

BELONG

Starter Questions: What are some of your favorite things to do with your friends? Ask your students if they would like to share their highs and lows from the week.

Become Challenge Check-In: Last week, you were challenged to ask someone you trust to hold you accountable and to look for an opportunity to help someone else make a wise choice. How did that go?

BELIEVE

Scripture: Proverbs 27:5–6, 9, 17

Main Idea: Godly friends help each other grow.

Focus Question: What kinds of friends am I choosing? What kind of friend am I becoming?

Context:

Proverbs is part of the Bible's wisdom literature. Much of the book is attributed to Solomon and teaches God's people how to live wisely in everyday life. Proverbs 27 contains individual sayings about relationships, influence, correction, and friendship. As you read selected verses, look for what they teach about the kind of friends we need and the kind of friend we should become.

Summary:

Friendships are an important part of our lives. The people we spend time with get to know us, hear what we are thinking, and often have opportunities to speak into our lives. Proverbs 27 gives us wisdom about what healthy, godly friendship looks like and how our friendships can shape us. As we follow Jesus, Scripture can help us think carefully about both the friends we choose and the kind of friend we are becoming.

Before You Read

→ On your notes, list 3–5 qualities you think make someone a good friend. As you read today's passages, make a second list on your notes of the qualities you see Scripture describe or demonstrate. You'll compare the two lists at the end.

Read Proverbs 27:5–6 • Tell the Truth

→ Bible Study Tip: Look for comparisons. Ask why the writer says one thing is better than another.

- Why might an honest correction from a friend be more loving than saying nothing? (*Speaking up may help a friend recognize something they cannot or do not want to see. Staying silent can feel easier, but a faithful friend cares about what is truly good for the other person.*)
- How can you share a hard truth with a friend in a loving way instead of simply being hurtful? (*Consider your motive, timing, words, and tone. Loving correction seeks your friend's good rather than embarrassing them, proving a point, or simply saying what you think. A good friend can act like a mirror, helping us see something about ourselves that we may not see on our own.*)

Read Proverbs 27:9 • Give Wise Counsel

→ **Bible Study Tip:** When a proverb uses a comparison, identify what is being compared and ask what the comparison helps you understand.

- What do you think this word picture is saying about the value of a good friend's advice? *(The writer describes a friend's sincere advice as something sweet and refreshing. A godly friend can encourage us and help us see something we might not see on our own.)*
- Why might a friend's sincere advice be better than relying only on your own perspective? *(We do not always see ourselves or our situations clearly. A trustworthy friend may notice something we have missed, challenge our thinking, or help point us toward the Lord.)*

Read Proverbs 27:17 • Sharpen Each Other

→ **Bible Study Tip:** When you read a familiar verse, slow down and ask what it actually says instead of assuming you already know what it means.

- What does it look like for one person to "sharpen" another? *(Friends sharpen each other through their example, encouragement, honest conversations, wise advice, and challenges to grow. The people we spend time with can shape the way we think, speak, act, and make decisions.)*
- Think about your closest friendships. What are you becoming more like because of the time you spend together? *(Encourage students to think beyond whether their friends are simply "good" or "bad." Consider attitudes, language, priorities, habits, how they treat others, and their relationship with God.)*

Read John 15:12–15 • Look to Jesus

→ **Jesus spoke these words to His disciples shortly before His arrest and crucifixion. As He prepared to lay down His life, He told them what love for one another should look like.**

- What do Jesus' words and actions show us about the kind of friend we should become? *(Jesus loved sacrificially and sought the good of others, even when it cost Him. He calls His followers to love one another as He has loved us.)*

Leader Note: Verse 14 does not mean we earn Jesus' love or friendship by obeying Him. Jesus is speaking to His disciples about a relationship they already have with Him. Their obedience is a response to knowing and following Him.

Compare Your Lists and Reflect

- Look back at the qualities you listed before you read. What would you add, change, or think about differently after studying these verses? *(Affirm the good qualities they already listed while helping them allow Scripture to shape their understanding of friendship.)*
- Based on what you studied today, what is one way you need to grow in the kinds of friends you choose or the kind of friend you are becoming? *(Give students time to think privately.)*

BECOME

Circle of Impact Challenge: Choose one way to intentionally be a godly friend this week. Encourage a friend, give wise advice when they need it, have an honest conversation in love, or help them take a step toward Jesus. Ask God to help your friendships become relationships where you help each other grow.