

REROUTING

"TRAVEL BUDDIES"

PROVERBS 18:24

This Week's Core Competency

Biblical Community – I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world. Acts 2:44-47, *All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

Social media has redefined or at least expanded the definition of "friend." In the past we made friends; on Facebook we add friends. As you know, Facebook is a big deal. Recent figures indicate that 1.55 billion people worldwide use Facebook. Here are just a few interesting statistics regarding its use:

- * 1.01 billion people log on to Facebook daily.
- * 8 new profiles are created every second.
- * Users upload 350 million photos every day.
- * 4.75 billion (with a "b") pieces of content are shared daily.

* Users post what's on their minds more than 3 million times per minute.

* Friend requests run 10,000 per minute.

* Facebook "likes" run 500,000 per minute.

* Users spend 21 minutes per day on average on Facebook. (See Jeff Bullas, "21 Awesome Facebook Facts," www.jeffbullas.com)

The significance of friends is found in their quality, not quantity.

– Bruce K. Waltke

Don't get me wrong. I think Facebook is a good thing. It's a convenient way to stay connected and keep in touch with family, friends, and acquaintances. I post on Facebook, although not as often as some of my 364 "friends," the vast majority of whom I actually know personally. My "Facebook friends" include family, current and former church friends, former students and university colleagues, as well as my college roommate and a handful of high school friends. I don't have that many friends. Some of my Facebook friends have over 1,000 friends; one has 5,000!

Ironically, "Facebook friends" can be total strangers, suggesting that the term is a bit of an oxymoron like "jumbo shrimp." Here's what I mean. I actually get friend requests from people I've not heard of before, people who are likely friends of other Facebook friends. Facebook gives its users an opportunity to add friends from a list of people it thinks they might know; all by simply clicking the "Add Friend" button. I usually accept friend requests immediately from people I know, but requests from people I don't are another story. I currently have 117 friend requests waiting from people whose names and faces I don't recognize. On the one hand, I'm reluctant to delete any of these requests. After all, one can't have too many friends, right? On the other, the more unknown-to-me friends I have on Facebook the more uninteresting-to-me posts I have to wade through on my news feed.

The term "Facebook friends" reminds me of an older expression, "church friends," in that one can have both and still not experience true community. Facebook may reflect involvement in community,

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but it neither creates it nor amounts to it. "Church friends" is the term my parents used a generation ago to refer to people they saw at church on Sunday but hardly ever during the week, people who were perhaps more than mere acquaintances but less than close friends. Mom and Dad went to church each week; occasionally, they would see a couple in Sunday school they hadn't seen for a while, and so would sit with them in the worship service afterward, but that was it. They seldom went to the homes of their church friends, and vice versa. Ours was a big church; people attended from all over Detroit, and adult Bible classes were not geographically based. Beyond sharing prayer requests, Mom and Dad never shared with church friends in a time of great need or great rejoicing for that matter—family always, neighbors sometimes, church friends never.

The people described in Acts 2:44-47 were much more than church friends, not to mention Facebook friends. They were a community of believers by virtue of the fact that they participated in the Christian life together as members of Christ's church. Their "fellowship," i.e., *koinonia*, was marked by a commitment to Christ and a love for one another. They belonged to Christ and community. They "were together and had everything in common" (v. 44) and "gave to anyone as he had need" (v. 45). What's more, their "fellowship" was marked by a desire to become like Christ. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (v. 42). Finally, their "fellowship" was marked by a shared effort to go beyond to reach others. "Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts" (v. 46), and continued "enjoying the favor of all the people" (v. 47). Put differently, their "fellowship" or community experience involved "sharing in" and "sharing with." They "shared in" the spiritual realities and blessings of belonging to Christ, and "shared with" others the mission to become like Christ and go beyond with the gospel.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Proverbs 18:24

24 *A man of many companions may come to ruin,
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*

Cf., other translations

24 *One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin,
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*
(NIV 2011)

24 *A man who has friends must himself be friendly,
But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*
(NKJV)

24 *A person who has friends may be harmed by them,
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*
(NET)

