

## Wisdom for Neighbors/Friends (Summer Wisdom 2016)

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### Introduction

- A recent study followed nearly 1,500 older people for 10 years. It found that those who had a large network of friends outlived those with fewer friends by more than 20%
  - In another study, women with breast cancer in a support group lived twice as long as those not in a group. They also had much less pain.
  - "People with social support have fewer cardiovascular problems and immune problems, and lower levels of cortisol -- a stress hormone," says Tasha R. Howe, PhD, associate professor of psychology at Humboldt State University.
  - Drug use among young people is higher among those who say they're lonely. Older lonely people tend to have higher blood pressure and poorer sleep quality. They also were more tense and anxious.
  - God's Word gives us direction as to what a good friend and neighbor looks like.
  - The common word for friend (רֵעַ rea) means, equally "neighbor" it has very much the range of meaning of our word "fellow." At the far extreme, it signifies merely 'the other fellow;' at its nearest it stands for a person with whom one has close fellowship (TOTC).
  - May the Lord grant us heavenly wisdom to have godly friendships and neighbors.
  - May the Lord grant us heavenly grace to be a godly friend and a godly neighbor
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### Christ-Centered Neighbors Cultivate Security (3:29)

**3:29** Do not devise evil against your neighbor, For he dwells by you for safety's sake.

- Christ centered neighbors should create stability, hope, confidence, and a place of safety for their community.
  - The word for safety also means trustworthiness
- Conversely, those who dwell with evil breed suspicion and instability.
- God has made you a neighbor for a reason... Christ has called you to be a peace-maker and a place of safety for your neighbors... how are you measuring up?

**Prov 25:8** Do not go hastily to court; For what will you do in the end, When your neighbor has put you to shame? <sup>9</sup> Debate your case with your neighbor, And do not disclose the secret to another;

- Christ followers must also cultivate safety and be known for those who are slow to quarrel and argue.
- Why? Because we know that eyes can be deceptive and what you think you see or hear your neighbor doing might not be the correct interpretation.
- Here the advice is to criticize one's neighbor directly and make the charge without going public (Longman). The wise neighbor confronts directly and cultivates relationships that are safe to speak truth in grace.
- **Christians should be God's Neighborhood watch, not that we are law enforcement for the world but we live according law of grace. That others may see and find refuge in our homes.**
  - What would it do to the world if every Christ follower was known as someone that fosters peace in their neighborhood, slow to court, and never to gossip.

**Are you a safe place? Are you a neighbor of peace? Are you intentionally cultivating trustworthy relationships?**

## **Christ-Centered Friends Build Constancy (18:24)**

- Constancy is the quality of being faithful or dependable
- 18:24 A man *who has* friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend *who sticks closer than a brother*.
- This proverb observes different graduations of friendship. The 1<sup>st</sup> speaks of those who want to spend time with the person, while the second describes a relationship of greater intimacy and intensity (Longman).
- Are you a person that builds deep friendships and relationships? The world ways have 1 Mil Facebook friends. God's Word tell us to be a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
  - We have lost the art of Gospel saturated deep relationships.
- **Can others depend on you? Do you stick closer than a brother?**
  - We must be dependable because our Savior is the most dependable person in the World.

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

- Godly friends are characterized by constancy. Fair-weathered friends are many, but the friend who fears the Lord and gives freely is treasured (TOTC)
- The proverb comments on one's foundational relationships, particularly those one can count on during trying times. A brother and friend is there through thick and thin in order to provide help during adversity (Longman).
- **Christ-centered friendships are ones where we are not fair-weathered and we are born for adversity.**
  - When storms come we lean on the ONE who calms the storms
- **Can your friends depend on you when storms come their way? Are you fair-weathered**

**Are you building constancy and dependability?**

In the JC reliability rating... do you get 1 star or 5 stars?

## Christ-Centered Neighbors Are known For Honesty (27:6)

27:6 Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.

- God's word over and over again warns and encourages us about our mouth and tongue. Here, proverbs directs our attention to wounds or cutting words of rebuke.
- Neighbor's here is your warning: be wary of foes who try to kiss you excessively. Literally this verse is translated: "the kisses of the foe are profuse"
  - The implication is that the kisses of the enemy are suspect and excessive.
- Rather... Christ-centered neighbors speak the truth in love with grace. They are people who offer constructive criticism for the sake of building up one another.
  - As surgery causes pain... its end goal is healing.
- Are you honest? Do you take pleasure in the hurts and wounds of others you create? Are you a person who can offer contrastive criticism?

