

# 7- Road Skills – Relating Across to Others

07/11/2010 - Jim Johnson

A large portion of Proverbs is devoted to the ways in which we relate to one another. These are largely found connected to the words “friend” and “neighbor” which are actually the same word in the Hebrew.



How should we \_\_\_\_\_ about those beside us?

## A. We need \_\_\_\_\_ (18:1)

18:1 tells us that there are some people who tend to withdraw from others. They pull back and stay to themselves and suppose that they do not need anyone else - a quarrel against all sound wisdom. According to Eccl 4:9-12 we need others for companionship, help in times of need, shared resources and protection.

## B. They need \_\_\_\_\_ (27:17)

Just as an iron file is able to sharpen an iron axe, one person is able to sharpen another. God uses our interaction with others to help us grow. So how do we do this?

I. \_\_\_\_\_ your enemy into a friend.....

### A. Work to \_\_\_\_\_ him. (Prov 11:30)

Solomon tells us that we ought to use our influence with our adversaries to affect them and befriend them and to win them over to our way of thinking.

### B. Do not \_\_\_\_\_ evil (24:28-29; 25:21-22)

We are absolutely forbidden, to treat our neighbor in the same poor way that he treats us. Instead we are to extend unmerited kindness to them (Prov 25:21-22) to give them coals with which to restart the fires in their homes (and their lives) When we do this we warm them which changes the way they think and relate to us.

### C. Resolve your issues \_\_\_\_\_ (25:8-9)

One way to resolve conflict in the Bible days was to take it to the town Elders who sat at the city gate and let them decide. Solomon advised against it. The public nature of it will shame your neighbor and he will just dig in deeper and be more stubborn. Instead you are to work through the problem directly & personally with your neighbor. Treat him with dignity & respect. Give him the opportunity to make adjustments without calling in the manager & a better outcome is more likely

### D. Be \_\_\_\_\_ (11:25)

We are reminded here that the kinder we are to others, the kinder they will be to us

### E. Walk with \_\_\_\_\_ (16:7)

*“When a man’s ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”*

Solomon speaks of the “ways” outlined in Proverbs: to win an enemy, to refrain from revenge, to resolve issues personally, to be generous, etc. “ Do this and he will make even our enemies to be at peace with us.

II. \_\_\_\_\_ care of the friends you make.....

### A. \_\_\_\_\_ always (17:17)

The focus here is not so much on the deed but the timing. This love is to take place at all times – so that your neighbor can predict it of you.

B. Do \_\_\_\_\_ (3:27-28)

If our neighbor should have a need and we are capable of meeting that need, then we are to do it.

C. \_\_\_\_\_ **when needed** (10:12)

Some of us are so fragile, that all it takes is one hurt to end a friendship. But Solomon tells us that forgiveness is more appropriate

D. Stay \_\_\_\_\_ (27:10)

One of the most powerful things you can offer your friend is loyalty - a commitment that you will not forsake him no matter what.

III. \_\_\_\_\_ **to dodge the pitfalls**.....

There are a few common mistakes that can derail a friendship. We need to beware of them.

A. \_\_\_\_\_ **offense.** (18:19)

It is much easier to maintain a healthy working relationship than it is to repair a broken one. Better to have avoided the offense in the first place.

B. \_\_\_\_\_ **Your Mouth** (11:9)

It takes only one ill spoken word to destroy a neighbor.

C. **Don't** \_\_\_\_\_ (26:17)

The principle here is that it is generally unwise to insert yourself and takes sides in someone else's conflict.

D. **Neither a** \_\_\_\_\_ **or lender be** (22:7)

There is no faster way to sour a friendship than to borrow or to lend money. When I borrow from others, I enslave myself to them and visa versa. Generally speaking, masters and slaves do not make very good friends. A better way is to give what may be needed (Prov 3:27-28)

E. **Don't wear out your** \_\_\_\_\_ (25:17)

We understand that we are to seek out and develop meaningful relationships with others. But we also understand from this passage that we can wear out our welcome, by presuming upon that friend – expecting more from them than we should - monopolizing that friend's time, or being over there at all hours of the day.

**The really wise among us will build \_\_\_\_\_ relationships with our neighbors**

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## FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. Think through the people on the periphery of your life. Are your relationships with them negative or maybe neutral? If so what can you do to transform them into positive relationships?
2. What about your inner circle? Which relationships are fresh and positive and which need your attention? What can you do to make them healthier?