

- Tell me who your friends are and I will tell you who you are.
- Show me your friends and I will show you your end.
- Change your community, change your future.
- To **FIND** a friend you need to **BE** a friend.

Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.
Proverbs 13:20

Kinds of Poverty: Material, Spiritual, RELATIONAL

What Causes Relational Poverty?

- 1) **MOVING** away from friends
- 2) Electronic entertainment can **ISOLATE** us
- 3) Online relationships can hinder **INTIMACY**
- 4) **WORKING** longer hours

1. Why we need friends: In your early life your FAMILY shapes you but in the rest of your life your FRIENDS will shape you.

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Proverbs 17:17

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Proverbs 18:24

2. What genuine friends do: The story of David and Jonathan - 1 Samuel 18:3

A great relationship like Jonathan and David's doesn't usually happen automatically, but demands something from us. It requires...

- **Time.** No relationship—whether it's with a friend, spouse, or child—will flourish without the investment of our time in their lives.
- **Talking.** Every friendship is founded upon two-way communication.
- **Tears and laughter.** A genuinely open relationship requires sharing of both our joys and sorrows. We'd prefer that it all be laughter, but true friendships include hurt, pain, and tears.
- **Triumphs.** We should be as excited about our friends' accomplishments and victories as we are about our own. These are times to commend them for a job well done and rejoice with them.
- **Trials.** Every relationship goes through trials and disappointments. However, troubles can be diminished when we learn to relate to others in a selfless, caring manner.

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- **Thankfulness.** We should always thank the Lord for blessing us with good friendships; however, we also need to express gratitude to our friends. Saying “thank you” should come readily and sincerely to our lips for anything they do for us. And when they need our help, we should be grateful for the privilege of meeting their need.
- **Thoughtfulness.** Being thoughtful requires that we think about the other person, not just about ourselves. It flows from our love and concern and can be manifested in a variety of ways—a note, a call, a gift, or a visit—depending on our friend’s need or circumstance.
- **Tolerance.** Being a genuine friend requires tolerance. We need patience when we’d prefer they change, forgiveness when we’re wronged, and willingness to help in whatever way we can.
- **Touching.** A warm, godly hug is a wonderful way to convey our love and assure a friend of our prayers on their behalf. And when someone is hurting, a touch delivers comfort and encouragement. This is a way we can follow Jesus’ example because He continually touched people as He ministered to them—even lepers. We should never underestimate the power of a touch.
- **Transparency.** To build an intimate friendship, we must be willing to be honest and open. Instead of trying to hide our weaknesses and hurts, we should freely share our struggles with a friend. This doesn’t mean we have to reveal everything about ourselves, but we must be authentic and demonstrate that we really are who we appear to be.
- **Truthfulness.** Without a foundation of truth, we cannot build a relationship. We must be confident that the other person is speaking truthfully, and he or she should be able to trust that we will do whatever we have said.

3. Where we find friends: Jesus’ example.

- Jesus **PRAYED** about it. Luke 6:12-13
- Jesus friends were obedient to God. John 15:14
- Jesus had friends with a common **PURPOSE**. Mark 3:14
- Jesus had friends he could share his heart with. John 15:15
- Jesus chose friends who received his **HARD** sayings. John 6:66-68
- Jesus had friends who stood by him in trials. Luke 22:28-29

You discover a friend you do not make one.

“Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one’s friend springs from his earnest counsel.” Proverbs 27:9

Sources: Charles Stanley, “Strong Friendships Part 1”. Joseph Mattera, “Seven Ways Jesus Picked His Friends”.

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