29:5 A man who flatters his neighbor Spreads a net for his feet.

- **Why is honest important?**
- Flattery is different than encouragement/criticism because the latter is based on the truth (Longman)
- As the proverb indicates, flattery hypes people but does not help them; rather, it harms them (Longman)
- Remember the #9 commandment... you shall not bear false witness.
  - Tell a Lie once, and all your truths become questionable.
  - If you are not a friend of honesty... why would someone listen to you when you share Christ?
- Why is honesty important? Because our God is a God of integrity and we must represent Him well.

## Christ-Centered Friends Give Wise Counsel (27:9)

27:9 Ointment and perfume delight the heart,  
And the sweetness of a man's friend *gives delight* by hearty counsel

- Oil and incense are two luxuries that make people happy and the second colon celebrates the sweetness of friendship over one's own advice. This proverb implies that the effect of advice from a friend is "sweet" and a delight (Longman).
  - Friends who offer godly counsel literally bring joy to the heart of a person.
- Are your words sweet or bitter?

- Have you ever given a lemon drop or warhead to a child? Our 18<sup>th</sup> month old mad a face at a sour patch kid. Don't give sour advice. Give sweet, Godly words that delight the heart.

**27:17** *As iron sharpens iron,  
So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.*

- The rubbing of iron against iron produces a sharp edge
- The first iron is a sword or knife because face is the Hebrew term for a blades edge. The second iron is a sharpening iron, as shown using “with.” Is sharpened is used metaphorically of mouth or tongue, which functions as a metaphor for dialogue.
  - You must be as hard as a flint to sharpens continually (NICOT).
- Are you involved in a place where you are continually sharpened?

## **Christ-Centered Neighbors Are Considerate (27:6)**

**25:17** *Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house,  
Lest he become weary of you and hate you.*

- Friendship ripens through discreet sensitivity not to intrude on privacy and to allow space for the other person to be a person in his own right not through imposition (NICOT).
- Godliness mandates that we walk circumspectly with others in mind. That we do not intrude however, this does not give us an out not to share the saving message of Jesus Christ.
  - The most considerate thing you can do for your neighbor is to give them Jesus.

**26:17** *He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own Is like one who takes a dog by the ears.*

**26:18** *Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death,*

**19** *Is the man who deceives his neighbor,  
And says, “I was only joking!”*

- this proverb only makes sense if the dog is understood to be a mean biter. So to pull the ears= certain pain.
  - Because of the Hebrew's prejudice that dogs were unclean, most dogs in Palestine were semi-wild, like the pariah dogs that still haunt some countries. Its dynamic equivalent would be a jackal. Not even Samson grabbed the foxes by the ears (NICOT).
- With course and deceitful joking, this speech starts a war. This joking results in pain and the death of any kind of relationships they may have with their neighbors (Longman).

- May we not hide behind a “joke” and use this funny business to cause deep hurt, perpetuate prejudice.. or further gossip.
- May the Grace of Jesus Christ make us considerate... and may others see our wised interactions in our friendships... may others see us as neighbors and see our Savior.

# Conclusion

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Why is friendship important? Because we have a friend in Jesus Christ.

**Matt. 11:19** The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a **friend** of tax collectors and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified by her children.”

- What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!  
 What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!  
 O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,  
 all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

**James 2:23** And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*” And he was called the **friend** of God.

- We do not begin as friends of God.
- We become friends of the Lord when are are righteous
- This is why Jesus died... to justify/make us right before the Lord.
  - Are you a friend of God?

**James 4:4** Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a **friend** of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

- Are you a friend **of** the world? Is you are living as an enemy of God.
- Are you a friend/neighbor **to** the world?
- May this alter and church be filled with neighbors and friends who cry out on behalf of others today:
- Do you need to seek restoration because you have been a lacking neighbor friend?
- Do you have neighbors that are sick? Carry their burdens
- Do you have neighbors that need Jesus? Seek the Lord on their behalf

- **You can put your faith in Jesus right were you sit**
- Opportunity to respond publically
  - Come forward
  - Connection card.. we will follow up and encourage you

### Why does it Matter?

- We have been justified (made right before the Lord) and accepted
- We receive forgiveness (redeemed)
- We escape God's wrath (reconciled)
- We are adopted in to a new family
- We gain a new identity (New Creation)
- **Believe, Confess, Faith, Baptism**

# Notes

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- the common word for friend means, equally “neighbor” it has very much the range of meaning of our word “fellow.” At the far extreme, it signifies merely ‘the other fellow;’ at its nearest it stands for a person with whom one has close fellowship (TOTC).

