



Series: The Problem Is People

Title: Show Me Your Friends

Text: Proverbs 27:17, 13:20

Leader note: This Message Guide is intended to help you facilitate discussion with your Grace Group. You can use the guide exactly as it is, ignore some of it, or add to it. We hope you view this guide as a flexible teaching tool, and not a rigid teaching task.

Development

Leader note; one of the groups I visited this week invited different people to pray at the prayer time. I think this is a great way to begin the process of moving a person from group member to apprentice leader. How about asking someone you think has leadership potential to pray this week?

Announcements

Impact Week is an opportunity to show God's love to our communities by serving them in a big way! During the week of May 9-15, we have over 1,300 spots available for you to serve! Visit graceimpact.cc to sign up.

NEXT FX is a great event for families of kids K-5th grades, April 24 at 6 pm at the Pickerington campus.

Welcome & Icebreaker

What kind of job or position do you currently hold, and what made you choose that line of work?

Action Step Follow-up

Ask your group members how they did last week with that difficult situation, relationship or people group. Did they pick one issue to try to solve?

Biblical Teaching

In Proverbs 27:17, Solomon writes, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." Having another person or two to figure life out with and to discuss your faith journey is always fruitful. It's fruitful because we grow by hearing other insights, different opinions and other's experiences.

1. Describe a time in your life when you learned from someone else's experiences. Maybe you were in a relationship with a person who challenged your thinking. Or perhaps there was a time when you gained insight from a close friend or two.
2. In a different Bible version the passage reads, "Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the wits of another." So, I think that means that we can learn to be sharper or wiser based on learning through discussions with another person. Having a relationship with another person who you can study scripture with, share ideas with and hash out life's problems. If

you are not currently in this type of relationship with another person or two, what would it take for you to begin one?

Proverbs 13:20 says, “He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.” Much of the time, we talk to our friends about our problems. People that are our friends usually think the way we do, and therefore, may not give us advice that will challenge our thinking, or push us to a different solution.

3. The message this weekend said that “the *progress* of our journey depends on the *people* we journey with.” Are we choosing our friends wisely? Are we better people because of the influence of our current friends? Do our friends push us to think of our problems as they relate to Christian behavior?

Throughout scripture there are examples of people seeking to learn from older, wiser people. Paul does this with Timothy. 1 Timothy 1:18-19 says, “Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected those and so have shipwrecked their faith.”

4. When we seek out someone who is older and wiser in the faith, they will give us warning and encouragement. They will sharpen our thinking and move us closer to Christ-like thinking and behavior. *Relationships produce results*. Think about all of your relationships. Describe the results that your close relationships produce.
5. So, let’s turn the tables. Think about how you are influencing your friends. Remember, close relationships should point us to more Christ-like behavior. Are you providing that kind of counsel and encouragement to those friends? How is this occurring? Are you intentional about your advice? Do you call out sinful behavior? Do you point your friends to Jesus?

Action Step

The action step is going to be difficult if we’re in relationships that don’t point us to Jesus. We were challenged this weekend to *demote* these type of friends. Can you do that? Is your faith journey that valuable to you? Are you willing to pick your friends based on whether or not they help you in your faith journey? He also challenged us to *promote* those persons who do give us advice, encouragement and counsel that points us to Jesus. That may be easier, but it will still take time and effort to do. Will you do it? Will you put forth the risk of getting closer to someone you may not know as well?

Digging Deeper

For those wanting to dig a bit deeper into the topic of Godly counsel:

2 Chronicles 18:3-8

2 Chronicles 22:4-5

Prov. 6:20-23

Isaiah 30:1

Genesis 48:15

Numbers 13:33-14:4

Numbers 14:6-10

Joshua 9:14-17

1 Kings 12:6-14

Care

Watch the news and you’ll quickly see there are situations in people’s lives that cause pain and heartache. The people in your groups are no different. They may not share all of their hurts and struggles, but they’re there. Make every effort to comfort your people through the difficult times in their lives, especially through prayer. (*Leader note: This is a very important part of the group meeting. Resist the temptation to have this be an afterthought. The cares, hurts, struggles of your group members are very important.*)