



Friends Like These

What Do I Do When a Friend Hurts Me?

Proverbs 27:5-6; John 21:15-19

Humans need a few things to survive—water, food, shelter, clothing. Then there are plenty of things we all want—extra money, extra time, hobbies. But let me ask you a question. Where do you consider friendship? For most of us, friendship is something we wished we had, but either don't have the time or don't have the energy to pursue. So, most of us simply choose to live without friends. Here's the problem. Just like we were made to need water, God made us to need friends. Friendship isn't optional. That means we need to prioritize friendship and cultivate those friendships.

When a friend hurts you, reveal the truth, release the debt, and restore the relationship.

- As you reflect on the message, what stood out to you? What is something you are still thinking about?
- What is something from the message that challenged you? How are you wrestling with that challenge?
- What question(s) do you have from the message?
- What is at least one practical takeaway from the message?

Proverbs 27:5-6

5 Better is open rebuke
than hidden love.

6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend;
profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

John 21:15-19

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” **16** He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” **17** He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. **18** Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” **19** (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”

- Have you ever had a friend hurt you? Have you hurt a friend? If you're comfortable, share your experience.
- The writer of Proverbs declares that “better is open rebuke” and “faithful are the wounds of a friend.” Even though this is true, revealing the truth in a friendship is difficult. What makes revealing truth to a friend so difficult?
- Turn to John 21:15-19. How does Jesus reveal the truth to Peter?
- How can we proactively build friendships that foster the ability to willingly and openly share the truth with one another?
- The Bible describes an offense as “debt.” For instance, read Matthew 6:12 of the Lord's Prayer. What does this teach us about forgiveness?
- Practically speaking, what does it look like to “absorb the debt?” Similarly, what does absorbing the debt NOT mean?
- In John 21, how does Jesus restore his friendship with Peter?

- What do you do when you want to restore a friendship but your friend does not want to restore the friendship?
- Paul writes one of the most difficult commands in Romans 12:18: “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” What lessons regarding friendship and forgiveness can we learn from this verse?
- Do you have a friendship or relationship that is broken and needs forgiveness and restoration? If you feel comfortable, share and then pray for this relationship to experience forgiveness and restoration.