

Proverbs Week 4: Friendship

Introduction

1. What is a friend and why should we want them?

Hebrew word for friend is “rea”. It is also translated “neighbour” (or acquaintances). Our friends are a special category of our acquaintances. Having many acquaintances can deceive us into believing we have many friends, but this is not the same thing.

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

12:26 A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

We need friends to grow to maturity

27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

2. Barriers to Forming Friendship

a. Family Ties

27:10 Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you--better a neighbour nearby than a brother far away.

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

b. Bad attitudes (pride/despising/deceiving/gossip etc.)

11:9 With his mouth the godless destroys his neighbour, but through knowledge the righteous escape.

11:12 A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbour, but a man of understanding holds his tongue.

14:21 He who despises his neighbour sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.

24:28 Do not testify against your neighbour without cause, or use your lips to deceive.

26:18 Like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows is a man who deceives his neighbour and says, "I was only joking!"

16:28 A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.

c. Ungraciousness

22:11 He who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious will have the king for his friend.

17:9 He who covers over an offence promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

19:6 Many curry favour with a ruler, and everyone is the friend of a man who gives gifts.

d. Lack of boundaries

^{27:14} If a man loudly blesses his neighbour early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse.

^{25:17} Seldom set foot in your neighbour's house--too much of you, and he will hate you.

3. Being a good friend

a. Dependability

See Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 27:10 above

b. Honesty

^{27:6} Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

^{29:5} Whoever flatters his neighbour is spreading a net for his feet.

c. Consideration

See Proverbs above!