



spiritual adult

DISCIPLE ME

TRACK 3: DEEPENING RELATIONSHIPS

FAITH-FILLED FRIENDSHIPS

ICEBREAKER: BACK IN THE DAY

Take a minute and think back to your group of friends growing up - the people you ran with and hung out with the most. What was your group like? Where did you hang out? What common interests did you share together - music, sports, trouble, late nights, inside jokes? Try to picture some specific moments that capture that season. Share with your group what it was like "back in the day".

- What did you value most in friendships during that season?
- How do your current friendships compare or contrast?
- How have your values around friendship changed over time?

STUDY: WHY FRIENDSHIPS MATTER

Take a moment to think about the role friendships have played in shaping your life. Most of us didn't grow spiritually - or personally - on our own. God used people: teammates, coworkers, roommates, friends who weren't perfect but were present. Over time, those relationships formed us more than we realized.

But as we grow, something begins to shift. Friendships stop being mainly about support, affirmation, or shared interests, and start becoming about responsibility. Maturity changes the question from "*What am I getting from this relationship?*" to "*What kind of influence am I carrying into it?*"

Today, we're going to talk about faith-filled friendships - not just friendships that feel good, but friendships that shape lives. Friendships that sharpen, challenge, and point one another toward Christ.

READ PROVERBS 27:17

This verse reminds us that growth in friendship is rarely accidental. Sharpening is intentional - it happens when two people stay close enough for influence to occur. It also involves friction. Iron doesn't get sharper without contact, pressure, and a little discomfort. And while sharpening benefits both pieces, it only works when we're willing to stay engaged instead of pulling away.

Here's an important shift to notice as we mature in our faith. Immature faith tends to ask, "*Who sharpens me?*" Mature faith begins to ask, "*Who am I sharpening?*"

DISCUSS:

- What kind of “sharpening” have you experienced in friendships - positive or negative?
- Why do we so often confuse encouragement with sharpening?
- What tends to keep us from allowing healthy friction in our friendships?

Proverbs 27:17 gives us the *picture* of faithful friendship - but it doesn't stand alone. Throughout Scripture, God fills in that picture by showing us what faith-filled friendship looks like in real life: how friends speak, how they challenge, how they stay, and how they sacrifice.

In the next few moments, we're going to read several passages that describe different aspects of this kind of friendship. As you read each one, don't rush past it. Slow down and listen for what God highlights. After each verse, summarize in your own words what the passage reveals about how faith-filled friends show up for one another.

<i>Scriptures</i>	<i>Summary</i>
Proverbs 13:20	
Proverbs 27:5-6	
John 15:12-13	

EXERCISE: THE FRIENDSHIP AUDIT

Take a few moments to reflect with your group about your friendships by completing each thought.

- One friendship that consistently sharpens me is ...
- One friendship where I may need to sharpen more intentionally is ...
- One friendship where comfort has replaced honesty is ...

CHALLENGE: BE LIKE IRON

This week, choose one friendship and take one intentional step toward faithful, Christ-centered influence. Don't try to fix everything or force a big moment; simply act with purpose. You might speak a truth you've been avoiding, doing so with humility and care. You could ask a deeper question instead of keeping the relationship at the surface. You might pray *with* them, not just *for* them. Or you could encourage a clear spiritual next step rather than stopping at empathy alone. As you step into the week, hold this commitment in mind: "This week, I will refuse to be a passive friend. I will sharpen with love."