

Principles from Proverbs: Friendship, Part III

Introduction: An old adage states, "To have friends, you have to know how to be a friend." While friendship is a two way street, each traveler should go the extra mile to make a friendship thrive. Proverbs teaches us to maximize our friendship potential by being the best friend we can be.

II. Be a friend to your friends.

A. Help your friend through difficult times.

“A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”
(Proverbs 17:17)

1. Friendship grows in good times and should deepen in bad times. Do not allow bad circumstances to distance a close friendship.
2. Because friendship involves commitment, it always costs. Whether time, money, or emotion, friendship has a price. A true friend pays the price even when it's high.
3. Biblical friendship has a purpose—support through adversity. Such gives friendship a sacred character.

B. Keep the confidences of your friend.

“He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.” (Proverbs 17:9)

“A forward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.” (Proverbs 16:28)

1. Friendship seeks to protect the reputation of his friend. A true friend will not spread unflattering details about his friend's life.
2. Covering a transgression does *not* mean failing to deal with sin. Rather, a true friend helps his friend confidentially—with no impulse to publicize private information.
3. Relationships are weakened and frequently destroyed by loose lips. Remember, the gossip will gain the ear—but never the friendship—of the people to whom he gossips.
4. Betrayal by a friend is a wound that may never completely heal. If you value a relationship, learn to keep your mouth shut.
5. The closest of relationships flourish where mutual trust is the ever-present, unspoken constant.

C. Treat your friend with respect and courtesy.

“He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him.” (Proverbs 27:14)

1. Do not allow familiarity to breed contempt in a friendship. Kindness, consideration, and good manners are the oil that reduces social friction.
2. Strong friendships allow for distance. Friends get on each other’s nerves if they are too close for too long.
3. Do not be overbearing and possessive in friendships. Allow your friends to have other friends as well.
4. Know when your presence has become irritating. Preacher’s mother always says, “Enough is enough and sometimes it’s too much!”

D. Be loyal to your friends.

“Thine own friend, and thy father’s friend, forsake not...” (Proverbs 27:10)

1. Friendships should be chosen with caution and maintained with care. Since “forsaking” happens frequently by default, it must be countered with active attention. At the very least, one should occasionally call a friend to maintain the relationship. Christmas cards are not enough.
2. Place a high value on your friendships. We do not lose track of the things we value.
3. Realize that relationships are usually more valuable than issues. Very few “issues” should break a friendship.
4. Remember that there is something inherently wrong with the individual whose life is littered with broken relationships. Such people are always dangerous as friends and associates.

A Friend—Dr. Jack Hyles

A friend is one who understands
The motives underneath my plan.

A friend is one who always sees
The real me, yet never flees.

A friend is one who always knows
The pain I feel, yet never shows

Disgust with me when I am weak,
And comprehends the words I speak.

A friend is one so soon to hear
The threats that often make me fear.

A friend, I guess, ‘tis plain to see,
Is really just another me.