



FRIENDSHIP 17:17; 18:24; 27:5-6, 9-10, 17

These **proverbs** deal with the subject of **friendship**. The dictionary defines a *“friend”* as *“a person whom one knows and with whom one has a bond of mutual affection”* By definition, *“friendship”* speaks of *“attachment by affection”* Notice in the definition of *“friendship”* the phrase *“mutual affection”* FRIENDSHIP CANNOT BE ONE-SIDED! There is a difference between a **friend** and an **acquaintance**. An *“acquaintance”* is *“a person whom one knows”* The word *“friend”* is used very loosely, and is often confused with a mere *“acquaintance”* PEOPLE HAVE FAR MORE ACQUAINTANCES THAN THEY DO FRIENDS!

FRIENDSHIP IS A NEED OF MANKIND! *“Friendship”* is **fellowship** and **companionship** AND SUCH IS NECESSARY FOR US! This is backed up by Biblical evidence. Even when man was in a perfect state, and in communion with God, God said *“It is not good that man should be alone”* [Genesis 2:18]. MAN NEEDED A COMPANION, ONE OF HIS OWN KIND! Man was not created for **solitude**, but for **socialization**! He needs **friendship**, **fellowship**, and **companionship** AND THIS IS TRUE OF EVERYBODY! THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS! However, there are two types of *“friendships”* **good** and **bad** AND OH, HOW WE NEED TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE! An example of **good friendship** is found in *Jonathán* and *David* [I Samuel 18:1-4]. An example of **bad friendship** is found in *Amnon* and *Jonadab* [II Samuel 13:1-5]. *Amnon* lusted after his own half-sister *Tamar*, and he knew that it was wrong, and he was struggling with the matter [verse 2]. We read in verse 3 *“But Amnon had a friend”* his friend’s name was *Jonadab*, and we read that *“Jonadab was a very subtil man”* [verse 3]. He was crafty and cunning NOT A VERY GOOD CHARACTERISTIC IN A FRIEND! By himself *Amnon* would not have raped *Tamar*; but he was influenced and encouraged by *Jonadab* [verses 4-5]. *“Friends”* exert a tremendous amount of influence upon us, whether for good or bad and they do make a difference in our lives, whether for good or bad, and they have the power to change our lives, whether for good or bad. *Solomon* wrote in Proverbs 13:20 *“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise”* and just the opposite of that is true also. *Paul* wrote in I Corinthians 15:33 *“Evil communications corrupt good manners”* and just the opposite of that is true also. Therefore *“friends”* should be chosen with care. *Solomon* in his wisdom warns against making friends with a **talebearer** [Proverbs 20:19], with one given to **anger** [Proverbs 22:24], with one given to **drink** and **riotous** living [Proverbs 23:20], and with those given to **change** [Proverbs 24:21]. *Paul* also gave warning in Romans 16:16-18; II Thessalonians 3:6-7; I Timothy 6:3-5. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT WE HAVE GOOD FRIENDSHIPS!

Often *“friendships”* are superficial and shallow, merely based upon having a good time. Heavenly wisdom will cause one to seek *“friendships”* that will **draw them closer to God**, that will **help them become what God would have them to be**, that will **cause spiritual development**, and that **delights in spiritual growth and maturity**, that **encourages good**

works, and helps them become more like Christ! WHAT A DIFFERENCE A FRIEND CAN MAKE!

“A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” [17:17].

“Friendship” requires constant and consistent love through adversity, poverty, wealth, sorrow, and happiness. It is a *“love”* that includes care, thought, and regard. It is a *“love”* that includes effort. It is a *“love”* that is unselfish [I Samuel 18:1], a *“love”* that consists of a strong bond [Deuteronomy 13:6; I Samuel 18:1], a *“love”* that includes aid, dependability, and trust [I Samuel 18:3], it is a *“love”* that includes giving and receiving [I Samuel 18:4]. It is a *“love”* that possesses the characteristics mentioned in I Corinthians 13:4-7. *“A friend loveth at all times”* The perfect pattern of this is seen in *Christ*. The second part of this proverb declares *“and a brother is born for adversity”* A *“brother”* is born to assist, to help, to benefit, and encourage a brother or sister in distress. A BROTHER AND A FRIEND WE NEED!

“A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” [18:24].

