

DARING TO BE A FRIEND

TEXT: (Proverbs 27:9, NIV)

⁹ Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice.

INTRODUCTION

1. "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you" (Matthew 18:15, NIV).
2. "You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. For people will love only themselves" (II Timothy 3:1-2, NLT).
- 3 "My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds" (Psalm 38:11, NIV).

I. REAL FRIENDS ARE INTERESTED IN YOU

A. Empathy

1. "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn" (Romans 12:15, NIV).
2. "When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was" (Job 2:11-12, NIV).

B. Heartfelt Advice

1. "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, NIV).
2. "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31, NIV).

C. More Than Empathy

1. Heartfelt advice is more than empathy; it includes rebukes and warnings.
 - a. "Let a righteous man strike me—that is a kindness; let him rebuke me—that is oil on my head" (Psalm 141:5, NIV).
2. "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him" (Leviticus 19:17, ESV).
3. "Do not nurse hatred in your heart for any of your relatives. Confront people directly so you will not be held guilty for their sin" (Leviticus 19:17, NLT).
4. "Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy" (Proverbs 27:6, NLT).
5. "As soon as Abigail saw David, she got off her donkey and fell on her knees at his feet, her face to the ground in homage, saying, 'My master, let me take the blame! Let me speak to you. Listen to what I have to say. Don't dwell on what that brute Nabal did. He acts out the meaning of his name: Nabal, Fool. Foolishness oozes from him.

"I wasn't there when the young men my master sent arrived. I didn't see them. And now, my master, as God lives and as you live, God has kept you from this avenging murder—and may your enemies, all who seek my master's harm, end up like Nabal! Now take this gift that I, your servant girl, have brought to my master, and give it to the young men who follow in the steps of my master" (I Samuel

25:23-27, MSG).

II. A COVENANT FRIENDSHIP

1. “By the time David had finished reporting to Saul, Jonathan was deeply impressed with David—an immediate bond was forged between them. He became totally committed to David. From that point on he would be David’s number-one advocate and friend” (I Samuel 18:1, MSG).

A. More Than a Fairweather Friend

1. “Jonathan, out of his deep love for David, made a covenant with him. He formalized it with solemn gifts: his own royal robe and weapons—armor, sword, bow, and belt” (I Samuel 18:3-4, MSG).
2. “Saul called his son Jonathan together with his servants and ordered them to kill David. But because Jonathan treasured David, he went and warned him” (I Samuel 19:1-2, MSG).
3. “Jonathan went to find David and encouraged him to stay strong in his faith in God. ‘Don’t be afraid,’ Jonathan reassured him. ‘My father will never find you! You are going to be the king of Israel, and I will be next to you, as my father, Saul, is well aware.’ So the two of them renewed their solemn pact before the LORD. Then Jonathan returned home, while David stayed at Horesh” (I Samuel 23:16-18, NLT).
4. “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity” (Proverbs 17:17, NIV).

B. Friendship Is About Others—Not Self

1. “But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile believers, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn’t eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. As a result, other Jewish believers followed Peter’s hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy” (Galatians 2:11-13, NLT).

C. The Absolute Need for Heartfelt Advice

1. "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14, KJV).
2. "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17, NIV).
3. "Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses" (Proverbs 27:6, NIV).

CONCLUSION

1. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable...for correction” (II Timothy 3:16, KJV).
2. “The pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice” (Proverbs 27:9, MSG).
3. “When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.’ And you forgave the guilt of my sin” (Psalm 32:3-5, NIV).
4. “Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many” (Hebrews 12:15, NLT).
5. "Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him" (II Peter 3:15, NIV)