

A Study of the Wisdom Literature

(OT Survey Lesson 287—Wisdom About Relationships)

Introduction: All of us need wisdom in dealing with others. Solomon offers great insight into who we should befriend and how to treat them. Following his advice will help us avoid unworthy companions and enable us to enjoy lasting friendships.

Lesson aim: To show how to be a true friend to others.

Warnings about entering unwise relationships

Avoiding unworthy companions

1:8-19 Hear, my son, your father's instruction, And do not forsake your mother's teaching; 9 Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head, And ornaments about your neck. 10 My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent. 11 If they say, "Come with us, Let us lie in wait for blood, Let us ambush the innocent without cause; 12 Let us swallow them alive like Sheol, Even whole, as those who go down to the pit; 13 We shall find all *kinds* of precious wealth, We shall fill our houses with spoil; 14 Throw in your lot with us, We shall all have one purse," 15 My son, do not walk in the way with them. Keep your feet from their path, 16 For their feet run to evil, And they hasten to shed blood. 17 Indeed, it is useless to spread the net In the eyes of any bird; 18 But they lie in wait for their own blood; They ambush their own lives. 19 So are the ways of everyone who gains by violence; It takes away the life of its possessors.

29:24 He who is a partner with a thief hates his own life; He hears the oath but tells nothing.

22:24 Do not associate with a man *given* to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, 25 Lest you learn his ways, And find a snare for yourself.

23:6-8 Do not eat the bread of a selfish man, Or desire his delicacies; 7 For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, "Eat and drink!" But his heart is not with you. 8 You will vomit up the morsel you have eaten, And waste your compliments.

23:19-21 Listen, my son, and be wise, And direct your heart in the way. 20 Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, *Or* with gluttonous eaters of meat; 21 For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe *a man* with rags.

24:21-22 My son, fear the LORD and the king; Do not associate with those who are given to change; 22 For their calamity will rise suddenly, And who knows the ruin *that comes* from both of them?

13:20 He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.

Entering unwise partnerships

11:15 He who is surety for a stranger will surely suffer for it, But he who hates going surety is safe.

27:13 Take his garment when he becomes surety for a stranger; And for an adulterous woman hold him in pledge.

20:16 Take his garment when he becomes surety for a stranger; And for foreigners, hold him in pledge.

How to treat your neighbors & friends

Loving our neighbor

3:27-28 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in your power to do *it*. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give *it*," When you have it with you.

3:29 Do not devise harm against your neighbor, While he lives in security beside you.

3:30 Do not contend with a man without cause, If he has done you no harm.

Making friends

19:6 Many will entreat the favor of a generous man, And every man is a friend to him who gives gifts.

19:7 All the brothers of a poor man hate him; How much more do his friends go far from him! He pursues *them with words, but they are gone.*

Being a friend

15:17 Better is a dish of vegetables where love is, Than a fattened ox and hatred with it.

27:17 Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another.

27:9 Oil and perfume make the heart glad, So a man's counsel is sweet to his friend.

27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

27:10 Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend, And do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity; Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother far away.

27:14 He who blesses his friend with a loud voice early in the morning, It will be reckoned a curse to him.

18:19 A brother offended *is harder to be won* than a strong city, And contentions are like the bars of a castle.

20:6 Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, But who can find a trustworthy man?

18:24 A man of *many friends comes* to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Understanding others

14:10 The heart knows its own bitterness, And a stranger does not share its joy.

15:13 A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, But when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.

14:13 Even in laughter the heart may be in pain, And the end of joy may be grief.

18:14 The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, But a broken spirit who can bear?

27:19 As in water face *reflects* face, So the heart of man *reflects* man.