*

The word used in this proverb for associating with fools (*rā'â*) comes from the sense of being in the same flock or grazing together. Not only are you hanging around them, but you are feeding on the same things they do.

*1 Corinthians 15:33-34 NLT - 33 Don't be fooled by those who say such things, for "bad company corrupts good character." 34 Think carefully about what is right, and stop sinning. For to your shame I say that some of you don't know God at all.*

Peer pressure doesn't apply only to teenagers. When you are in the company of others, you feel compelled to do as they do. And when you are in the company of fools, you feel compelled to sin.

*Was there a time in your life that associating with fools got you into trouble? What did you do to change your path?*

You may not be able to totally avoid foolish people in your life, but you can limit their influence by limiting your association with them and spending more time with those you know are wise and godly friends.

*Think about the friends you have right now. What are some things you can do together that you know would be good choices pleasing to God? Connect with them today and plan a time together to do that!*

## 2. Mountain Top and Valley People

*Proverbs 17:17 ESV - 17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

In Proverbs 17 we find that there are “fair weather friends” and then there are true friends. Those who not only want to celebrate with us, but the kind of friend who walks with you through the valleys of life. When we think of the kind of friend we want when times are difficult,

they are the friend (*rēa'*) referred to in Proverbs 17- an intimate friend, metaphorically your brother (*'āḥ*).

*Proverbs 18:24 ESV - 24 A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*

Social media would have us believe it is the quantity of friends that makes you important. But Proverbs 18 debunks that myth.

*Can you recall a time when an extraordinary friend supported you? One time we often see that kind of friendship is when we move. Who showed up for you when you needed to pack boxes or clean the house as you prepared to move?*

*John 15:13-17 ESV - 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. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. 17 These things I command you, so that you will love one another.*

Jesus showed us how to be a friend. He was a model of the perfect friend. He demonstrated the love that He instructed his disciples to show. He loved them and lay down his life for them.

As you reflect on the kind of friend you aspire to be, consider Jesus' command, that we love one another, and that the greatest love we can demonstrate is a love that sets aside our own agenda for our friends sake.

## 3. A Friend Risks Speaking Truth

*Proverbs 27:6 ESV - 6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.*

No one likes to see a friend hurt. But sometimes we must choose between confronting a friend and allowing them to walk a destructive path. The key is to understand our motivation. We are to speak the truth “in love” as Paul instructs in the book of Ephesians.