

<b>Series:</b> The Book of Proverbs	<b>Reference:</b> Proverbs 27:1-27	<b>Title:</b> Rooted Friends	<b>Date:</b> 01.22.23
<b>Website Writeup:</b> Wise relationships are rooted in a relationship with God. Are your relationships self-serving or loving?			

### Color Changes in text indicate slide changes

Take a moment & watch this video of a reading of Psalm 27. Let the words soak in considering the wisdom they direct us to in relationship with others.

(Proverbs 27:1-27 video)

Notice how many of these verses relate to human interaction; relationships, family, friendships, healthy connection. Who we should lean upon. What is a true friend, or brother or sister in the Lord. How to regard foolish or jealous people. How to recognize a true friend as opposed to an enemy when they often look so similar. How a child is a reflection on a father or mother. How we sharpen one another. How we can guard against pride in ourselves. And of course, the statement...

*a quarrelsome wife is like the dripping of a leaky roof in a rainstorm...*

As a matter of fact this sentiment is repeated two more times, once in Proverbs 21:9 & then in 25:24, both saying the same thing...

*Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.*

But...of course, none of the husbands here would know anything about that, right!?

There's simply so much rich wisdom in just this chapter alone, not to mention the whole book of Proverbs! It's all about the benefit relationships bring, or how unhealthy people can easily damage relationships. We all need healthy godly relationships, even if we don't realize it.

As I've said in other sermons, we've been watching Survivor. Maybe its apropos given it reflects so much of what we see in Proverbs. People stuck on an island competing constantly with limited resources, hungry & tired. You find out what people are made of, and how they react in relationships under stress.

In Season 30, a guy named Dan gets really mad at another player named Mike for a small infraction which Mike actually rectified right away. He had intended to make a really hurtful move in the game, but then said, "No, I just can't do it." But just the thought that Mike would consider doing it made Dan hate Mike. And for the rest of the game Mike kept silent as Dan made negative comment, one after another.

Every time Dan was on camera you could just see the disdain & loathing in his face towards others & the game as a whole, and especially towards Mike. When it came time for the final vote & Dan had been voted off & was now on the jury of past players. So, he

was not in the running for the million dollars any more, but Mike was. As Dan sat on the jury, his looks towards Mike dripped with hatred & jealousy.

After the show Dan carried his rant onto social media for months, even lying about certain things he claimed were said in the game to garner favor with others. Mike, who seemed to be a somewhat healthy Christian, won the million dollars. And during the reunion show, Dan was reprimanded by the host & called out for his lies & negative attitude. Cringeworthy to say the least - but he created that unhealthy tension by his unwise attitude & behavior.

Survivor is a petri dish of human relationships under pressure, where we witness all the good & bad of a person leak out like a pressure cooker unable to hold back the steam. They would've done well with a copy of Proverbs to read around the campfire at night. You have to wonder how would the game have changed if they did?

We need each other. But we need those relationships to be guided by God's wisdom to bring health.

In the film *About a Boy*<sup>1</sup>, Hugh Grant's character lives a lonely existence. He refers to this existence as 'island living' & is quite happy with it - that is, until a twelve-year-old boy befriends him. Suddenly his whole lifestyle is called into question, and in the end, he finds he's happier in community.

Here's a clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74256F5BtI>.

In today's message, we'll look at God's wisdom as it applies to our relationships. Wise relationships are rooted in our relationship with God. The question becomes, are yours rooted in Christ? In other words, are they self-serving or loving?

Relationships are gifts from God, with the wise orienting their relationships around God & His wisdom. Wise relationships have certain characteristics. One of these is trust.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says...

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart & lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

One way that's done is to not go with your gut instinct in relationships when we confront difficulty, but rather to seek God in His wisdom on how to react & handle situations. Valuing others as a fellow creation of God. To listen to the words of Proverbs allowing the Truth in these verses to marinate your soul, bringing your emotions under the authority of Christ. In other words, to take every thought captive to Him, not reacting or acting in damaging ways - but rather ways which bring life to yourself & others.

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<sup>1</sup> directed by Chris & Paul Weitz [Universal Pictures, 2002]

We had a little bump in the road with our foster sons. They lied to us about something & we had to tell them that relationships only operate well on trust. Without it, you simply cannot move forward.

We know that we all fail each other in relationship, there are a myriad of little things the wise don't elevate to some great breach of trust. Because, due to Christ, we don't operate out of victimhood where every little breach of trust from another creates some major emotional conflict. Christians understand human nature, and the wise are able to weigh which issues are relevant to confront, and which to simply overlook. And in the small issues is where forgiveness resides - we often times must simply bear with one another in love, overlooking all the more insignificant issues as God does with us.

But overall, trust is our central goal in any relationship. And when major trust is broken, it can grind a relationship to a halt if there's not forgiveness on the part of the offended, and repentance on the part of the offender.

And we recognize that trust in a relationship with another person has to start with trusting God yourself. Can you trust God in all your ways, including your relationships? When you trust God "in all your ways," you don't have to micromanage relationships letting the small things go. If your spouse has friends, that's okay. If your friend hangs out with other friends, that's okay. When problems arise, and you trust God in all things, you don't have to be the savior of the situation. Instead, you can point people to the one who can help fix the mess.

Choosing to be wise in our relationships means choosing to give & receive counsel.

Proverbs 27:9 says...

*Perfume & incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice.*

Then v17 says...

