

# The Friendships That Strengthen Faith

**Primary Text:** Proverbs 27:17 (NIV) “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”

## Introduction

Faith was never designed to grow in isolation. From the beginning, God made it clear that spiritual growth happens in **relationship**, not retreat.

**Genesis 2:18 (NIV)** “The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone.’”

Throughout Scripture, God forms His people in community. Moses had Aaron. David had Jonathan. Paul had Barnabas. Even Jesus surrounded Himself with disciples. Many believers struggle not because they lack belief, but because they lack **faith-strengthening relationships**. God often uses people to do what isolation weakens.

## 1. Faith-Strengthening Friendships Point Us Toward God

**Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 (NIV)**

“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.” Faith-filled friendships don’t replace God—they **redirect us to Him**. When fear clouds our vision, godly friends help us see God clearly again.

David experienced this while hiding from Saul.

**1 Samuel 23:16 (NIV)** “And Saul’s son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God.”

Jonathan didn’t point David to strategy—he pointed him to **God’s sovereignty and promise**.

**Psalms 121:1–2 (NIV)** “I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.”

## 2. Faith-Strengthening Friendships Encourage Us When Faith Feels Weak

**Hebrews 10:24–25 (NIV)** “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together... but encouraging one another.”

Encouragement is not optional—it is a **biblical command**. Every believer will have moments when faith feels fragile.

In **Mark 2**, a paralyzed man is carried to Jesus by friends who refused to give up.

**Mark 2:5 (NIV)** “When Jesus saw *their faith*, he said to the paralyzed man, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’”

Sometimes your faith is strengthened because **someone else refuses to quit believing for you**.

**Galatians 6:2 (NIV)** “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

## 3. Faith-Strengthening Friendships Speak Truth, Even When It’s Hard

**Proverbs 27:6 (NIV)** “Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.”

Biblical friendship includes loving correction. Silence may feel kind, but it can be spiritually dangerous. Paul demonstrates this when Peter compromises the gospel.

**Galatians 2:11 (NIV)** “When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.”

Paul’s goal wasn’t humiliation—it was **restoration and gospel integrity**.

**Ephesians 4:15 (NIV)** “Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.”

## 4. Faith-Strengthening Friendships Walk With Us Through Suffering

**Romans 12:15 (NIV)** “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.”

When Lazarus died, Jesus knew resurrection was coming—yet He still entered their grief.

**John 11:35 (NIV)** “Jesus wept.”

Jesus shows us that presence often ministers more than explanations.

## 5. Faith-Strengthening Friendships Are Intentional, Not Accidental

**Proverbs 13:20 (NIV)** “Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.”

You don’t drift into godly friendships—you choose them. Who you walk with will shape who you become.

**1 Corinthians 15:33 (NIV)** “Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’”

**Amos 3:3 (NIV)** “Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?”

**Proverbs 12:26 (NIV)** “The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.”

## 6. Jesus, Our Greatest Friend

Jesus defines the ultimate faith-strengthening friendship.

**John 15:15 (NIV)** “I no longer call you servants... Instead, I have called you friends.”

Jesus strengthens us with truth, walks with us through suffering, corrects us in love, and never abandons us.

**Hebrews 13:5 (NIV)** “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

Strong faith is rarely built alone—it is forged in godly relationships.