

Excellent Relationships

Read: Proverbs 17:17-28

Main idea: We are called to build excellent relationships grounded in loyalty, wisdom, and understanding, as they reflect the love and support that Christ shows us.

Key Verses: "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." (**Proverbs 17:17, ESV**)

Key Principles:

- Loyalty in relationships requires constant love and support, especially in adversity, mirroring Christ's sacrificial friendship that endures trials without fail.
- Wisdom calls us to honor commitments carefully, avoiding rash decisions and unwise promises that can strain the relationship and lead to destruction.
- Arrogance fosters tension and perversion, twisting hearts and speech toward disaster, while humility aligns us with God's order for harmony in our relationships.
- Joy lifts up our relationships, spreading healing and fairness, while chasing foolish goals or negativity drains life from our connections.
- Restraint in our speech shows wisdom and understanding, protecting fairness in relationships and even making a fool seem smart by avoiding needless harm.

Discussion:

1. How does the call to pursue loyalty in verse 17 challenge you to support friends or family during their hardships? Share an experience where such loyalty (or its absence) impacted a relationship.
2. In what ways does verse 18 warn against honoring others without wisdom, such as through risky financial ties? Discuss practical steps to apply this in church community, like discerning when to help without enabling folly.
3. How have you seen arrogance breed selfish conflicts in relationships? Reflect on a time when avoiding tension required humility.
4. What does spreading God's joy look like in everyday interactions, and how can it counter injustice in your circles (see John 15:11)?
5. How does abiding in God's wisdom bring joy to strained relationships, such as with a "foolish son?"
6. How does speaking with integrity about others prevent relational harm? Share how this principle applies to gossip or criticism in your life.
7. Read James 1:19-20 together. Discuss a situation where holding your tongue preserved a relationship.

Prayer:

- Thank God for sending Jesus to show us loyal, humble, joyful, and restrained love.
- Pray for:
 - Strength to pursue loyalty and reject arrogance in our daily interactions.
 - Joy to spread in our families and church amid the challenges of this world.
 - Grace to practice restraint, speaking with thoughtfulness to build up one another.

Excellent Relationships
Proverbs 17:17-28

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| I. | <u>Pursue Loyalty.</u> | 17:17-18 |
| 1. | <u>Support</u> others with <u>love</u> . | 17:17 |
| 2. | <u>Honor</u> others with <u>wisdom</u> . | 17:18 |
| II. | <u>Reject Arrogance.</u> | 17:19-21 |
| 1. | <u>Avoid</u> selfish <u>strife</u> . | 17:19 |
| 2. | <u>Embrace</u> godly <u>humility</u> . | 17:20-21 |
| III. | <u>Spread Joy.</u> | 17:22-25 |
| 1. | <u>Live</u> in God's <u>joy</u> . | 17:22-23 |
| 2. | <u>Abide</u> in God's <u>wisdom</u> . | 17:24-25 |
| IV. | <u>Practice Restraint.</u> | 17:26-28 |
| 1. | Speak about others with <u>integrity</u> . | 17:26 |
| 2. | Speak about others with <u>thoughtfulness</u> . | 17:27-28 |

NEXT WEEK:
The Excellence of Integrity
Proverbs 28:1-18