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## BIBLE STUDY

### ***Five Friends We All Need***

**By Stephen Judd**

**Synopsis:** This Bible study highlights the importance of having five essential types of friends in our lives: a mentor, an encourager, a confronter, an intercessor, and a partner. Through biblical insight and practical application, it reminds us that meaningful relationships are vital for spiritual growth, personal development, and lasting impact—we were never meant to walk this journey alone.

**Text: Exodus 17:8-13**

*“Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. <sup>9</sup> And Moses said to Joshua, “Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” <sup>10</sup> So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. <sup>11</sup> And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. <sup>12</sup> But Moses’ hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one*

*side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. <sup>13</sup> So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.”*

In this passage, we see a powerful example of teamwork and support. As Joshua led the Israelites into battle against the Amalekites, Moses, their leader, ascended to the top of the mountain, accompanied by Aaron and Hur.

From this vantage point, Moses interceded for the Israelites, raising his hands in prayer. However, as time passed, he grew weary. Each time his hands fell, the enemy gained the upper hand. But when his hands were lifted in intercession, Israel prevailed.

Recognizing Moses' struggle, Aaron and Hur stepped in. They positioned a stone for him to sit on and, standing on either side, held up his hands. What had begun as a personal act of intercession became a collective effort. Instead of just two hands, now six hands were lifted in unity—and because of this teamwork, God granted victory to Israel.

## **The Power of Supportive Relationships**

This story illustrates a fundamental truth: success is rarely achieved alone. Even Moses, one of the greatest leaders in biblical history, needed support.

Victory came not just because Moses was a great leader, but because he had an Aaron and a Hur.

Throughout Scripture, we see similar examples. David had Jonathan. Paul had Barnabas and Timothy. Every great person of God had someone standing beside them.

There is a vital principle at work here: We can accomplish more for God when we join hands with like-minded believers than when we attempt to do it alone.

When we surround ourselves with the right people—friends who encourage, strengthen, and uplift us—we position ourselves for victory. Just as Moses needed Aaron and Hur, we all need people who will stand by us in times of weakness, help us bear our burdens, and intercede on our behalf.

This message is a reminder that no one succeeds in isolation. We all need friends who will lift us up—spiritually, emotionally, and even physically when necessary. In the following sections, we will explore five essential types of friends that each of us needs in our lives.

## **Five Questions We Need to Ask Ourselves**

### **1. Who Is My Mentor?**

Proverbs 13:20 – *“He who walks with wise men will be wise,  
But the companion of fools will be destroyed.”*

Mentoring is a powerful process that fosters personal and spiritual development. It involves finding someone who can guide us, challenge us, and help us grow.

### **What Is a Mentor?**

A mentor is more than just a teacher; they are a trusted counselor, guide, and coach—someone who offers encouragement, wisdom, and direction.

Mentorship is about more than instruction; it involves imparting courage, offering affirmation, and exercising patience as a person develops.

The term *mentor* originates from Greek mythology. When Ulysses left for war, he entrusted his son’s upbringing to a wise man named Mentor, who taught and guided him in his father’s absence.

### **A Working Definition of Mentorship**

Mentorship is the willingness to pour one’s life into another person, investing in them for the sake of the next generation. It is about sharing experiences, wisdom, and values to shape and develop future leaders.

John C. Crosby describes it this way: “Mentoring is a brain to pick, a shoulder to cry on, and a kick in the pants.”

The Harvard Business Review once published an article titled, “Everyone Who Makes It Has a Mentor.” The premise was simple: success rarely happens in isolation. Behind most great leaders is someone who believed in them, guided them, and invested in their success.

### **Biblical Examples of Mentorship**

When King David took refuge in the Cave of Adullam, the Bible describes how distressed and discontented men gathered around him. David became their leader—and their mentor.

*“And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him” (1 Samuel 22:2).*

Over time, these men became mighty warriors—giant killers—because they followed David, learned from him, and adopted his mindset.

A compelling example appears in 2 Samuel 21:20-22, where men who had been mentored by David went on to defeat giants just as he had. The lesson is clear: mentorship transforms lives.

What David was, these men became!

