



*“What draws people to be friends is that they see the same truth. They share it.” —C.S. Lewis*

Summer is a time to hang out with friends. Sometimes we make new ones; sometimes we lose some old ones. Either way, who we surround ourselves with has an impact on us in some way.

Scripture warns us to be careful of whom we call friends. Proverbs 12:27 says, “The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.”

So, how do you choose your friends? Do you have common interests? Do they just happen to share the same life circumstances as you? Your friends may look very different from you—and that's OK—but they should have similar values to help keep your eyes on Christ. You can be silly and have fun with friends, but friends should also have your back when times are tough and lead you toward Christ and not away from Him.

Does this mean you should only hang out with Christians? No! But your closest friends and influences should encourage you in your faith, and not lead you away from Jesus.

Questions:

Who is the person you go to first to for advice?

Who is the person you laugh with the most?

Who is the person who has seen you cry the most?

Who is the person who knows your secrets the most? Do you trust them?

Who is the person who has hurt you the most?

Do your closest friends influence your walk with God in a positive way?  
How so?

Friendships have the power to encourage us, but they can also tear us down. Read the following passages and then share the principles or lessons you learn in less than one sentence and in your own words:

Ecclesiastes. 4:9-12 [Friends can lift you up and will stand with you.]

Proverbs 27:17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:11 [Friends will encourage you and sharpen you. Sharpening can be painful, but in the end, will make you stronger.]

Proverbs 27:5-6 [True friends will tell you the truth, even when it is hard to hear—that is the most loving thing they can do.]

Proverbs 17:17 and Galatians 6:2 [Bear with one another at all times, even when times are difficult, because a true friend loves through anything.]

1 Peter 4:8-10 and Colossians 3:12-17 ([Without grumbling, love one another through anything and forgive.]

Re-read Colossians 3:12-17. Note that these verses are talking about how we should be with everyone, not just our friends! Do you think it's easier or harder to live out what this passage is telling us to do with people we know, or with strangers?

It's easy to start comparing these verses and asking yourself if your friends have these qualities, but take a moment and ask yourself, do *you* have these qualities? Are you a good friend to others?

Challenge for the Week: Read and meditate on Hebrews 10:23-25. Set up a time to meet with another brother or sister in Christ. Get together to pray or read God's Word. Share what God is doing or teaching you. There is a lot we can learn from each other due to the fact that we have fellowship with one another, because Jesus has cleansed us from our sins (1 John 1:7).

Verses for the Week: Take time each day this week to read over these passages. Journal them in a notebook or in your phone. What are the principles and lessons found in these verses? If you had to sum up those lessons in one sentence, what would it be?

Day 1 - Proverbs 13:20

Day 2 - Proverbs 18:24

Day 3 - Proverbs 22:24-25

Day 4 - Galatians 11:10

Day 5 - 1 Peter 4:8

Day 6 - John 13:34-35