PROVERBS: Wisdom for Living

Study 19: Friends Matter

READ Proverbs 17:17 and LISTEN to Pastor Craig Baxter's <u>sermon</u>.

One of the distinctives as people made in God's image is that we have been made to have relationship with others. It is for this reason that one of the deepest needs of the human heart is intimacy through true friendship. Many of us have acquaintances, others of us have "friends" on social media. But how many true friends do you have and why are true friends important? It is not surprising that a major area of wisdom through the book of Proverbs deals with the topic of friendship. In this study we will come to understand what a true friend is and why having true friends in your life is a matter of spiritual life and spiritual death.

Main lesson: Jesus expected and commanded that the Christian life be lived in a community of friendship for the wellbeing of our soul.

Questions:

- 1. From Proverbs 19:6, what kind of person has many friends and what might change if that person's circumstances changed for the worse?
- 2. A. How does Jesus define true friendship and what might be the ultimate goal of such a friendship from John 15:15-16? See also Ex 33:11.
 - B. From Jesus' words, how might you define what true friendship is?
- 3. A. What do you learn about the importance of loyalty and love for fostering intimate friendship from Proverbs 17:17 and 20:6?

B. Practically speaking, what might this look like? See 1 Sam 20:30-42; Prov 17:9; 1 Cor 13:7; 1 Peter 4:8.

C. How did Jesus display both of these qualities toward His people? See John 15:13; 14:3; Matt 28:20. Identify other verses if you can.

4. How do you think intimate friends "sharpen" each other (Prov 27:17)?

A. How did Jonathan "sharpen" or help David when he was in danger? See also Job 4:3-4. Do you help your friends in the same way? If not, why not?

B. How does "open rebuke" prove love in a friendship? See Prov 27:5-6.

C. Why is rebuke important? See Heb 3:12-14; 10:23-31. What might stop you from doing this?

5. How might you apply this lesson to your current circumstances?

STOP AND PRAY:

Praise: God for redeeming us in Christ despite our enmity and rebellion toward Him

Thank: the Lord for no longer treating us as servants, but as friends

Pray: that you might seek true, intimate friends and be this kind of friend to others