The same principle applies today. We grow spiritually, emotionally, and even professionally when we allow others to pour their wisdom and experiences into us.

### **Choosing the Right Mentor**

If you want to grow, finding the right mentor is key. Ask yourself these questions:

- 1) Do I want to be like this person?
- 2) Can this person teach me how to think correctly?
- 3) Does this person have a positive influence on my life?
- 4) Do they believe in me?
- 5) Is their life worth following?
- 6) Do they have a wealth of experience? (The best mentors have been where you want to go.)
- 7) Are they still growing? (A true mentor continues to learn and evolve.)

Remember: "We teach what we know, but we reproduce what we are." A great mentor doesn't just teach lessons—they inspire growth through their own example.

### **How to Maximize a Mentoring Relationship**

- 1) Clarify what you want from the relationship.

Mentorship isn't about perfection—it's about growth and improvement.

- 2) Adopt a learning posture.

Stay humble and willing to learn. Don't let your ego prevent you from receiving wisdom.

- 3) Seek multiple mentors.

No one person has all the answers. Learn from various individuals with different strengths. Some of the best mentors are found in books and biographies—learning from past greats.

4) Apply what you can learn.

Knowledge without action is useless. Implement lessons immediately to solidify your growth.

5) Encourage your mentor.

The greatest reward for a mentor is seeing their mentee progress. Show appreciation by growing.

6) Pass it on.

The best way to honor your mentor is to mentor others in return.

Mentorship is a cycle—it's about receiving, growing, and then pouring into the next generation. Just as David's men became giant killers under his guidance, we, too, can inspire and develop others when we allow ourselves to be mentored.

Who is your mentor? And who are you mentoring?

## **2. Who Is My Encourager?**

Encouragement plays a vital role in shaping our lives and motivating us toward our full potential. The people we surround ourselves with can either build us up or tear us down. A true encourager is someone who speaks life, uplifts our spirit, and helps us grow into the person God intended us to be.

### **The Power of Encouragement**

1) We tend to become what others expect of us.

The most influential person in our lives often shapes who we become. If we deeply love or respect someone, we are likely to live up to their expectations. Positive reinforcement from trusted individuals can help us achieve greatness.

2) Encouragement Is a powerful motivator.

Nothing fuels motivation more than genuine affirmation. Encouragement can inspire effort, determination, and perseverance.

Business leader Charles Schwab once said: "I have yet to find the man, however exalted his station, who did not do better work and put forth greater effort under a spirit of approval than under a spirit of criticism."

His words highlight a fundamental truth—people thrive in an environment of encouragement and struggle under constant criticism.

3) A true friend brings out the best in you.

Our closest friends should be those who encourage us, not those who constantly criticize and tear us down. A best friend is someone who helps us grow, strengthens our faith, and inspires us to reach our full potential.

No one can truly call a continual critic their “best friend.” Encouragement fosters growth, while persistent negativity stifles progress.

### **Seeking Out Encouragers**

If we want to succeed, we need encouragers in our lives—people who believe in us even when we struggle to believe in ourselves. Who in your life lifts you up? Who challenges you to become better? Surrounding yourself with encouragers will help you reach new heights in faith, purpose, and personal development.

### **3. Who Is My Confronter?**

Proverbs 27:5-6 reminds us, *“Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed.  
6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”*

While encouragement lifts us up, confrontation—when done with the right spirit—helps us grow. There is a significant difference between constructive confrontation and destructive criticism. Confrontation, when rooted in love and truth, fosters development, while criticism, when laced with negativity, breaks down confidence and self-worth.

### **The Power of Confrontation**

The manner in which we are confronted makes all the difference. If delivered with the right heart and intent, confrontation can be transformative. Throughout scripture, we see key figures being confronted, which ultimately led to their personal and spiritual growth:

- Jesus confronted Peter, and after that, Peter became a stronger, more effective disciple.
- Nathan confronted David, leading him to repentance and restoration
- Paul confronted Timothy, helping him develop as a leader in the early church.

Every one of us needs someone in our life who is willing to ask the hard questions and hold us accountable.

