

PROVERBS

Wisdom For Working With People

August 25, 2024

What does Proverbs teach us about working with people?

1. Be careful who I have as my friends. I will become like them.

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. Proverbs 13:20 (ESV)

A. Foolish friends will encourage me to live a foolish life.

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. Proverbs 13:20 (ESV)

- We don't just watch something. We are formed into what we watch.

B. Wise friends will encourage me to live a wise life.

2. Learn to avoid arguments.

It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling. Proverbs 20:3 (ESV)

A. Arguments always go farther than I want and cause more damage than I expected.

Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out. Proverbs 17:14 (NIV)



B. A broken relationship can be hard to restore.

A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city, and quarreling is like the bars of a castle. Proverbs 18:19 (ESV)

If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Romans 12:18 (ESV)

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,
Ephesians 4:26 (ESV)

- We are not relationally passive. We always take the initiative to build new relationships or repair old ones when they break. — CW Staff Core Value

C. Expect that some conflicts can not be avoided.

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.” Matthew 5:11 (ESV)

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!
Psalm 133:1 (ESV)

3. Learn to control my emotions.

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.
Proverbs 15:18 (ESV)

A. It takes two to start an argument but only one to stop it

- Be a relational thermostat, not a thermometer.

B. Learn to ignore insults.

The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult.
Proverbs 12:16 (ESV)

C. Assume the best of people, not the worst.

- Separate motives and methods.



Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.
Proverbs 19:11 (ESV)

4. Learn there are right and wrong times to speak.

Whoever blesses his neighbor with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, will be counted as cursing. Proverbs 27:14 (ESV)

5. Love people like Jesus loves me.

A friend loves at all times,... Proverbs 17:17 (ESV)

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
Philippians 2:3–8 (ESV)

6. Conclusion

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:19–23 (ESV)

- Developing great people skills doesn't come from trying harder in my heart but from letting Jesus change my heart.

Life Group Questions

1. **Read Proverbs 13:20 and 27:17.** Looking back on your life, how have friends influenced you for good or evil? Why is it important to make time to attend church and pursue friendships with other Christians?
2. **Read Proverbs 20:3, 17:14, and 18:19.** In our conflict-saturated world, why is it important to become skillful in avoiding arguments instead of leaning into them? What practical skills have you learned to avoid an argument? What kind of disagreements can not be avoided? How should we handle them?
3. **Read Proverbs 15:18 and 12:16.** Pastor Kurt said it takes two to start an argument but only one to stop it. How can you apply that wisdom to your life? Pastor Kurt used M&M's to illustrate the importance of learning to separate someone's motives from their methods. We need to assume the best from others, not the worst, especially with a fellow Christian. If we apply this, how would it change how you handled relational frictions from this past week?
4. **Read Proverbs 27:14, 13:3, and 10:19.** Why is it wise to know when we should not speak and when we should say less words instead of more? Why is this not just important in person but also on social media?
5. **Read Philippians 2:3-8.** The more we think about these verses, the more impactful they become about the depth and breadth of love we are called to have for others. What makes these verses earth-shattering? This week, who is one person you can go out of your way to call, encourage, or serve in a Philippians 2 way?
6. **Read Galatians 5:19-23.** Pastor Kurt said that developing great people skills doesn't come from trying harder in my heart but from letting Jesus change my heart. What does that mean? This week, as you try to love and care for people, why is knowing Galatians 5:19-23 the key to turning that desire into reality?