

## **FriendShift: "Your Friends = Your Future"**

"Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is truly reliable?"  
**Proverbs 20:6**

### **The Three Friends You Need**

The Parable of the Prodigal Son Luke 15:11-32

#### **Luke 15:11-16:**

"There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything."

1. \_\_\_\_\_.

Dad is \_\_\_\_\_.

**Malachi 4:6** "And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

- Children who are raised without fathers are five times more likely to be poor.
- Infants are nearly two times more likely to die when their parents are not married.
- Children without fathers at home are twice as likely to drop out of school without finishing.

#### **A wrong view of fathers:**

A father is a cash machine. "Father, give me my share of the estate." **Luke 15:12**  
I don't need a Dad. "He...set off for a distant country." **Luke 15:13**

**SHIFT: I need a Father figure who will guide, advise, mentor, and discipline me.**

**Luke 15:31** "My son," the father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours."

**Hebrews 12:6-10** "For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child. As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all. God's discipline

is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening – it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever? God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness."

**Hebrews 13:17** "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you."

2. \_\_\_\_\_ .

**A wrong view of friends:**

- Friends are party-mates and play-mates. "He wasted all his money in wild living." **Luke 15:13**
- Friends don't tell friends what to do. "No one gave him anything." **Luke 15:16**

**James 4:1** "What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you?"

**If you want better friends, you have to be a better friend.**

**Proverbs 17:4** "Wrongdoers eagerly listen to gossip; liars pay close attention to slander."

**Proverbs 18:24** "A man who has friends must himself be friendly."

**SHIFT: I need open and accountable relationships with friends who can walk with me, sharpen me, and provoke me to love and good works.**

**Proverbs 27:17** "As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend."

**Proverbs 27:5-6** "An open rebuke is better than hidden love! Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy."

**Hebrews 10:24** "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."

3. \_\_\_\_\_ .

**A wrong view of followers:**

My brother is not my problem. "This son of yours..." **Luke 15:30**

**Luke 15:30-32** "But when **this son of yours** who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because **this brother of yours** was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

**Proverbs 16:28** "A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends."

**Proverbs 18:13, 17** "To answer before listening - that is folly and shame. In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right, until someone comes forward and cross-examines."

**SHIFT: I need friends I can invest my life into in love and service.**

"This brother of yours." **Luke 15:31**

**Proverbs 11:30** "The seeds of good deeds become a tree of life; a wise person wins friends."

**Galatians 6:1-3** "Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself.

Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important."

**Memory Verse:**

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." **Proverbs 17:17**