## **The Role of Loving Confrontation**

An article from *Christianity Today* titled "Honest Tidings" humorously illustrates the impact of honesty in relationships.

"Ever since that seminar last spring on confronting in love, our church has been on an openness and honesty kick. Abigail Abbot, our 'sunshine sister' is leading the way. She is sending greeting cards on behalf of the church to associates who are sick, tired or otherwise in need of attention, but Abbey has been having trouble finding cards that are truly open and honest, so she has been buying blank cards and trying her own hand. Here is a sampling:

"From the choir director: 'I'm glad your operation went off without a hitch, but please don't hurry back friend, the choir is now on pitch.'

"From a board member: 'We heard about your mishap, it was a true disaster, but since you've been away, we find our business goes much faster.'

"From the treasurer: 'Good luck with your malpractice suit, we hear it's quite a honey. And just a quick reminder, you still need to tithe that money.'"

While lighthearted, this story highlights an important truth—honesty, when not tempered with love, can be more harmful than helpful.

## **Keys to Effective Confrontation**

### **1) Tears – Show you care.**

Before confronting someone, ensure that your motive is rooted in genuine care and concern. People are more receptive to correction when they know it comes from a place of love.

### **2) Timing – Choose the right moment.**

When and how you approach someone matters. Timing can determine whether confrontation leads to growth or resistance. A wise confronter discerns when the individual is ready to receive correction.

### **3) Trust – Establish a relationship of respect.**

People must trust the person who is confronting them. If they do not believe that you have their best interests at heart, they will reject even the most well-intended advice.

We all need a confronter—someone who loves us enough to tell us the truth, even when it's uncomfortable. Who in your life has permission to challenge you in love? Surround yourself with people who help you grow, not just those who make you feel good. True friends sharpen each other, shaping one another into better versions of themselves.

#### **4. Who Is My Intercessor?**

Intercessors play a crucial role in our spiritual journey. They are the ones who stand in the gap, lifting us up in prayer, encouraging us in times of struggle, and carrying our burdens before God.

In Acts 20, we find a powerful example of intercession as Paul meets with the elders of Ephesus for the final time. Paul had spent three years ministering to this church—longer than any other place in his missionary journey. His deep love for them is evident as he shares his heart, knowing they will not see him again.

**This passage provides four key characteristics of an intercessor.**

##### **1. Intercessors are bold in their witness.**

Paul exemplified boldness in sharing the truth, never holding back anything that would benefit others

- Acts 20:20 – “... *how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,*”
- Acts 20:27 – “*For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.*”

Intercessors do not shrink away from speaking the truth in love. They pray boldly and proclaim God's word without hesitation.

##### **2. Intercessors are broken in their relationships.**

Intercessors carry a deep burden for the people they pray for. They weep over the spiritual condition of others and intercede with humility and tears.

- Acts 20:19 – “...*serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews;*”

A true intercessor is moved by compassion and concern, willing to bear the weight of others' struggles in prayer.

##### **3. Intercessors are bridges between God and others.**



Intercessors act as spiritual bridges, standing in the gap between God and those they pray for. They seek God's strength on behalf of others, praying for their spiritual growth and well-being.

- Acts 20:32 – *“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”*

They are not just prayer warriors; they actively connect others to God's power and grace.

#### 4. Intercessors are bonded to those they pray for.

Intercessors develop deep emotional and spiritual connections with those they intercede for. Their prayers are not just words—they are heartfelt pleas that reflect their love and commitment.

- Acts 20:37-38 – *“Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.”*

Paul’s intercessory relationship with the Ephesians was so strong that their farewell was filled with sorrow and affection.

An intercessor is more than someone who prays occasionally—they are deeply invested in the lives of those they intercede for. Who in your life serves as an intercessor, lifting you up in prayer? More importantly, who are you interceding for?

True spiritual growth happens when we surround ourselves with people who boldly witness, carry burdens, connect us to God, and love us deeply. Seek out intercessors, and be one for someone else.

### 5. Who Is My Partner?

In life's journey, especially in the pursuit of spiritual and ministry goals, the value of a partner cannot be overstated. A partner is someone who shares the load, not just by being present, but by actively contributing their time and energy to your efforts.

