

Inner Circle

Proverbs 18:24; 27:6, 10 (Proverbs 17:17; 19:7)

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A. Circle of Trust (Proverbs 27:6; 18:24):

1. Faithful are the wounds - When a friend creates lasting affliction on another friend's life it is trustworthy because it is true.
 - a) Faithful are the wounds of a friend means that a true friend's criticism or frank speaking (wounds of a friend) is based on the sincerity of the friendship. CEV says "You can trust a friend who corrects you."^[1]
2. Friend – The kind of friends who hurt and can be trusted, are the kind of friends who have proven that they are sincerely dedicated to establishing a loving relationship.
 - a) The wounds which a real friend inflicts by their justified rebukes are directed by truth and discriminating affection (see Ps. 141:5).^[2]
3. Deceitful are the kisses – The words of an enemy are those who are like Judas. He was an associate, acting like a true friend, alluring people with his persuasive words.
4. Enemy – A hateful person is one who is hostile, seeks strife, is crafty and misleading about their true intentions; they're not desiring a sincere relationship while pretending the entire time.
5. Friend – Too many associates are not wise.
 - a) The maxim means that the man of many friends, who lays himself out to make friends of bad and good alike, does so to his own ruin. They will feed upon him, and exhaust his resources, but will not stand by him in the day of calamity, nay, but rather will give a helping hand to his downfall. It is not the number of so-called friends that is useful and precious.^[3]
6. To ruin – It is not wise to have too many associates or personal friends because it leads to decisions that can deliberately hurt others or make a person so confused, they become useless or distressed.
7. There is a friend – There is another kind of person who is more than an associate. They are like David and Johnathan were to each other. They had a strong emotional attachment to each other and sincerely desired to spend significant time together.

- a) The “man of friends,” of many friends, the “friend of all the world,” will show himself a bad friend, — he with whom is contrasted in a clause by the instance which is indeed rare and isolated, of a true friendly love, which endures in every extremity (17:17), and even surpasses the devotion of one who is a brother by nature. See Critical notes for an exhibition of the many meanings found in the verse, etc. Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Zöckler, O., & Aiken, C. A. (2008). A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Proverbs (p. 169). Logos Bible Software.
8. Stick – The kind of friends that have a deep emotional connection will forever cleave together like a faithful believer who clings to God.
9. Closer than a brother – A true friend is so dedicated; they will be more committed to their friend than a blood brother.

B. Never Broken (Proverbs 27:10; 17:17):

1. Do not forsake our own friend – We must continuously seek to not put aside, abandon, or neglect a person who we consider to be an associate, a family friend, or a marriage partner.
- a) We must remember, too, that the practice of polygamy, with the separate establishments of the various wives, greatly weakened the tie of brotherhood. There was little love between David’s sons and Jonathan, which was far dearer to David himself than any of his numerous brothers were. Better is a neighbor that is near than a brother far off. “Near” and “far off” may be taken as referring to feeling or to a local position. In the former case the maxim says that a neighbor who is really attached to one by the bonds of affection is better than the closest relation who has no love or sympathy. In the latter view, the proverb enunciates the truth that a friend on the spot in time of calamity is more useful than a brother living at a distance (μακρὰν οἰκῶν, Septuagint); one is sure of help at once from the former, while the application to the latter must occasionally delay, and may not be successful. Commentators quote Hesiod, Ἔργ. καὶ Ἡμ., 341–^[4]
2. Or a father’s friend – We must not abandon or neglect a family friend that has a close relationship to one’s father.
3. Do not go – Continuously make it a point to not go to one’s brother’s house on the day when there is a disaster.

4. In the day of calamity – By calamity Solomon means a time when people may have deliberately violated the Word of God creating trouble, whether it is something that is disastrous or even a military event.
5. Better is a neighbor who is near – It is pleasant and of practical benefit to have a friendly person live nearby.
6. Than a brother far away - A neighbor who is near provides excellent life experiences compared to a person who one holds dear as a family member that is significantly a distance away.
 - a) Ishmaelites - Joseph found more kindness with strangers than with his brethren. Jonathan’s friendship afforded David a sympathy which his own brethren did not. Rehoboam’s forsaking his “father’s friends” cost him the most of his kingdom (1 Ki. 12:6–8). Solomon remembered his father’s charge, “My son, know thou *the God of thy fathers*” (1 Chr. 28:9; cf. Jacob’s words, Gen. 48:15, 16). This is the Friend who is “better than a brother,” for He is ever near in love and in presence. (far) better (is) a neighbor (that is) near, than a brother far off. A neighbor near in heart, as well as in locality, is better than a brother who is as far off in love as he is in distance.^[5]

^[1] Reyburn, W. D., & Fry, E. M. (2000). [A handbook on Proverbs](#) (p. 575). United Bible Societies.

^[2] Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. (1909). [Proverbs](#) (p. 515). Funk & Wagnalls Company.

^[3] Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. (1909). [Proverbs](#) (p. 353). Funk & Wagnalls Company.

^[4] Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. (1909). [Proverbs](#) (p. 516). Funk & Wagnalls Company.

^[5] Fausset, A. R. (n.d.). [A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments: Job–Isaiah: Vol. III](#) (p. 500). William Collins, Sons, & Company, Limited.