24 *There are persons for companionship,
but then there are friends who are more loyal than
family.* (CEB)

24 *Some friends play at friendship
but a true friend sticks closer than one's nearest kin.*
(NRSV)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "man," and in the margin write, "Cf., "one," and "a person."
- * Bracket "of many companions."
- * Underline "may come to ruin."
- * Box "but" indicating *contrast*.
- * Box "closer" indicating *comparison*.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Do you see any relationship between Proverbs 18:24 and the surrounding proverbs?
2. Identify the type of *parallelism* found in this proverb.
3. What do you infer about it from its many different translations?
4. The NIV 1984 has "many companions," whereas the NIV 2011 has "unreliable friends." Why the change?
5. Having "many companions" may not be a good thing. How so?
6. Explain the *contrast* between "many companions" and "a friend."
7. Explain use of *comparison* in this proverb.
8. Put what this proverb says about "friendship" you own words.
9. **Discussion:** Talk about personal experiences that confirm the truth of the proverb.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of its message to clarify your understanding of the passage.

It should come as no surprise that personal transformation takes place best in community. After all, God has gifted each believer with a view to each being used by the Spirit to build up the body of Christ. Consider what Paul says in Ephesians 4:11-13: "It was he [Christ] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." This growth occurs as gifted members of the body live their Christian lives together. Paul goes on to say in verse 16: "From him [Christ] the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." Gifted people "rub off" on one another, not just on Sunday but whenever they are together in biblical community. In my opinion, you are never doing nothing if you are doing it together with others in community because personal transformation occurs *incidentally* as well as *intentionally*. This notion is expressed more broadly in the wisdom literature, which highlights the value of personal relationships that have the power to transform lives. For example, Proverbs 18:24 says: "A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."

While there is general agreement on the interpretation of the second half of the verse (verset B), the interpretation of the first half (verset A) is difficult—as its many different translations suggest. It's made difficult by a couple of factors. First, the Hebrew is cryptic: "A man of friends [is] to be shattered" can be taken in a number of ways. Second, how two of the three words in the verset should be translated is disputed. While most English translations render the first one, "a man" (NIV 1984, ESV) or "a person" (NET), some render it "there are" (CEB). And while most English translations render the second one "may come to ruin" (NIV 1984, NASB), one renders it "must

himself be friendly" (NKJV). Other translations give the words a more periphrastic rendering: "Some friends play at friendship" (NRSV).

The fact that the proverb uses *antithetical parallelism*, which employs *contrast*, to make its point helps resolve these interpretive difficulties. The use of "but" is the mark of antithetical parallelism, which here contrasts "many companions" (verset A) vs. "a friend" (verset B) as well as, "come to ruin" (verset A) vs. "sticks closer than a brother" (verset B), i.e., having no true friends in a time of trouble vs. having a faithful friend. The sense of the proverb is summarized well by one commentator: "If a person has many companions, or numerous friends chosen indiscriminately, he may find himself in trouble (lit., 'be broken in pieces'). A wordplay is intended here, for the Hebrew word for companion is *re'eh* and the word for break in pieces (come to ruin) is *ra'a*'. It is better to have a true friend (lit., 'one who loves'; cf. 17:17) than many less reliable companions" (Sid S. Buzzell, "Proverbs," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 945).

In the Apocrypha, Ecclesiasticus 6:10 puts the contrast this way: "There is a friend who is a table companion, but will not stand by you in your day of trouble." As another commentator wisely says, "The significance of friends is found in their quality, not quantity" (Bruce K. Waltke, *Proverbs: Chapters 15-31*, NICOT, 97).

The practical question, of course, is where can true friends be made? Perhaps the best answer is found in the example of the early Christians, who forged such friends through living the Christian life together with others in biblical community.

