

Week 5 – The Friend

**Introduction:** We were never intended to *go-it-alone*. A word like “friend” can conjure warm thoughts of kind people or trigger painful memories of cruel treatment. Not everyone has enjoyed the help of healthy friendships. Some have given up the fine art of friend-making altogether.

**F**riendship is one of the sweetest joys of life. Many might have failed beneath the bitterness of their trial had they not found a friend. -SPURGEON

Guess what? God made man for companionship, and good friendships are His gift to help us live godly lives. God is our ultimate example of friendship. Abraham, we're told in James 2:23 was a *Friend of God*.

Jesus considers His followers to be His *friends* (John 15:14-15). Since God created and modeled friendship, wouldn't it be wise for Christians to listen to God's instructions for being the best kind of friends?

Proverbs has more to say about friendship than any other book in the Bible. There are many examples of friendship throughout the scriptures, but Proverbs wins the prize for having the most to say on the subject. We have two words used in the book to denote the idea of a friend — *neighbor* and *friend*.

- Give an example of a great friendship (*Actual or Fiction*). What made the friendship valuable?

This week we are going to dredge Proverbs for both positive and negative illustrations of friendship that we can add to our plan for daily Christian victory.

**VICTORY PLAN:**

**#1 - TRUTH TO YOUTH**

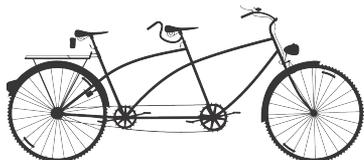
**#2 - KNOW GOD**

**#3 - GET WISDOM**

**#4 - DON'T BE A FOOL**

**#5 - BE & MAKE FRIENDS**

Depending how or where they are used, words used to describe friendship in proverbs can include a person who is very close to us or someone who might be just an acquaintance. The same Hebrew word might be used for a legal opponent or a dear friend (Compare Proverbs 17:17 and 18:17).



Proverbs seems to explain that a few close friends are better than many acquaintances. Let's first consider the good neighbor, and secondly the good friend.

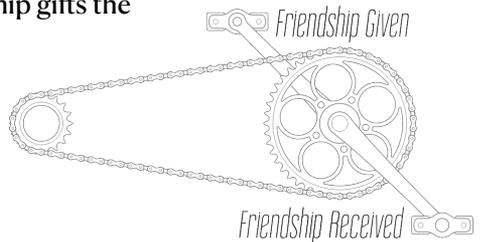
- I. **The Good Neighbor** — The characteristics of the good neighbors are equal to what we would call love. Here are seven of their fine qualities.
  - A. Person of Peace — Why is it not wise to pick a fight with the neighbor? (Prov 3:29; 25:8-9)
  
  - B. Generous in Opinions — How will the neighbor respond to wrongs done to them? (Prov 24:17, 19; 25:21, 22)
  
  - C. Watches Their Words — Why are they careful with what they say? (Prov 11:12)
  
  - D. Cares for the Fallen — Why might someone despise their neighbor? (Prov 14:21; 21:10)
  
  - E. Guards Close Allies — Who does the good neighbor avoid? Why? (Prov 22:24-25)

F. Rewards Right — Who does the neighbor reward? (Prov 3:27-28)

G. Valuable Asset — What makes having a good neighbor worthwhile?  
(Prov 12:26)

***“The standard he upholds will be as much a service to his neighbor  
as the good things he dispenses.”-Kidner***

II. **The Good Friend** — Loyal friendship gifts the recipient as well as the friend who gives. Just as the pedals of a bicycle complement each other (one pushing while the other pulls), so a true friend will give and get for their labors.



A. Is Constant — Fair-weather friends will disappoint, but good friends can be depended upon. Why were people mentioned in the following verses treated differently? (Prov 14:20; 19:4, 6, 7) James 2:4-5 speaks to this tendency in the local New Testament church context.

- What are signs of a constant friend? (Prov 18:24; 17:17; 27:10)

B. Will Confront — What is a good friend willing to do? (Prov 27:6)

- Why is flattery dangerous? (Prov 29:5)

C. Gives Counsel — How does wise counsel from a friend influence our attitude? (Prov 27:9)

- What is the benefit of counsel from good friends? (Prov 27:17)

***A true friendship should have both elements, the reassuring and the bracing. -Kidner***

D. Is Careful — How might someone **NOT** be a good friend?

- Prov 25:17

- Prov 27:14

- Prov 25:20

- Prov 26:18-19

### **Conclusion:**

It just so happens that one of the strongest Hebrew words used to describe close friendships (allûp) is usually used in in scenes of betrayal (Note: Prov 16:28; 17:9). Friendships are valuable, but they are also vulnerable. The better you know someone, the more hurtful you can be to them. Be Careful!

Every Christian friendship includes Christ. What does Christ's friendship mean to you? How will your view of friendship change because of the passages studied today?

