

## Proverbs - Friends: Proverbs 27:1-17

If we are to navigate our way through life with wisdom, we need to pick the right fellow travelers.

### Choosing your friends:

#### 1. Who to avoid

Proverbs has something to say about who we should avoid:

**a. 'Sinners':** Proverbs 1:10 'My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.' These are the people who persuade you to do stuff you know is wrong.

**b. The Put-Down Kid:** Proverbs 20:19 'whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babblers'. This is the kind of friend who spends their time putting others down. In reality it's them who has the problem. And the danger is you join them in their negative attitude to others.

**c. The Jealous Friend:** Proverbs 27:4 'Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?' Jealousy in a friendship ultimately destroys relationships.

**d. Anger:** Proverbs 22:24-25 - 'Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare'. There is a kind of friend who is given to strops. Solomon's advice is blunt: don't make a friendship with such a person. If they make a habit of blowing their stack and storming off, don't rush in pursuit of them.

#### 2. Who to choose:

##### a. Character

Proverbs 22:11 'He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend': the combination of integrity and charm in a friend is priceless.

##### b. Stickability

Proverbs warns against fair-weather friends who disappear when your circumstances change. But true friendship is proven in the heat of adversity, and it's in your moment of adversity when Solomon says in 19:22 that 'what is desired in a man is steadfast love.' And Proverbs 17:17 says 'a friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity'.

##### c. Honest counsel

Whilst flattery may seem sweeter at the time, proverbs says the wounds of a friend are better: 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.'

**Keeping your friends:** Proverbs is honest with us: we cannot assume friendships will endure. They come under attack from outside: Proverbs 16:28 'A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends' and from within: Proverbs 17:9 'whoever covers an offence seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends'. We must consciously defend our friendships.

**The friend you need:** No one friend can satisfy our longing for friendship. In Proverbs 18:24 Solomon says that there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Christians have read that verse and seen a glimpse of Jesus Christ: the friend of sinners (Luke 7:34) You don't have to get yourself sorted to be a friend of Jesus Christ. But you do have to come with faith (James 2:23). It is as we put our trust in Jesus and what He has done for us, that we can know His forgiveness, His righteousness and His friendship. The Friend who sticks closer than a brother.