#### **The Power of Partnership**

##### 1) Multiplication of Effort

The synergy between partners can produce results far greater than the sum of their individual efforts. A well-known example is that of draft horses: one draft horse can pull two tons, but two draft horses working together can pull up to 23

tons. Similarly, geese flying in formation can travel 71% farther than if each bird flew alone, thanks to the lift and reduced air resistance provided by their V-shaped formation.

## 2) Biblical Perspective

Deuteronomy 32:30 illustrates the exponential strength of partnership, stating, *"How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And the LORD had surrendered them?"*

This scripture highlights how partnership aligned with divine purpose can accomplish improbable feats.

## 3) Historical Example

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, famously said, "Give me a hundred men who hate nothing but sin, and fear nothing but God, and those 100 men will change the world." This quote encapsulates the essence of strategic and spiritually aligned partnerships in achieving transformative outcomes.

## **Qualities of a Good Partner**

### 1) Complementary Skills

A good partner complements your abilities. Together, partners can cover each other's weaknesses and enhance each other's strengths, leading to more effective ministry and personal growth.

### 2) Multiplicative Impact

Just as two horses can pull far more than either could alone, a partner in ministry or life can amplify your efforts, increasing your impact and reach.

## **Cultural Reference**

Alex Haley, in his famous book *Roots*, includes an illustration of a turtle on a fence post. Underneath the picture is the statement: "If a turtle sits on top of a fence post, you know he didn't get there by himself." This metaphor is a powerful reminder that no one achieves anything of significance entirely on their own. Every success story includes the contributions and support of others.

As we reflect on the relationships that shape and support our lives, it's clear that partners play an indispensable role. They do more than share our burdens; they multiply our efforts and enhance our capabilities. In every significant endeavor, especially those aimed at spiritual growth and ministry, seek out partners who not only share your vision but also enhance and multiply your efforts to achieve it. Who is your partner in this journey? How do you support each other in achieving your shared goals?

## Conclusion

Throughout this lesson, we've explored five essential friends that everyone needs: a mentor, an encourager, a confronter, an intercessor, and a partner. Each of these relationships serves a unique and vital role in our spiritual growth and personal development.

- A mentor provides wisdom and guidance, helping us navigate life's challenges with clarity.
- An encourager lifts us up when we are weary, reinforcing our faith and determination.
- A confronter challenges us in love, keeping us accountable and helping us grow.
- An intercessor stands in the gap, praying for us and carrying our burdens before God.
- A partner walks beside us, multiplying our efforts and ensuring we never face the journey alone.

The takeaway is clear: we were never meant to walk this path by ourselves. Just as Moses had Aaron and Hur, David had Jonathan, and Paul had Timothy, we, too, need people in our lives who strengthen, challenge, and uplift us.

Who are the five friends in your life? More importantly, whose friend are you?

As you seek to fulfill God's purpose, surround yourself with people who will build you up, challenge you to grow, and walk alongside you in faith. Likewise, be that friend to others. In doing so, we strengthen not only ourselves but also the body of Christ as a whole.

Let us commit to building these godly relationships, knowing that together, we can accomplish far more than we ever could alone. Find your five friends—and be one.

# HANDOUT

## ***Five Friends We All Need***

**Text: Exodus 17:8-13**

Success is rarely achieved \_\_\_\_\_.

**Five questions we need to ask ourselves:**

### **1. Who Is My Mentor?**

Proverbs 13:20

**In choosing a mentor, ask yourself these questions:**

- 1) Do I want to be like this person?
- 2) Can this person teach me how to think correctly?
- 3) Does this person have a positive influence on my life?
- 4) Do they believe in me?
- 5) Is their life worth following?
- 6) Do they have a wealth of experience?
- 7) Are they still growing?

**How to maximize a mentoring relationship:**

- 1) Clarify what you want from the relationship.
- 2) Adopt a learning posture.
- 3) Seek multiple mentors.
- 4) Apply what you learn.
- 5) Encourage your mentor.
- 6) Pass it on.

### **2. Who Is My Encourager?**

We tend to become what others \_\_\_\_\_ of us.

