

Lost in Translation (Week 4)

March 8th, 2026

"The Biblical Meaning of Friendship"

DO YOU HAVE FRIENDS? A story of a Pastor's conference.

The world's definition:

- You keep secrets no matter what. You keep a confidence. You back me no matter what (*loyalty*). You affirm me no matter what I do. This is considered unconditional love.
- Friendship is having fun.

The result: Because of wrong definitions and painful experiences, people isolate.

- Because relationships are painful and hard you make other things more important.
- Isolation (*without friends*) can happen intentionally or unintentionally.
 - Living an isolated life is a choice, being walled off is a choice to be alone.
 - Too busy to actually live out friendship.
 - We have to make choices to have the kinds of relationships God wants us to have.

So many Christians (leaders) lead friendless lives—they're lonely.

- This is not God's will for us. We were created for relationship with God and others (**Matthew 22:37-40**).
- Friendship is getting harder to find because love grows cold (**Matthew 24:12**).
- Some justify it with "*I am too busy.*"
- Some redefine it so it sounds like they do but they truly don't.

God's desire is to rebuild what was broken using His Word, His Holy Spirit, His people.

- God gave us a way to recover what we were born for.
- What does a friend look like?
- I can become one, I can recognize one, and I can disciple into becoming one.
- Hardwired to connect.

1 John 1:6-7 (NIV84), Ecclesiastes 4:7-12 (NIV84)

1. Being alone is not God's idea.

Genesis 2:18 (NIV84); Proverbs 18:1 (NASB95); Psalm 68:8 (NASB95)

2. Let's look at what friendship looks like.

- A. You work together for a better return.
 - A good friend helps us be good and do good. Again, a better return.
 - The best of us is what we bring up together.
 - **Proverbs 13:20; Psalm 141:5 (NIV84)**
- B. A good friend is there when you fall/struggle
- C. A good friend stands with you in the cold—the dark night of the soul.
 - Intimacy; honesty; coldness to warmth.
- D. A good friend is there in the fight even if the fight is against us.
 - I know I have a good friend when there is a disagreement, and we fight for relationship.
 - **Proverbs 17:17; Proverbs 27:6 (NIV84)**
- E. A cord of three strands—a spiritual family that strengthens one another.

3. Assumed truths found in this passage.

- A. He lays out here what a friend is. There are good friends and bad friends, and they can impact your life.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:33 (NASB95); Proverbs 18:24 (NIV84), Proverbs 12:26 (NIV84)**
- B. *Being* a friend sets the stage for friendship.
 - Who is my neighbor? Jesus says to "*Be a neighbor!*" (**Luke 10:29-37 NIV84**)

- C. Proximity is assumed. People know you and you know them when someone falls or is under attack.
 - **James 5:16; Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 3:12-13; Galatians 6:2 (NIV84).**
 - Being honest and reaching out **vs.** withholding truth about how you are really doing.
- D. A good friend is not a perfect friend. Humility and forgiveness are required (**Proverbs 10:12 (NIV84)**).

Back to the question: **DO YOU HAVE FRIENDS?**

Are you this kind of friend? Do you have this kind of friend(s)? If not, why not?

- Is your life too busy? Misplaced priorities?
- Are you too idealistic? Or am you too self-centered?
- Have you hardened your heart because of past pain?

A growing Christian is growing in relational depth with others! Are you growing?

FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

Head Questions: Renewing how we *think* about friendship

- Where have your definitions of “*friend*” been more shaped by culture (*fun, affirmation no matter what, “no snitching”*) than by Scripture (**Ecclesiastes 4**; “*wounds of a friend*”; **1 John 1:7**)?
- What is one specific belief about friendship that needs to be “*retranslated*” in your mind to match God’s Word?

Heart Questions: Letting God reshape our *desires* and *affections*

- When you hear that “*it’s not good for man to be alone*,” what comes up in your heart—resistance, fear, longing, shame, hope? Why?
- Where has hurt, disappointment, or loneliness made you pull your heart back from pursuing deep, Biblical friendship, and what might surrendering that to Jesus look like this week?

Hands Questions: Serving in the church as Biblical friends

- **Ecclesiastes 4** says two have “*a good return for their labor*.” In what ways could you serve *with* others in the church (*not just individually*) so that you’re building friendships *and* the body of Christ at the same time?
- What is one concrete step you can take in the next month (joining a 4:19 group, serving on a team, following up with someone who’s struggling, etc.) that would move you toward being the kind of friend who helps others up when they fall?

Feet Questions: Living this out in work, home, and hobbies

- Think about your workplace, home, or favorite hobby context. Where are you currently most tempted to live “*alone*” (*self-sufficient, hidden, surface-level only*)?
- What is one relational risk you could take this week (*appropriate vulnerability, an honest check-in, offering to walk with someone through a “cold night of the soul”*) that reflects the kind of friendship described in **Ecclesiastes 4**?

Community Questions: Shaping the culture around us

- The sermon warned that isolation and wrong views of friendship are “*holes*” that American Christianity can fall into. If your neighborhood, school, or community sports team adopted your current practice of friendship, what would that community look like?
- As a group, identify one practical way you can model Biblical friendship together *publicly* (*e.g., showing up for someone in crisis, reconciling instead of church-hopping, supporting a struggling family*) so that your community sees what Christ-shaped relationships really look like.

Sermon Series Resources:

