

REROUTING

"NO EXIT"

PROVERBS 17:17

This Week's Core Competency

Love – I unconditionally and sacrificially love and forgive others. 1 John 4:10-12, *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.* 11 *Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.* 12 *No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

Love and friendship go together like Jack and Jill, friends and family like peanut butter and jelly. Wisdom, too, puts them together in Proverbs 18:24, "A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother;" in 27:10, "Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you—better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away;" and in 17:17, "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." To my mind, the best biblical example of true friendship is that between David and Jonathan, who happened to be relatives also.

Jonathan was King Saul's son (1Sa 13:16) and Michal was his daughter (14:49). Now Michal fell in love with David, Israel's most eligible bachelor at the time. No wonder; in one place the Bible describes him as "ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features" (16:12) and in another

Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

– 1 Samuel 18:3

simply "ruddy and handsome" (17:42). What's more, he was famous. He so successfully carried out Saul's orders that the king elevated him to a high rank in the army. Women celebrated his victories singing, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands" (18:7), which, by the way, didn't sit well with the king. Nevertheless, Saul was pleased to hear that his daughter had a crush on David because by this time he was jealous of his young rival and thought Michal might be David's downfall. Saul was apparently convinced that David would die in his attempt to secure the bride-price (v. 21). But Saul was mistaken. After David paid a hundred Philistine foreskins for Michal, the two were married, making David part of the royal family.

Consequently, David and Jonathan could legitimately be called brothers, and the love they had for one another truly fit the following translation of Proverbs 17:17: "A *true* friend loves regardless of the situation, and a *real* brother exists to share the tough times" (VOICE). They were loyal to one another at all times and were there for one another in times of adversity.

Crown-prince Jonathan gave up the right to succeed his father by making a covenant with David, because in the words of scripture, "he loved him as himself" (18:3; cf., 20:16-17). To ratify that pledge, "Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt" (18:4). The significance of Jonathan's actions did not escape Saul, whose anger flared up at his son. "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own

cont. pg. 2

shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, *neither you nor your kingdom will be established*" (20:3-31). Then following multiple attempts on Saul's part to do away with David, Jonathan assured his friend. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father knows this" (23:17).

Over an extended period of time Jonathan repeatedly spoke well of David to Saul, repeatedly warned David of Saul's attempts to kill him, and repeatedly helped David make good his escapes from the king (chaps. 19, 20). Their meeting described in 20:41-42 is especially touching. Believing they would likely not see each other again, the Bible says: "Then they kissed each other and wept together—but David wept the most. Jonathan said to David, 'Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.' Then David left, and Jonathan went back to town."

For his part, David never forgot the covenant of friendship he made with Jonathan. When he heard of his cherished friend's death, he composed a lament for Jonathan and for Israel's fallen king. It closes with these words, "I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women" (2Sa 1:26). And once David became king over all Israel, he asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" (9:1). Of course, there was, a crippled son, Mephibosheth, to whom David said, "I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table" (v. 7) . . . And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king's table, and he was crippled in both feet" (v. 13).

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

Proverbs 17:17

17 *A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for adversity.*

17 *A friend loves you all the time.
A brother is always there to help you. (ICB)*

Cf., other translations

17 *A friend loves at all times,
and a relative is born to help in adversity. (NET)*

17 *Friends love all the time,
and kinsfolk are born for times of trouble. (CEB)*

17 *At all times a friend is one who loves,
And a relative is born for adversity. (Waltke)*

17 *The friend loves at all times,
but a brother is born for adversity. (LEB)*

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

- * Circle "friend."
- * Circle "loves."
- * Bracket "at all times."
- * Underline "and."
- * Circle "brother."
- * Bracket "born for adversity."

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 17:17 and the surrounding proverbs?
2. "At all times" comes first, before "a friend," in the Hebrew text. What do you make of that?
3. Identify the type of *parallelism* assumed by most English translations (cf., "and").
4. Identify the type of *parallelism* assumed by the LEB (cf., "but").
5. Explain why the *type* of parallelism used here matters.
6. Do you see any *contradiction* between this proverb and 18:24? Explain.
7. *Paraphrase* "born for adversity" to clarify what it means.
8. Put the point of the proverb in your 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.

Proverbs 17:17, which touts the value of a true friend also exhorts a person, albeit implicitly, to be a true friend, isn't particularly difficult to understand. The Hebrew begins with "at all times" to *emphasize* a true friend's steadfastness. One commentator describes this proverbial virtue of a good friend. He writes: "*Constancy is his first feature. Fair-weather friends are many in Proverbs (e.g. 14:20; 19:4, 6, 7), but 'there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother' (18:24), and 'loveth at all times' (17:17). In case the reader should think only of the friendship he hopes to receive, he is urged to give this kind of loyalty (27:10), especially to the old friend of the family who may easily be dropped in the search for new company, but whose staunchness would stand any test*" (Derek Kidner, *Proverbs*, TOTC, 45).

Another commentator comments on the implicit intention of the proverb: "Foul-weather friends are the only ones worth having. More important to the point of the proverb, they are the only ones worth being. The text is not about gaining a stalwart friend. It is about being one" (David A. Hubbard, *Proverbs*, The Preacher's Commentary, 267).

