



## **Fruitful Friendships**

### **Key idea:**

Friends have a powerful influence upon us, so the wise person builds close relationships with people who will encourage them in prudent, healthy actions rather than emboldening them in foolish, harmful habits.

### **Key text:**

Proverbs 13:20

He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.

### **Key points:**

1. Friends have a great influence over us and the direction of our lives - for good or ill.
2. The Scripture speaks a lot about the influence of companions on us, warning us to be careful in the friends we choose (Proverbs 13:20; Proverbs 1:11-19; Psalm 1:1; 1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Samuel 16:23; 1 Kings 11:4-5).
3. We should choose wise and righteous friends rather than foolish, unrighteous ones (Proverbs 13:20; Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 9:10; Proverbs 4:11-12, 18-19).
4. We should choose friends who will encourage and strengthen us in our walk with God (Proverbs 27:17; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13; Hebrews 10:24-25).
5. We should choose friends who will give us wise counsel, and even rebuke us when necessary - and we should listen to them! (Proverbs 27:9; Proverbs 27:17; Proverbs 9:8; Proverbs 25:12; Proverbs 17:4; Psalm 1:1)
6. Choose friends who will be faithful in good times and bad (Proverbs 17:17; Proverbs 18:24; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

### **Questions for discussion/application:**

1. What part of Sunday's text and teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. Why do Proverbs and the rest of Scripture speak so much about the influence friends and companions have upon me?
3. Does this mean that I can not be friends with people who are not Christians? Why or why not?
4. What things should I consider when choosing close friends? What things should NOT enter my consideration?
5. Why is it so ironic that Solomon became a key example of being foolish in marrying unbelieving wives (See 1 Kings 11:1-5)? Why did he do this? What was the final result?
6. The book of Proverbs indicates that fruitful friendships sometimes include offering and receiving correction. Why do we find this so difficult to do? How willing am I to receive correction from my friends?
7. Why is the trait of faithfulness in good times and bad so important for true friends? Can I think of an example of friends who have stuck with me through adversity? How did that affect me? Can I think of times friends abandoned me? How did that affect me?
8. Can I think of particular relationships in my life that are not helping me in my walk with God? How do I plan to make changes in these relationships?
9. How can I specifically work to cultivate a particular friendship so that it is even stronger and more fruitful? What specific action can I take in the coming weeks?
10. Whom can I pray for, share what I have learned, and invite to church this week?

### **Preview of next week: Growing Generous (Proverbs 11:24-26)**