

LEGACY: BE THE DIFFERENCE IN YOUR FRIENDSHIPS

Part 1 of LEGACY. Various passages in Proverbs.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. January 7, 2024.

THE LEGACY SERIES

A three week series focused on bringing three important areas of life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

- Friendship
- Passing the Faith on to the next generation.
- Finances.

It's hard to overstate the importance of genuine friendship.

- Friends helps us feel happier
- Friends helps us go deeper in faith.
- Friends help us find strength when life is challenging.

HOW TO BE HAPPY

Researchers know that friendships are crucial to happiness.

- Harvard Business School professor Arthur Brooks researches happiness. Brooks concluded that everyone needs a life-partner or a true friend (or both) to feel happy. Check out some of his work:

- Book:

From Strength to Strength. Portfolio/Penguin. 2022.

- Articles:

<https://medium.com/@jackrossdixon/the-two-necessities-for-a-happy-life-a-life-partner-and-true-friends-3874135cf65b>

<https://www.gqindia.com/content/a-harvard-professor-reveals-the-3-types-of-friendships-you-need-in-your-life-to-feel-truly-happy>

BE THE DIFFERENCE IN YOUR FRIENDSHIPS

1. Be Faithful - Proverbs 17:17.

- It's rare to find a faithful friend.

Proverbs 20:6 (ESV) Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find? (Also Proverbs 18:24)

- Why is friendship so rare?
 - Faithful friendship is hard work.
 - People can be rude or difficult. Forgiving is a struggle.
 - People do stupid things.
 - Faithful friendships take months or years to develop.
 - We can't be a faithful friend to many people.
- Christianity is a relational religion. We're created/re-created for friendship.

Ephesians 2:20-21 (NLT) Together, we are God's house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. 21 We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.

- Two essential qualities of a faithful friend:

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

- Consistency: a friend loves at all times.
- Commitment: a brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs 27:10 (ESV) Do not forsake your friend and your father's friend,

2. Be Truthful - Proverbs 27:5-6.

Proverbs 27:5-6 (ESV) Better is open rebuke than hidden love. 6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

- Honest and caring communication is an essential relationship skill.
- “Open rebuke” is a sharp word of correction.
- It takes wisdom to know when to speak, what to say, how to say it. Pray:
 “Lord, help me say the right thing, at the right time, in the right way to help my friend walk on the right path that pleases you.”
- Jesus gave his disciple Peter a stern rebuke:
 Matthew 16:22-23 (ESV) And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” 23 But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”
- Consider the following when speaking honestly to a friend:
 - It’s easier if we’ve been asked to give advice.
 - It’s better when we’re more like a coach than a critic.
 - It’s more productive to offer solutions, not just corrections.
- Rebuke/correction should be rare and helpful:
 Proverbs 27:9 (NLT) The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as sweet as perfume and incense.

BE THE DIFFERENCE

Arthur Brooks identified three kinds of friendships.

- Friendships of transaction (associates), admiration (acquaintances), and virtue (genuine friendship - deep, loyal, honest, long-term).
 Proverbs 18:24 (ESV) A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
- The secret sauce of true friendship is living in freedom from the need to hide in shame. Jesus knows our deepest selves and darkest sins, and he loved us and died for us to cleanse and forgive us. We can be vulnerable.

SMALL GROUPS GUIDE

GET STARTED

- Share your resolutions, goals, plans for 2024.

DIVE IN

- Review the study guide. What were Peter's main ideas, insights, or Bible passages related to friendship?
- What evidence is there to support Peter's claim that friendship leads to feeling happier, going deeper in faith, and growing more resilient?
- Read the following friendship passages from Proverbs and discuss them. First, identify their meaning BEFORE discussing their applications:

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

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

Proverbs 27:5-6 Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

Proverbs 17:9 Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.

Proverbs 18:1 Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.

PRAY TOGETHER

Pray for the members of the small group, your pastors/elders, the Cornerstone family, and our outreach partners. And anything else the Lord puts on your mind.