The Message of the Passage

In a time of need, you're better off with a few close friends made in community than with many casual acquaintances like some added on Facebook.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on the three "living questions" below to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

“Travel Buddies”

(Use the space below for Sunday's message notes)

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 24 *man* The proverb is not intended to be gender specific, hence the translations: "one" (NIV 2011), "a person" (NET), and the periphrastic rendering of the first line, "Some friends play at friendship" (NRSV).

v. 24 *of many companions* Lit., "a man of friends." The Heb. word translated "companions" [rea'] can be translated by "neighbor," "another," or "companion," when it refers to a neutral or somewhat negative relationship and by "friend" when it refers to a positive relationship (Waltke, 96). "The common word for 'friend' (rea') means, equally, 'neighbor': it has very much the range of meaning of our word 'fellow'. At the far extreme, it signifies merely 'the other fellow'; at its nearest it stands for a person with whom one has close fellowship. The context will decide the point" (Derek Kidner, *Proverbs*, TOTC, 44). Here antithetical parallelism indicated by "but" suggests the translation "companions" in the NIV. "Its antithetical parallelism draws a line between the topics, companions (i.e., run-of-the-mill friends) versus a true friend, and their respective predicates, 'about to be shattered' versus 'who sticks closer than a brother' (96).

v. 24 *may come to ruin* The first line of this proverb is translated differently in part because the Heb. is very cryptic, "a man of friends [is] to be shattered," in part because the Heb. "a man" can be emended "there are," and because the Heb. "to be shattered" can be emended "to make companions" (see Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC, 171). (On the various translations of the verse see Waltke, 87, footnote 6.) With regard to the meaning of the verb, one commentator explains: "The verb is a play on the Heb. for 'to make friends' (found in 22:24); but it is not the same word, as AV (*must shew himself friendly*) and RSV would prefer. (RSV reads: *There are friends who pretend to be friends.*) The RV gives the most probably sense of the Heb. text: *He that maketh many friends (doeth it) to his own destruction*" (Kidner, 131).

v. 24 *but* "Scholars have identified several types of parallelism in Proverbs. The basic types are: synonymous (in which the parallel lines share the same thought in different words; e.g., 1:8), antithetic (in which the thought of the second line is the opposite of the first; e.g., 3:33), and synthetic (in which the second line expands or adds a thought to that of the first line; e.g., 3:12)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Proverbs, 2015 ed., 6, www.soniclight.com).

v. 24 *closer* "The comparative closer than a brother (*me'ah*; see 18:19) uses blood relative as a basis of comparison for sticking to someone through thick and thin but which the subject has to an even greater degree (see 17:17). Economic survival was precarious in ancient Israel, and one needed the 'insurance' of a true friend" (Waltke, 97). "Proverbs itself is emphatic that a few close friends are better than a host of acquaintances, and stand in a class by themselves" (Kidner, 44).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

A 2013 Barna survey reported that, "one of the greatest self-perception changes over the past decade is in how Americans see themselves in relation to others. For all the technological advances in the past decade, the desire for human connectedness remains. Ten years ago, slightly over one out of 10 Americans self-identified as lonely. Today, that number has doubled-a paradoxical reality in the full swing of the social media age. But while loneliness among Americans has risen, the desire to find one's place among a few good friends has likewise increased-from 31% a decade ago to 37% today." It is interesting that people are looking for their place among a few good friends. It sounds a lot like our proverb today. "A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." (Proverbs 18:24) As parents it is our responsibility to instruct our kids in choosing friends wisely. I have always told my kids to keep their closest friend circle small and choose friends who have characteristics they want to develop in themselves. In this age of social media and online gaming, it's becoming harder for our kids to learn to develop face-to-face friendships. You can encourage this by getting them involved in group activities, bringing them to church and having friends over to play (without their devices). Friendships are a great blessing and helping your kids choose wisely will reap great rewards.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Proverbs 18:24

1. What is a companion?
2. What happens to the man of many companions?
3. What does a good friend do?

What Do You Think

Think about your best friend. What do you like most about him or her? If you could name his best quality, what would it be? How does she treat you? The Bible tells us to choose friends wisely. Do you do that?

What R U Going To Do

Take some time to encourage a friend this week. Write him a card and tell him why you are thankful for him. Invite her over and share a special treat you made. Friends love and encourage each other!

Core Comp

Biblical Community - I spend time with other Christians to help with God's work.

Memory Verse

Heb 12:2 - *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed Scrolls _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.