In order to have *“friends”* one must display and manifest friendliness! This means that *“friendship”* is reciprocal (a mutual action). To manifest friendliness one must display and manifest affection, sociability, hospitality, approachability, kindness, empathy, (the ability to understand and share the feelings of another), benevolence, loyalty, dependability, availability, and a listening ear! FRIENDSHIP IS AN ATTITUDE! FRIENDSHIP IS A COMMITMENT! *“Friendships”* are not made by isolating yourself from people! *“Friendships”* are not made by avoiding closeness! *“Friendships”* are not made by being fearful of being hurt! *“Friendships”* are made, and cultivated, they require effort, time, and patience. *“Friendships”* are built by being a friend. FRIENDSHIP IS AN INVESTMENT OF SELF! Many are looking for someone to be a *“friend”* to them, listen to their problems, be sympathetic to them, be there for them, they want to receive friendship, they are looking for what someone can do for them, BUT THE BASIS OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP IS BEING A FRIEND! A *“friend”* is one who believes in you. BE A FRIEND! A *“friend”* is one who answers your call before you call. BE A FRIEND! A *“friend”* is one who never gets in the way unless you are going the wrong way. BE A FRIEND! A *“friend”* is one who is willing to have their schedule interrupted. BE A FRIEND! A *“friend”* is at the disposal of a friend and is available. BE A FRIEND! A *“friend”* shares their life and their self. BE A FRIEND! A *“friend”* shares in joys and griefs. BE A FRIEND! Again, *“A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly”* The second part of the proverb makes a marvelous statement; *“and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother”* There are *“friendships”* that are stronger and greater than blood relation! These words find their fulfillment in *Christ*, who is an ancient friend, a caring friend, a prudent friend, a faithful friend, a loving and constant friend!

“Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” [27:5-6].

The words “*open rebuke*” are expressive of **sincerity**. The phrase “*Faithful are the wounds of a friend*” have reference to “*open rebuke*” and such is a mark of the **faithfulness**, the **devotion**, the **dependability**, and **reliability** of a “*friend*” Natural self-love is apt to flatter ourselves, and is inclined to accept the flatteries of others. There is a natural unwillingness and blindness in us to know and see our own faults. As long as we have faults, it is good to be aware of them. Such reveals the benefit of a “*friend*” A “*friend*” sees and is aware of the faults in their friends, BUT IS A FRIEND ANYWAY! A “*friend*” watches over the well-being of a “*friend*” out of **care** and **concern**, and is willing to issue a rebuke when necessary. A true “*friend*” will tell you what you need to hear. This “*rebuke*” is to follow the guidelines of Scriptures, and is to be administered prayerfully. True “*friendship*” is built upon a solid foundation, and can and will receive rebuke from a friend.

“Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel. Thine own friend, and thy father’s friend, forsake not, neither go into thy brother’s house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off” [27:9-10].

A “*friend*” brings **joy** and **refreshment** to the heart. A “*friend*” **invigorates** and **rejuvenates** the heart in the time of trial. A friend’s “*counsel*” (advice, guidance, direction, warnings, and encouragements) are “*hearty*” or from the heart, and speak of **sincerity** and **well-meaning**. This **proverb** also is a warning not to forsake or forget a friend-”*Thine own friend, and thy father’s friend forsake not*” This is also an exhortation to continue to cultivate old friendships. ❶ Do not take friends or friendships for granted. ❷ Do not allow trivial matters interfere with friendship. ❸ Do not expect perfection. ❹ Do not be easily hurt and offended. ❺ Do not carelessly listen to evil reports against your friends.

The last part of the **proverb** is a reminder that there are “*friendships*” that are **stronger**, more **reliable**, and **dependable**, and more **beneficial** than blood relationships.

“Iron sharpeneth iron: so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” [27:17].

This **proverb** speaks of the value of conversation between friends. “*Friends*” conversing with one another is **revitalizing**, **refreshing**, and **stimulating**. This ought to be especially true concerning spirituality. *Paul* was often invigorated by his friends [Acts 28:15; II Corinthians 7:6].

FRIENDS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR LIVES [Ecclesiastes 4:9-10]. Seek to make a positive difference in someone’s life! All earthly “*friendships*” have some weaknesses in them, and as a result can be broken [Psalm 38:11; Proverbs 16:28; 17:9]. GUARD AND CHERISH TRUE FRIENDSHIPS!

