TOPIC PRINTABLE

Friendship

What Scripture says about true friends: loyalty in hard times, honest counsel, David and Jonathan, and Jesus calling His disciples friends.

PROVERBS 17:17

A friend loves at all times; and a brother is born for adversity.

“A friend loves at all times”: friendship is proved by staying when things go wrong.

PROVERBS 18:24

A man of many companions may be ruined, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Many companions are no substitute for one friend “who sticks closer than a brother”: depth over numbers.

PROVERBS 27:17

Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens his friend’s countenance.

Iron sharpens iron: good friends make each other better, which sometimes means friction.

PROVERBS 27:6

The wounds of a friend are faithful, although the kisses of an enemy are profuse.

“The wounds of a friend are faithful”: honest correction from a friend is worth more than flattery.

ECCLESIASTES 4:9–12

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falls, and doesn’t have another to lift him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have warmth; but how can one keep warm alone? If a man prevails against one who is alone, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Two are better than one: someone to lift you when you fall, and a cord of three strands not quickly broken.

1 SAMUEL 18:1–3

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When he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Saul took him that day, and wouldn't let him go home to his father's house any more. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

Jonathan's soul is "knit with the soul of David," and the two make a covenant, a friendship that later cost Jonathan his father's favor.

JOHN 15:13–15

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant doesn't know what his lord does. But I have called you friends, for everything that I heard from My Father, I have made known to you.

Jesus defines the greatest love as laying down one's life for one's friends, then calls His disciples friends rather than servants.

SIRACH 6:14–17

A faithful friend is a strong defense. He who has found him has found a treasure. There is nothing that can be taken in exchange for a faithful friend. His excellency is beyond price. A faithful friend is a life-saving medicine. Those who fear the Lord will find him. He who fears the Lord directs his friendship properly; for as he is, so is his neighbor also.

"A faithful friend is a strong defense": a treasure beyond price, found by those who fear the Lord.

JOB 2:11–13

Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come on him, they each came from his own place: Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite; and they made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and to comfort him. When they lifted up their eyes from a distance, and didn't recognize him, they raised their voices, and wept; and they each tore his robe, and sprinkled dust on their heads toward the sky. So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great.

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Job’s friends begin well, sitting with him in silence for seven days. Their later speeches, which God rebukes, make them Scripture’s warning about comfort that turns into judgment.

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