*As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.*

The company we keep matters, and so we should surround ourselves with friends who can speak truth into our lives which can prove uncomfortable at times. When you sharpen your knives, you don't lay them on the counter & then lay the sharpening stone opposite them in close proximity. You have to create friction in order to sharpen knives. You have to drag that stone across the blade. But even in the potential friction, there is sweetness.

Proverbs says that "earnest counsel" is the source of sweetness in your relationship. The question must be asked, if you're friends with someone & you see them doing something self-destructive but never say anything, are you really a true friend? The same being true in reverse for your own lifestyle. Are you open to loving correction from someone who's simply calling you back to the healthy standards of the Christian life as defined by the Scriptures?

Whether in marriage or friendship, you need a friend who's dependable & honors their commitments. One who isn't going to up & run when things get tough, but stays with you through thick & thin. Healthy relationships depend on commitment. They can't be one-sided affairs.

That's what Proverbs 27:10 addresses...

*Do not forsake your friend or a friend of your family, and do not go to your relative's house when disaster strikes you - better a neighbor nearby than a relative far away.*

We all need someone in close proximity to whom we can reach out & grasp during difficult times. Geography makes a difference. Proximity makes a difference. Do you value those right around you, creating healthy community with others who are pursuing Christ as well in discipleship relationships? Supporting each other during difficult times?

A wise relationship demonstrates commitment. Even if the other person isn't dependable, because your life is oriented around God, you'll be there for them when they need it. On the day of calamity, what a blessing it is to be present for someone during their time of need - or to know that during your time of need, there is someone there who's available & will help you!

An example of this commitment was found in the friendship between Christopher Reeve & Robin Williams. They met in Juilliard & were close friends for the rest of their lives. Reeve recounts Williams's commitment in his autobiography. After a tragic accident that was going to leave him paralyzed, Williams came to comfort his friend.

Later, Reeve wrote, "As the day of the operation drew closer, it became more & more painful & frightening to contemplate...I had only a fifty-fifty chance of surviving the surgery. Then, at an especially bleak moment, the door flew open & in hurried a squat fellow with a blue scrub hat & a yellow surgical gown & glasses, speaking in a Russian accent. He announced that he was my proctologist, and that he had to examine me immediately.

My first reaction was that either I was on way too many drugs or I was in fact brain damaged. But it was Robin Williams! My old friend had helped me know that somehow I was going to be okay. He said he would do anything for me. I thought: "My God, not only do I have Dana & my kids but I have friends like Robin...who truly care. Maybe it can be okay. I mean, life is going to be very different, and it's going to be an enormous challenge, but I can still laugh, and there's still some joy.""<sup>2</sup>

In one humorous act, Williams demonstrated the biblical truths of trust, honesty & commitment. And Reeve expresses the endless value he received from that gift.

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<sup>2</sup> Christopher Reeve, *Still Me* [New York: Random House Publishing, 1998], 33

So good friends, and likewise, to be a good friend, we center all things around Christ & His directives, taking all thought captive to Him. We don't nag & browbeat about little things, but we do confront unhealthy attitudes & behavior when necessary in love. We are both open to, and provide wise counsel in life. We value our friends, especially those within our own church community, building discipleship relationships in a healthy way. And we encourage when necessary.

But, instead of me preaching at you more, I thought it would be good to just meditate on these verses for a few minutes as I read them slowly. Open your Pew Bibles to Proverbs 27 on p451. I'll read slowly. Listen prayerfully, let the Holy Spirit identify one or two which particularly strike you. You can follow along in your Bibles. But keep your Bibles open since at the end we will have a silent time of reflection, and I want you to be able to read them again silently to yourselves...

Let me pray, then we will start. I will begin with Proverbs 3:5-6...

Proverbs 3:5-6...

Trust in the Lord with all your heart & lean not on your own understanding; 6in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 27...

*Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.*

*2Let someone else praise you, and not your own mouth; an outsider, and not your own lips.*

*3Stone is heavy & sand a burden, but a fool's provocation is heavier than both.*

*4Anger is cruel & fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?*

*5Better is open rebuke than hidden love. 6Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.*

*7One who is full loathes honey from the comb, but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet.*

*8Like a bird that flees its nest is anyone who flees from home.*

*9Perfume & incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice.*

*10Do not forsake your friend or a friend of your family, and do not go to your relative's house when disaster strikes you - better a neighbor nearby than a relative far away.*

*11Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart; then I can answer anyone who treats me with contempt.*

*12The prudent see danger & take refuge, but the simple keep going & pay the penalty.*

*13Take the garment of one who puts up security for a stranger; hold it in pledge if it is done for an outsider.*

*14If anyone loudly blesses their neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse.*

*15A quarrelsome wife is like the dripping of a leaky roof in a rainstorm; 16restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand.*

*17As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.*

*18The one who guards a fig tree will eat its fruit, and whoever protects their master will be honored.*

*19As water reflects the face, so one's life reflects the heart.*

*20Death & Destruction are never satisfied, and neither are human eyes.*

*21The crucible for silver & the furnace for gold, but people are tested by their praise.*

*22Though you grind a fool in a mortar, grinding them like grain with a pestle, you will not remove their folly from them.*

*23Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; 24for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations.*

*25When the hay is removed & new growth appears & the grass from the hills is gathered in, 26the lambs will provide you with clothing, and the goats with the price of a field. 27You will have plenty of goats' milk to feed your family & to nourish your female servants.*

*(Give 2 minutes to prayerfully reflect, then close in prayer)*