

Daily Devotional: Things That Matter

Theme: Choose Your Circle Wisely

Scripture Focus: “*The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone.’*” — Genesis 2:18a (NIV)

Are You Feeling Lonely?

Loneliness is a profound and widespread issue in our society today. According to a recent survey, **1 in 5 U.S. adults—about 52 million people (about twice the population of Texas)—report feeling lonely daily.** It’s even been declared that loneliness is a public health epidemic because of its significant impact on both mental and physical health.

From the very beginning, God made it clear—we *were never meant to walk through life alone*. We were created for connection, for fellowship, and for meaningful relationships that nourish our souls and reflect God’s love.

But here’s the thing: **not all relationships are created equal.** Choosing who you allow into your inner circle is one of the most important decisions you’ll make on your journey with Jesus. Scripture reminds us repeatedly to **choose wisely.**

The wrong influences can lead us off track, while the right ones can help keep us centered in Christ. There are certain types of people the Bible cautions us about:

- **People who love to argue** (*Proverbs 20:3*)
- **Gossips** (*Proverbs 20:19*)
- **Flatterers** (*Proverbs 29:5*)
- **Hot-tempered individuals** (*Proverbs 22:24*)
- **Those engaged in sexual sin**

Now, you might be thinking, “*I know a lot of people like this!*” And that’s fair. We’re not called to reject or condemn them—Jesus Himself was known as a friend of sinners. But when it comes to *close* friendships—the people who speak into your life, who influence your decisions, who walk closely with you—it matters who those people are.

This week, we’re focusing on what matters most. Start by asking yourself:

What kind of friends do I have?

Not the number of followers on Instagram or Facebook... not those who like your posts or leave fire emojis under your stories. Real friends. Godly friends.

Some of those online “friends” might just be spectators—**spies**, waiting to gossip, or hoping to see you fall. But faithful friends? They show up. They stand by you when your world is falling apart. When you lose someone, when your job is taken away, when your marriage is hanging by a thread, or when your child is struggling... they don’t just watch. **They act. They listen. They pray.**

After Helene hit, my neighbors knocked down my mailbox and then ran over it moving debris. Lizzie and I needed help getting a new mailbox back into place. I had just changed banks, and all my banking cards and checks were being shipped plus my meds. It took all of two seconds for the Dykstra’s to reach out and say, “We got YOU”. Joe and Charlene stopped what they were doing and came over in the middle of dealing with the cleanup at their house and church to help us get the mailbox back up. The Dykstra’s are the kind of people you want in your corner.

If you’ve got someone like that in your life—**cherish them**. They are rare. They are a gift from God. They have a loving, serving heart.

Here’s what the Bible says we *should* look for in close friends:

1. Choose friends who BUILD YOU UP SPIRITUALLY.

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up...” — 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)

2. Choose friends who HAVE YOUR BACK IN TOUGH TIMES.

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.” — Proverbs 17:17 (NIV)

3. Choose friends who MAKE YOU BETTER.

Iron sharpens iron, and godly friends sharpen us for the better.

Let’s be real—it’s *harder* than ever to make real friends today. Social media has made the world more connected, but also more isolated. It’s hard to know people’s true intentions. The world has changed a lot in the past 10, even 25 years. But the truth hasn’t changed: **People need people.**

Not just *any* people—but the *right* people. Godly people. Faithful friends who will walk with you, speak truth into your life, and help keep your eyes on Jesus.

Stay tuned tomorrow as we explore what it means to have **spiritually building** friendships—and how to become that kind of friend yourself.

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for reminding me that I was never meant to do life alone. Help me to surround myself with people who honor You, who encourage me in my walk with You, and who stand by me in both joy and hardship. Give me wisdom to choose my close friends wisely and help me to be that kind of friend to others. Amen.

Reflection Questions:

- **Are you currently experiencing loneliness? If so, what steps can you take to connect with godly community?**
- **Think about your closest friends—do they build you up spiritually, or pull you away from your walk with Christ?**
- **Have you ever had to distance yourself from someone who was a negative influence? How did it affect your faith?**
- **What kind of friend are *you* to others? Are you someone who encourages, supports, and sharpens others in their spiritual walk?**