The most important interpretive decision a reader must make to understand the proverb correctly is whether it uses *synonymous* or *antithetical* parallelism. If antithetical, like a few versions and some commentators take it (cf., "but"), then the true "friend" is contrasted to the "brother," suggesting that no matter how good a good friend is, a brother is even better. Blood is thicker than

water. In other words, a friend rejoices and weeps with you, but a relative functions more like a safety net. If synonymous, like most English versions take it (cf., "and"), then the true "friend" in the first line is compared to the "brother" or relative in the second line. Water is as thick as blood, perhaps thicker.

I'm inclined to the conclusion of the following commentator: "Some Bible translations make a contrast in this verse between a friend and a brother by beginning the second line with 'but.' The NIV's **and** seems preferable; it conveys the idea that both the friend and the brother are valued. However, in 18:24 a friend is extolled above a brother (relative). True friends—and relatives—are faithful in times of **adversity** as well as prosperity" (Sid S. Buzzell, "Proverbs," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 943).

According to the second line of the proverb, a brother is "born for adversity." While the meaning of the phrase is somewhat obscure, the notion is clear enough. A brother or family member is there to help when times are bad. One translation expresses the idea nicely, "A *true* friend loves regardless of the situation, and a *real* brother exists to share the tough times" (VOICE). In a crisis one can always be sure of the help from a relative. A relative is made for that kind of trial; the crisis makes evident his loyalty. If the parallelism is synonymous, the same is predicated of a true friend.

The Message of the Passage

Consider your true friends a blessing and models of the kind of loving friend you should be to others.

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?

“No Exit”

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

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 17 **friend** Two words occur in this proverb that can be translated "friend." "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." (Kidner, 44). Another stronger word is *'oheb*, means "one who loves," and that is how it is translated in this verse to avoid the tautology "a friend is a friend at all times."

v. 17 **at all times** "At all times (see 5:19) is placed emphatically up front" (Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15-31*, NICOT, 56).

v. 17 **and** Or "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). "This proverb is ambiguous, and interpreters differ among each other. It is not clear if the parallelism is synonymous or antithetical; the connective translated 'and' can also frequently mean 'but' . . . If synonymous, the line *b* specifies the particular reliability of the friend; in a difficulty he becomes, as it were, a blood brother; cf. 24:b and 27:10. This is a metaphorical use of 'brother.' See also 18:24, but the proverb in 27:10 goes in the other direction. If, however, a contrast is intended, there is a heightening: a brother is better than an ever-loyal neighbor. In a crisis one can always be sure, even more certain, of the help from a brother. A brother is made for that kind of trial; the crisis makes evident his loyalty. As we say, blood is thicker than water" (Roland E. Murphy, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 22, *Proverbs*, 130-31).

v. 17 **brother** Cf., "relative/s" (NET; GNT; CEV); "kinsfolk" (NRSV). The term can refer to any blood relative, not just a male sibling. If the parallelism is antithetical, the "brother" is literally a relative distinguished from the "friend." According to that interpretation, "the moral of the verse is 'blood is thicker than water,' because while a friend is good to have, in the hour of adversity only a brother is a real help. Against this interpretation is the explicit phrase at all times in the first clause, and the fact that in xviii. 19, xix. 7 brothers are not spoken of in flattering terms, and in xvii. 24, xxvii. 10 a friend is held to be superior to a brother in a time of emergency" (A. Cohen, *Proverbs*, Soncino, 115). If the parallelism is synonymous, *figuratively speaking*, the "friend" is a "brother."

v. 17 **born for adversity** "This is not referring to sibling rivalry but to the loyalty a brother shows during times of calamity. This is not to say that a brother only shows loyalty when there is trouble, nor that he always does in these times (e.g., 18:19, 24; 19:7; 27:10). The true friend is the same as a brotherly relation—in times of greatest need the loyal love is displayed" (The NET Bible, **tn**61 on Pr 17:17).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Unfortunately, because we live in a fallen world, bad things happen. Just turn on the 6 o'clock news or open your news app and you will get a myriad of bad news from all over the world. As parents we try to shield our kids from bad news. We want them to feel safe. However, the reality is we all hit hard patches in life, and helping our kids develop skills to navigate those seasons is valuable. Sometimes hard times come with death or divorce or the loss of a friendship. Sometimes, it comes through a natural disaster as recent tornados taught us. It could be an illness or unfair treatment. Regardless of the source of our pain, here are some suggestions to help your children walk through hard times. (1) Ask them what they think or feel about the situation. What are they most afraid of? (2) Pray out loud with them so they can hear you trusting God and affirming His Sovereignty over all situations. (3) Look for an opportunity to do good in a bad situation. Can you collect clothing and toys for tornado victims? (4) Be intentional about spending time with your kids and pointing them to God's promises during a stressful season. Surround yourselves with people who love you. It's true that with great friends, joy is multiplied and sorrow divided.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Proverbs 17:17

Fill in the blanks. "A friend _____ at _____ times, and a brother is born for _____."

What is adversity?

What Do You Think

1. Can you think of a time when a friend or family member loved you during a hard time?
2. Why do you think it's important to have good friends when bad things happen?

What R U Going To Do

Do you know someone who is going through a hard time? Is someone you know sick or sad or lonely? Be a good friend and do something kind for them this week. Make a card. Plan a special visit. Meet a need. Ask your parents for help.

Core Comp

Love - I love and forgive others no matter what.

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

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for twelve years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Pantego Bible Church. He and his wife Ruth have been married forty-six years and have one son, Zach.

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.



8001 Anderson Blvd.
Ft. Worth, TX 76120
1-866-PANTEGO
Fax 817-275-6403
www.pantego.org

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.