Nothing fuels motivation more than genuine \_\_\_\_\_.

A true friend brings out the best in you.

### **3. Who Is My Confronter?**

Proverbs 27:5-6

Every one of us needs someone in our life who is willing to ask the hard questions and hold us \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **Keys to Effective Confrontation**

- 1) Tears – show you care.
- 2) Timing – choose the right moment.
- 3) Trust – establish a relationship of respect.

### **4. Who Is My Intercessor?**

Paul's example in Romans 20 provides four key characteristics of an intercessor:

- 1) Intercessors are \_\_\_\_\_ in their witness (Romans 20:20, 27).
- 2) Intercessors are broken in their \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 20:19).
- 3) Intercessors are \_\_\_\_\_ between God and others (Romans 20:32).
- 4) Intercessors are bonded to those they \_\_\_\_\_ for (Romans 20:37-38).

## 5. Who Is My Partner?

Deuteronomy 32:30

### Qualities of a good partner:

- 1) Complementary Skills: A good partner complements your abilities.
- 2) Multiplicative Impact: a partner in ministry or life can amplify your efforts, increasing your impact and reach.

*"If a turtle sits on top of a fence post, you know he didn't get there by himself."* - Alex Haley

### Summary:

- 1) A mentor provides wisdom and guidance, helping us navigate life's challenges with clarity.
- 2) An encourager \_\_\_\_\_ when we are weary, reinforcing our faith and determination.
- 3) A confronter challenges us in love, keeping us accountable and helping us grow.
- 4) An intercessor stands in the gap, praying for us and carrying our \_\_\_\_\_ before God.
- 5) A partner walks beside us, \_\_\_\_\_ our efforts and ensuring we never face the journey alone.

**Who are the five friends in your life? More importantly, whose friend are you?**

# SMALL GROUP GUIDE

## ***Five Friends We All Need***

### **Opening Prayer:**

Begin with a prayer, asking God to guide your discussion and help each member reflect on the importance of godly relationships in their lives.

### **Ice Breaker Question:**

Share about a friend who has significantly impacted your life. What made their influence so powerful?

### **Key Scripture:**

Exodus 17:8-13 (Focus on verses 11-12)

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. The sermon emphasizes that success is rarely achieved alone. Can you think of a time when teamwork or support from others helped you overcome a challenge?
2. Of the five types of friends mentioned (Mentor, Encourager, Confronter, Intercessor, Partner), which do you feel you need most in your life right now? Why?
3. What qualities do you look for in a mentor? Have you ever had a mentor, and if so, how did they impact your life?
4. How can we be better encouragers to those around us? Share an example of when someone's encouragement made a difference in your life.
5. The study talks about the importance of loving confrontation. How can we approach confrontation in a way that promotes growth rather than resentment?
6. What does it mean to be an intercessor for someone? How can we develop a deeper prayer life for others?
7. In what areas of your life or ministry could you benefit from having a partner? What qualities would you look for in such a partnership?

## **Key Takeaways:**

1. We all need supportive relationships to grow and succeed in our spiritual lives.
2. Each type of friend (Mentor, Encourager, Confronter, Intercessor, Partner) plays a unique and vital role in our personal development.
3. Being a good friend to others is just as important as having good friends.
4. Surrounding ourselves with the right people can multiply our effectiveness in serving God.

## **Practical Applications:**

1. Identify one person who could serve as a mentor in your life. Take steps to initiate or deepen that relationship this week.
2. Practice being an encourager by sending a thoughtful message or making a call to someone who might need uplifting.
3. Ask a trusted friend for honest feedback about an area in your life where you might need growth or improvement.
4. Start an intercessory prayer journal, committing to pray regularly for specific individuals in your life.
5. Consider a ministry or personal goal where having a partner could increase your effectiveness. Pray about who that partner might be.

## **Closing Activity:**

Have each group member write down the names of people in their lives who currently fill (or could potentially fill) each of the five friend roles discussed. Encourage them to pray over these names and relationships in the coming week.

## **Closing Prayer:**

Thank God for the gift of friendship and ask for His guidance in nurturing godly relationships that promote growth and spiritual maturity.