

Small Group Discussion Outline



Read: Psalm 1



How does this passage relate to friendship?

In the context of this passage, how can you measure the health of a friendship?

You can tell if a friendship is unhealthy by looking at CHARACTER.

When you and your friend share different values, it's easy to feel as if your friendship is unhealthy. Yet having a friend with different standards and morals isn't necessarily wrong—if you stand up for what you believe and refuse to compromise your standards. You can respect your friend for the godly qualities (s)he shows, but pray (s)he'll find the truth and love of God through Jesus Christ. Love him/her with a genuine, humble heart and stay away from an attitude of superiority.

If, however, a friend—no matter what his/her beliefs—offers evil advice or sneers at God, put some distance between you and that person for a while. Don't let yourself fall into cynical, scoffing ways, but be grateful to God in all things.

Ask God to guide you in the details of this friendship.

In any case, nourish yourself with God's Word and delight yourself in God's love. Watch those at your church who reflect God's love and pick up their gentleness and kindness. When your roots go down deep with God, you are better equipped to let Him use you to salt the earth and light the world.

There's an old adage: You become like your companions. What kind of characters do your friends have?



Read: Proverbs 4:14-15



In the context of this passage, how can you measure the health of a friendship?

You can tell if a friendship is unhealthy by looking at ACTIONS.

The closer you are to a friend, the more difficult it is not to be influenced by their example. That's why you need to cultivate friendships that are mutually supportive in doing what's right.

This doesn't mean you can't be friends with people who don't hold the same biblical values you hold. But if a friend persists in trying to lead you away from these values, Proverbs recommends you not only turn aside but stay away from this person.

Friendship How Can I Tell if a Friendship is Unhealthy?

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If you find you are in an unhealthy friendship, put these verses on a card to memorize as a reminder of God's word about friendships. And ask a godly friend to pray with you about what to do. It may be that God wants to use you to help change the other person, but you must also consider the possibility that he wants you to move away from that friendship. If you put yourself in healthy situations, God will provide the healthy friendships you need.



Do your friends lead you toward, or away from, God?



Read: Proverbs 22:24-25



In the context of this passage, how can you measure the health of a friendship?

You can tell if a friendship is unhealthy by looking at HABITS and ATTITUDES.

We tend to become like the people we stay around. This tendency is particularly noticeable in children. They readily pick up the language and behaviour of their playmates. But it's also true of adults. That's why you need to choose friends whose conduct you'd like to model.

You know the kind of person described in verse 24. They mutter bitterly in stalled traffic. They complain at each new set of instructions from the boss. They gripe about their spouse's lack of attention. They snap at their children. They even complain about the music in church. If you're not careful, before long you'll find that the same things that irritate them also irritate you.

The Bible has a lot to say about anger and controlling your temper. Perhaps that's because anger often leads to violence—a trap you want to avoid. Healthy friendships are those that encourage you to please God in all your habits and attitudes, including the way you handle your anger.



What kind of people do you choose to spend time with, and why?



Read: 2 Corinthians 6:14-18



In the context of this passage, how can you measure the health of a friendship?

You can tell if a friendship is unhealthy by looking at your COMMITMENT to CHRIST

Having just talked about the “ministry of reconciliation” we have as Christ's ambassadors (5:11-6:10), Paul now sets certain limits on your relationship with unbelievers. Paul doesn't name specific issues such as marriage; the Bible addresses that concern elsewhere. He does say that, as a general rule, you must decide whether certain alliances and experiences with unbelievers will weaken your commitment to Christ.

In Corinth, idol worship was a fundamental part of life. Since Christ lived in the Corinthian believers, they had to make a complete break with their culture. Paul's language is strong because the stakes are high (5:15). Do certain friendships, relatives, or jobs cause you to dishonour God or compromise your commitment to him? Prayerfully consider who and what you're involved in. Ask advice from wise, believing friends for perspective and support. God promises to bless you for honouring him above all others. That blessing comes in this life—and the next.



How do your friends affect you?

WAIUKU ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Ph: (09) 235 7341 **Mob:** (021) 187 1928 **Email:** waiukuag@wag.org.nz **Web:** www.wag.org.nz