



Street Smart

Part 4 - Friends

Discussion Guide

We often think of friends as the cohorts in our adventures, the party companion or wingman, or maybe the one you call when you have unexpected free-time. The Bible teaches about friends from a much more serious perspective, revealing vastly deeper relationships. We are to be there for each other in adversity, sharpening each other, rubbing off the rough edges, and lifting each other up when we fall down. Let's move on from thinking of our friendships as most helpful in planning a weekend getaway to living godly lives.

Jump Start

1. What one adjective do you most look for in a friend? Is this a characteristic of your current close friends?
2. *True friends make us better.* Read [Proverbs 27:17](#) and [Proverbs 13:20](#). True friends will challenge us to be better people, and they will expect us to do the same for them. Can you think of a time in your own life where an “iron sharpens iron” exchange took place in your friendships?
3. *True friends tell us the truth.* Read [Proverbs 27:6](#) and [Ephesians 4:15](#) and [4:29](#). Have you ever been thankful for the “faithful wounds of a friend” as they told you a hard truth? What are some ways you can speak truth to the people in your life without “sugar-coating” the issue, but also in a way that is obviously motivated by love?
4. *True friends help us follow Christ.* Read [1 Corinthians 11:1](#), [1 Corinthians 15:33](#), and [1 John 1:7](#). Jesus is the ultimate example of the One we should follow, but we should also intentionally surround ourselves with people who encourage us to be more like Him. We have the liberty to choose which of our friendships to nurture. How can we seek and build relationships that draw us closer to Jesus? What kind of friends will we associate, as per 1 John 1:7?
5. Final Thought: We know that we need to seek out godly friends, but we must also reciprocate by *being* a godly friend. When you consider the ways you can be a better, more godly friend to those you are close to, how can you personally commit, this week, to being the kind of friend God has called you to be?

Deeper

Read John 6:53-68 (ESV)

⁵³ So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹ Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

⁶⁰ When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” ⁶¹ But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? ⁶² Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) ⁶⁵ And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

⁶⁶ After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

6. In [verses 53-58](#), Jesus is teaching a hard thing. Did He share in love? Did He speak to bring life or death? Were His words true? Were they hard to hear? Easy to understand? Paraphrase the message He gave. Ask God to help your heart be soft and open to the truth, especially when it is uncomfortable.
7. [Verse 61](#) says Jesus knew their thoughts. And He knew they were offended. We find His reply in Verse 63. What is it? What does this mean? In your life, where are you looking for worldly or “fleshly” answers? Who is reproofing you, and directing you towards God and His wisdom?
8. A true friend will understand you on a soul level and will love you in spite of yourself. We see in again in [verse 64](#) that Jesus knows every part of us. How did He treat all His followers, even foreknowing their choices? Do you ever assume you know exactly how others will act and react? Is this wise or judgmental? Do you have the “gift of discernment?” How can you apply the grace of God to your friendships and other relationships?

9. Read [Matthew 16:21-25](#). Jesus further revealed truth and upcoming pain and suffering. Even His closest friends were appalled. If we are following Jesus, our friends are either drawing us closer to Him or pulling us away from Him. In the same way, we are either drawing our friends toward Christ or pushing them away. There is no neutral. When our hearts are receptive to the truth – even a painful truth, we are able to grow in Christ. Who are your friends? Is God asking you to change your relationship with any of them as you learn what true friendship should look like?