



**Educate
+ Engage**



THE
WISDOM WAY ~~TH~~

The way
to Make Friends

OVERVIEW

This lesson teaches that real friendship, as described in the Bible, is more than just being connected with a lot of people on social media. It's about having deep Christ-centered connections with people who shape you, stick with you, and challenge you to become a better Christian.

Scripture Passage

Proverbs 17:17 (NKJV)

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

EDUCATE

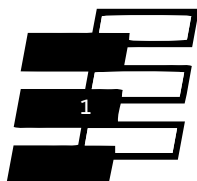
What is a friend? Think about it: we toss around the word *friend* like confetti, but do we really understand its true meaning? Social media floods us with “friends,” but how many do we truly know? Even before the world of Instagram, being a friend meant little more than just being an acquaintance.

The Bible has a different idea on friendship than what social media portrays. It talks about friends who are more like family, people who stick with you through thick and thin. Real friendships are sometimes hard to find in the digital age, but true friendship is super important.

Blaming technology for our disconnected lives isn't the full story. Even before smartphones, making true friends was tough. That's why the Book of Proverbs is packed with advice about friendship. Today we're diving into the Bible to discover what real friendship looks like.

Friends Shape You

Friendships have a profound impact on who we become. The wisdom of Proverbs urges us to be discerning about the company we keep because our friends shape us. Proverbs 13:20 advises us to surround ourselves with wise people who will inspire us to be wise. Doing so will keep us from the harmful lifestyle of the fool.



Dave Ramsey shares some great wisdom about improving ourselves through friendship: "You will be the same person in five years as you are today except for the people you meet and the books you read." That is one reason we must be careful to choose the right friends. Proverbs 22:24–25 warns against associating with those given to anger, as their influence can lead us astray. Even though we're called to love everyone, it's essential to cultivate deep connections with those who positively influence us.

(Stress the point: friends will influence you for the good or the bad.)

Discussion Questions: How do you think your friendships have influenced who you are today? Can you identify someone in your life who has been a positive influence on you? What qualities do they possess that you admire?

Friends Stick with You

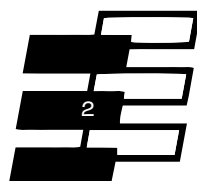
True friendship goes beyond a follow on social media or proximity or convenience; it's about caring deeply for one another. Having only acquaintances can lead to loneliness, but true friends are there for us through thick and thin. They stick with us even when it's inconvenient, showing their love at all times. (Read Proverbs 17:17 again.) In the messiness of life, true friends stand by us and offer their support and understanding.

Understanding correct boundaries is crucial in developing healthy friendships. (Read Proverbs 25:17, NLT.) Proverbs 25:17 teaches us the importance of giving others space and respecting their needs for solitude or privacy. Similarly, Proverbs 27:14 emphasizes the significance of timing in our interactions with friends. True friendship involves understanding what others need and respecting those boundaries, rather than imposing our own desires on them. Simply stated, night owls don't want morning people singing at 6:00 am. Boundaries.

Discussion Question: How can we respect our friends' boundaries while still being supportive and present in their lives?

Friends Challenge You

True friendship goes beyond having a lot of fun together; it involves caring about each other. Friends counsel, correct, and confront each other because they want what's best for one another. Proverbs 27:9 highlights the importance of seeking counsel from trusted friends who provide valuable advice and perspective. Proverbs 27:17 illustrates how friendships sharpen us,



refining our character through honest feedback and correction. Although confrontation can be uncomfortable, Proverbs 27:6 reminds us that the wounds of a friend are intended for healing, not harm.

However, friends also give each other grace and room to grow. Proverbs 17:9 emphasizes the importance of not dwelling on past mistakes or constantly criticizing one another. Instead, true friends overlook offenses and seek reconciliation, demonstrating love and forgiveness even in times of conflict.

Discussion Questions: How do you think receiving counsel from a friend differs from receiving advice from someone else? How can we balance confronting a friend about their actions while still showing them love and understanding?

Closing

Remember what Proverbs says about being a true friend. It is a tight and unbreaking bond. True friendships shape us, giving us people we can rely on each day, and challenge us to grow closer to Christ. Are your friends pulling you closer to God or pushing you further away from Him? Today, let's be intentional about surrounding ourselves with friends who positively influence our lives, steering us toward wisdom and being Christlike. Let's grant God access to our friend list and allow Him full permission to guide us to those who influence our lives.

ENGAGE

Ask God for guidance and wisdom in your friendships. Ask Him to reveal to you those who truly reflect His love and truth, and to help you discern the relationships that may be leading you away from Him and His will for your life. Pray for strength to cultivate Christ-centered connections, where everyone involved gives and receives encouragement and accountability.

Take this lesson to heart, and apply it in your daily life. Be intentional about the friendships you form, choosing those who care for you enough to challenge you to grow closer to God. Reach out to someone who may need a friend, showing them the love and compassion of Christ. And above all, commit to being a true friend yourself, caring for others, offering guidance and correction when needed, and always pointing our peers towards the way of wisdom.

