

Friendship in an Age of Loneliness

Study Guide

Note of caution to CG members and leaders participating in this discussion. This topic brings with it the full spectrum of experiences and emotions. Please have the awareness and grace to know that not everyone's experience is the same. It ranges from sweet delight to brokenness, pain, and unfulfilled expectations. The intent of the CG discussion is not to play "armchair" counselor or psychologist. Recognize that for some, to move forward, you must go back. This requires the Holy Spirit's power to break down walls of hurt and pain and courage to address the past. This may be beyond the function of the CG and may require the involvement of a third party, an Elder, a trusted friend / mentor, or professional Christian Counseling.

Be sensitive, but feel free to dive as deep as each of you are willing to go. Finally, there are expectations that we all bring to CG's and this topic may provide a good opportunity for some to connect more 1:1 to discuss things that may need to be "aired out". Approach your discussions with prayer and sensitivity. There is amazing power in restoring broken friendships. It's worth it!

1. Discuss your major takeaways from the message on Friendship. What spoke loudest to you?
2. How have you seen the power of friendship personally impact your choices and life decisions?
3. Read Proverbs 18:1 and discuss any personal experiences when you may have gone into "isolation mode". How helpful or destructive was that to you and your family? What are the dangers of isolation? If anyone is currently in that mode and is comfortable sharing, what is holding you back from reengaging in the relationship?
4. Why do you think God's design includes others as a key to your personal growth?
5. Read Proverbs 17:17. What are practical ways that you can live out the Big Idea: Embrace friendship's power: Be **A**vailable, **C**ommitted, and **T**rustworthy: **ACT!**
6. Share how following through on an inter prompt to "ACT" and reaching out to a friend has resulted in a meaningful impact to them and to you.

7. Create space for prayer. Relationships are hard. We're not alone. Pray over each other's concerns, seeking the Holy Spirit's power to restore and build wise friendships.

Message Outline

Series Theme Verse:

1. Proverbs 3:13-14

"Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold."

2. Friendship in an Age of Loneliness

Big Idea: Embrace friendship's power: Be Available, Committed, and Trustworthy.

3. Proverbs 18:1

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

4. Proverbs 17:17

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

5. Proverbs 13:20

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

6. Proverbs 18:24

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

7. John 15:12-14

12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you.

8. Big Idea: Embrace friendship's power: Be Available, Committed, and Trustworthy: ACT!