

Letting Sparks Fly

Scripture Reading — Proverbs 27:1-6, 17

Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. . . . As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. — Proverbs 27:6, 17

Today I'm celebrating my 71st birthday, and I'm thankful for the years God has given me. Earlier this month I mentioned that my seminary professor cautioned his students to wait awhile before preaching from Proverbs. That was wise advice, but I've also learned that you don't have to be elderly to appreciate friends who speak the truth. The earlier, the better!

When a friend rebukes you, the words may hurt, but they are truly a kindness. Wise friends will tell us what we need to hear. We need friends who'll say what needs saying.

Alternatively, kisses—or flowery false words—from an enemy are deceptive. Feel the pain in Jesus' words as he responds to Judas's kiss of betrayal: "Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48).

We need people in our lives who'll say what we need to hear. We need friends who will challenge us, disagree with us, and yet stick with us. When iron sharpens iron, sparks fly. When friends disagree, sparks fly. They have a purpose. They help define our goals, check our priorities, and affirm our commitments.

It's wise to have friends who'll challenge us and question what we may be doing. It's also good to be a friend like that. Are you such a friend?

Prayer

Lord, thank you for friends who challenge us as they walk with us. We confess our inclination to avoid hearing what we need to hear. Help us to listen to wisdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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