## Community/Safety

**3:29** Do not devise evil against your neighbor,  
For he dwells by you for safety’s sake.

- To do “evil” will breed, not confidence, but suspicion and fear in the community (Longman)

**Prov 25:8** Do not go hastily to court;  
For what will you do in the end,  
When your neighbor has put you to shame?

**9** Debate your case with your neighbor,  
And do not disclose the secret to another;

- do not go out quickly to a quarrel, for what will you do afterward (Alter)
- this proverb warns against overhasty accusations of some kind of wrongdoing. Eyes can be deceptive, so one must reflect on a situation before making an accusation (Longman).
- Here the advice is to criticize one’s neighbor directly and make the charge without going public (Longman).

**12:26** The righteous should choose his friends carefully,  
For the way of the wicked leads them astray.

- The standard he upholds will be as much a service to his neighbor as the good things he dispenses
- That is to say, he does not rush into a friendship, and does not surrender his moral judgment to anyone (TOTC)
- “a righteous person shows the way to his neighbor, but the path of the wicked makes them wander (Longman).

## Constancy

18:24 A man *who has* friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend *who* sticks closer than a brother.

- In the first verse we see someone who is isolated or separated from others, focusing on his own desire, and who consequently gets into trouble; this last verse affirms the sustaining power of friendship (Alter).
- This proverb observes different graduations of friendship. The 1<sup>st</sup> speaks of those who want to spend time with the person, while the second describes a relationship of greater intimacy and intensity (Longman).

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

- Godly friends are characterized by constancy. Fair-weathered friends are many, but the friend who fears the Lord and gives freely is treasured (TOTC)
- The proverb comments on one's foundational relationships, particularly those one can count on during trying times. A brother and friend is there through thick and thin in order to provide help during adversity (Longman).

## Honesty

- 27:6 Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.
- Wounds = “cutting words of rebuke” (Alter)
- “the kisses of the foe are profuse” this is what the Hebrew means. The implication is that he kisses are excessive, and suspect (Alter).
- In other words, the bruises must be the result of constructive criticism brought to bear by a friend. The paradigmatic example of this is Judas's kiss of betrayal in Matt 26:48-50

• 29:5 A man who flatters his neighbor Spreads a net for his feet.

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## Wise Counsel

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- Oil and incense are two luxuries that make people happy and the second colon celebrates the sweetness of friendship over one's own advice. This proverb implies that the effect of advice from a friend is "sweet" and a delight (Longman).
  - Delight = to rejoice in the heart

**27:17** *As iron sharpens iron,  
So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.*

- This is a well known verse and often is cited in connection with male friendship, but there is really no reason to think it does not apply to women. (Longman)
- The rubbing of iron against iron produces a sharp edge
- The first iron is a sword or knife because face is the Hebrew term for a blades edge. The second iron is a sharpening iron, as shown using "with." Is sharpened is used metaphorically of mouth or tongue, which functions as a metaphor for dialogue.
  - You must be as hard as a flint to sharpens continually (NICOT).

### **Tact/sensitivity/consideration**

**25:17** *Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house,  
Lest he become weary of you and hate you.*

- It is a matter of overdoing it and overstaying your welcome (Longman).
- Friendship ripens through discreet sensitivity not to intrude on privacy and to allow space for the other person to be a person in his own right not through imposition (NICOT).

**27:14** *He who blesses his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning,  
It will be counted a curse to him.*

- This proverb is a specific application of the principle that the sage must learn to say the right thing at the right time. In this case, people are just slowly getting up in the early morning; their minds are still groggy. If they in this condition are greeted by someone with a loud, cheerful voice, it can be disturbing (Longman).

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  - Because of the Hebrew's prejudice that dogs were unclean, most dogs in Palestine were semiwild, like the pariah dogs that still haunt some countries. Its dynamic equivalent would be a jackal. Not even Samson grabbed the foxes by the ears (NICOT).
- With course and deceitful joking, this speech starts a war. This joking results in pain and the death of any kind of relationships they may have with their neighbors (Longman).
- Deceives relays the force that this neighbor intends harm. He is not prankster or practical joker but a deceiver and to cover up his ill intent he calls it jest (NICOT)

## Illustrations

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## Application

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- The only way to separate yourself from your sin is to trust in Jesus.

the expositor (NAC)