

The importance of Who is around you

We went axe throwing and it ended up making me think of our circle of friends. We tend to have a variety of friendships in our lives. Think of it like a bullseye. We played this game that gave each ring a different value. The outer ring was a value of 1 and the center was 10.

1. The outer ring is our acquaintances.
2. The next ring in is people we are in contact with in our sphere of daily/weekly life (work, church, gym).
3. As we get closer, we might call this our generic friends. People you occasionally hang out with, text or send reels or TikTok's to.
4. The next ring are the people that you do life with. The people that you call when you need prayer, a night out, a ride to the airport at 3 AM.
5. The center circle is your ride-or-die-people. The ones you call when life is ugly and hard, and the first people you call when something good happens.

We are going to focus on the 2 innermost rings.

Who are in your 2 innermost rings?

As a Christian does it matter who is there?

As a Christian, why does it matter who we have close to us?

1. The wrong people can ruin or harm you

1 Corinthians 15:33 ESV

³³ Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."

Proverbs 12:1 NIV

¹ Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid.

Proverbs 13:14-20 ESV

¹⁴ The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death. ¹⁵ Good judgment wins favor, but the way of the unfaithful leads to their destruction. ¹⁶ All who are prudent act with knowledge, but fools expose their folly. ¹⁷ A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a trustworthy envoy brings healing. ¹⁸ Whoever disregards discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored. ¹⁹ A longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul, but fools detest turning from evil. ²⁰ Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

The wrong people can put us in some bad situations. They can make us compromise or give in to pressure. No one is immune to pressure. It is important to have the same "moral compass" as your close people.

2. The Right People Can Bring us to God

Mark 2:3-5 ESV

³ And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. ⁴ And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. ⁵ And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

In the John MacArthur Commentary, John MacArthur says about verse 5, “The aggressive, persistent effort of the paralytic’s friends was visible evidence of their faith in Christ to heal. Son, your sins are forgiven you.”¹

The Christian life is not easy. We can get weary. Good friends bring us to God. They lift us up in prayer before the Lord. They remind us of what God has done in our lives and how He has been faithful. They show us scripture of who He is and how we can count on Him.

As a friend it should be an honor and joy to hold one another up before the Lord. Sometimes we need the reminder of who He is.

3. The Right People Encourage Us

Ephesians 5:18-19 CSB

¹⁸ And don’t get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit: ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord,

Hebrews 3:13 ESV

¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Good friends Encourage us. They are our cheerleaders. They can encourage us personally and can encourage us to get busy with God’s work and purpose. These are the friends who invite us to bible study, encourage us in our prayer lives and celebrate the purpose God has for us.

4. The Right People Will Call Us Out / Expose Our Sin

Proverbs 27:17 ESV

¹⁷ Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.

Galatians 6:1 CSB

⁶ Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won’t be tempted.

Wait. What? Let that sink in, “restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won’t be tempted.”

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 ESV

⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! ¹¹ Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? ¹² And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

This is a tough one. No one wants to be called out for our sin. We need these people in our lives. Sometimes we are so blinded by the sin that we don’t see it, or we *won’t* see it. It can be in a blatant loud way, but it can be in subtle ways as well.

¹ MacArthur, John. The MacArthur Bible Commentary : Unleashing God’s Truth, One Verse at a Time, 3070.

Circles
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Not being humble in a response, flashing in anger, being selfish... we all have our moments. Thankfully we have a God who is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins. He is ready to forgive and restore, but we have to acknowledge our sin, ask for forgiveness, and repent. We will all struggle with in-the-moment sins, as well as the ones we are living in or struggling with on a daily basis. Sometimes it is helpful to have a true friend who will call us out and walk us through these struggles.

But what if I don't have friends in these categories? My encouragement is to pray about it. Get involved in church activities and ministries. You never know who those people will be.

5. Discuss

1. Do I have Christians in my circles?
2. Any other thoughts on why it matters who is in my circle?
3. Who are you bringing to God? Who are we encouraging?
4. Why is it hard to be held accountable? Is it a barrier to getting closer in friendships?

6. Challenge

1. Pray about your circles
2. Be a friend this week who encourages and brings others to God
3. Take inventory of the friendships that can harm us

Bibliography

MacArthur, John. The MacArthur Bible Commentary : Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time.
Nashville, Tenn: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2005.