

**Foolproof
You Got a Friend in Me- Week #7
Small Group Notes
February 11 and 14, 2021**

Introduction:

What is the difference between a friend and an acquaintance? How do we sometimes get the lines blurred between these?

How does God define friendship? (John 15:12-15) How can we sometimes misunderstand what friendship with God means?

Discuss:

1. Read John 13:34-35

- Be a friend, as Jesus has been a friend.

Explain: As followers of Christ, our motivation for expressing love is Jesus' example, which means our love, too, must be demonstrated through action. Loving one another through humble, sacrificial service can be a powerful witness to the world that we are His and that it is good to be His. Through our visible expressions of love, non- Christians should be able to see the love of an invisible God.

Ask:

Who is our "one another"? How do our love for God and our love for one another go hand in hand?

Read Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 22:34-40. What was new about the commandment to "love one another," which He gave in John 13?

2. Read Proverbs 27:17

- Friendship is deliberate.

Explain: A piece of **iron** can sharpen another piece of **iron**, but it happens through striking, friction, and with sparks. We think of the iron of a blacksmith's hammer working on a sword to make it sharp. **So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend:** A man can be used to sharpen (improve and develop) **his friend**, but it may happen through a bit of friction and sparks. We shouldn't be afraid of such and expect that true sharpening can happen without the occasional use of friction.

Ask:

What's the hardest conversation that a friend has ever had with you? How did it change you? Why were you open to their words versus someone else?

Read Proverbs 17:17. How does this verse encourage us to move beyond the surface level of friendship?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and Proverbs 27:5-6.

- A friend is patient. A friend is kind and honest. A friend rejoices alongside. A friend recognizes where the blessing comes from. A friend is humble. A friend lifts up, not tear down. A friend is self-less. A friend is quick to listen and slow to anger. A friend believes the best.

Explain: The kind of love he described here is above emotion; it's self-sacrificing for the sake of another. If we love only those who measure up to our standards or who never pose any challenge, then is that really love? It's only through experiencing the self-sacrificial love of Jesus that we can truly love others. A mark of a true **friend** is that they will be willing to wound us with loving correction. The correction may not feel good as genuine **wounds**, but it will be an expression of the love and faithfulness of **a friend**.

Ask:

How have you seen these characteristics expressed by someone that you didn't expect? What impact did that make?

How does today's discussion encourage you to be a better friend to others? What may be missing in your relationships? How can this change?