



Sunday, June 21, 2020

Pastor Don Denyes

## **Intro to Proverbs 27:17**

1 Thessalonians 2:8 is a great motto for any ministry. “Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.” This embodies the heart of what the church should be about: clear proclamation of the gospel and a love for people that shows itself in shared life. The two most obvious example of this type of ministry are Jesus and Paul. Jesus lived for three years with twelve close friends (well, eleven, as it turned out). A meme recently said that Jesus’s greatest miracle was having twelve close friends in His 30s. That is a sad indictment on our culture! But for those three years, Jesus spent a great deal of time with people who often didn’t understand Him, sometimes fought with one another, sometimes inhibited His ministry to the marginalized, and even occasionally rebuked Him! Yet He ministered patiently among them and called them His friends.

Paul is no less an example. Though he covered a broader geographic area, his ministry was committed to proclaiming the gospel and modeling it for the people in such a way that it required close personal contact. That ought to continue to be a model for us, as we endeavor to make disciples of the next generation. We ought not shy away from relationships, though at times they will make us uncomfortable, because it is in the crucible of those relationships as people begin to imitate Christ in us that disciples are forged.

## **Context**

Scholars differ on whether Proverbs is written as a “random” collection of proverbs (in that one verse may not have a direct link to the next). Some say that Proverbs has a logical flow to it. That would certainly appear to be the case with chapter 27. This chapter has much to say on the subject of friendship.

**Read and Reflect** *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Proverbs 27:17

“Iron Sharpens Iron”

- Our lives must be commendable
- Our lives must be intentional
- Our lives must be relational

Levels of friendship

- Casual
- Comfortable
- Close

## **Discuss**

- 1) When you think of your closest friends, how did they become your closest friends?
- 2) In what memorable ways have your friends “sharpened” your walk with Christ? How have you generally received that?
- 3) How have you sought to “sharpen” your friends in their relationships with Christ? How have they received that?
- 4) Why do you think some people shy away from having close friends?
- 5) Who are you discipling? How are you passing your faith on to someone else? If you’re not, what do you think might be a good first step towards doing that?