

IRON SHARPENETH IRON

PROVERBS 27:17

Text: Proverbs 27:17

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¹⁷ Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Introduction:

“What does friendship have to do with the church, and following the Lord?” you might ask. Well, quite truthfully, the Bible has quite a lot to say about being a friend to others. And, when you think about it, if any group of people within modern-day society should be friendly, it should be Christians; those who have been befriended by God through the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord once said to His disciples:

John 15:14-15

¹⁴ Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. ¹⁵ Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

What is a friend? The New World Dictionary of American English defines the term this way:

1. a person whom one knows well and is fond of; intimate associate; close acquaintance
2. a person on the same side in a struggle; one who is not an enemy or foe; ally
3. a supporter or sympathizer...
4. something thought of as like a friend in being helpful, reliable, etc...

Obviously, a friend is not someone with whom a person is merely acquainted. They are someone with whom a person shares things in common, and with whom one feels comfortable. They are someone with whom a person can divulge private information to without fear of everyone else hearing about it. Though a friend is a supporter and sympathizer, they will tell a person the truth about themselves when they need to hear it. Friends help one another and can rely on one another.

Notice:

1. THE REQUIREMENTS OF FRIENDSHIP

Proverbs 18:24

²⁴ A man *that hath* friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend *that* sticketh closer than a brother.

Friendship is somewhat like your bank account: You cannot get anything out of it if you do not put anything into it.

Every person that walks through these church doors ought to sense the love, concern, and friendship that is here. We ought to greet folks that visit our services with a handshake and a smile, as well as eye contact that lets them know they are welcome.

We ought to do that no matter what kind of clothes they are wearing, or the color of their skin. One man has summed up just how friendly church folk ought to be to visitors with the following: “Nothing in the world is friendlier than a wet dog.”

Being friendly to visitors will take some effort, but it is worth it. Someone has said, “Some people make enemies instead of friends because it is less trouble.”

A. Friends Should Share a Mutual Affection

Illustration:

Jonathan and David

1 Samuel 18:1

¹ And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

2 Samuel 1:26

²⁶ I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

B. Friends Should Share a Mutual Acceptance and Allegiance

Proverbs 17:9

⁹ He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth *very* friends.

Proverbs 17:17

¹⁷ A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Would it not be wonderful if all God's children would learn to be true friends, and stop criticizing each other? You never help a Christian brother or sister correct a flaw by pointing out those flaws to others who cannot help the situation. Concerning true friendship, someone has noted the following:

Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts, nor measure words, but to pour them all out just as they are, chaff and grain together knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them,

*keep what is worth keeping, and then, with
the breath of kindness blow the rest away.*

2. THE RELATIONSHIP OF FRIENDS

A. There Should Be Mutual Support

Ecclesiastes 4:9

⁹Two *are* better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

Romans 15:1

¹We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Galatians 6:2

²Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

3. THE REWARD OF FRIENDSHIP

Proverbs 27:17

¹⁷Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

A Real Friend Will Cause You To Be More Like the Lord

**A real Friend Will Sharpen The Countenance, and
Character**

Close:

A British publication once offered a prize for the best definition of a friend. Among the thousands of answers received were the following:

"One who multiplies joys, divides grief, and whose honesty is inviolable."

"One who understands our silence."

"A volume of sympathy bound in cloth."

"A watch that beats true for all time and never runs down."

The winning definition read: "A friend is the one who comes in when the whole world has gone out."

May we be a true friend to those that who consider us their friend, and may we seek to have friends who will help us be more like the Lord.

