



CREW

WONDER
DISCOVERY
PASSION

Our friends have the potential to influence our lives in a big way. In this three-week series we'll discover what the Bible has to say about how we choose and treat our friends.

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TEACHING OUTLINE

CREW | WEEK 1

BOTTOM LINE

YOUR FRIENDS CAN MAKE YOU OR BREAK YOU.

SCRIPTURE

The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray (Proverbs 12:26 NIV).

Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm (Proverbs 13:20 NIV).

Solomon offers wisdom on friendships that we can apply in our lives today. This wisdom will help us find friends that will influence us for the best.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to use wisdom when it comes to choosing their closest friends.

TEACHING SCRIPT SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Who are *your* people?

TENSION

How did your crew become your crew?

You should know this: Our friends have a huge influence on us.

Ultimately your friends will have a big influence on how good your life is *now*, and where it ends up *later*.

TRUTH

One of the books where we see a lot of that wisdom is called Proverbs.

Whether it's a good direction or a bad direction, your friends are leading you and steering you.

In other words, if you spend time around wise people, you'll become wise. The quality of your life will go up.

If you spend time around fools, you'll experience harm, consequences, and hurt. The quality of your life will suffer.

APPLICATION

Here are a couple of questions to ask yourself when it comes to the people in our crew. 1) Do they make wise decisions in their own life? 2) Do they have my best interest in mind?

LANDING

Maybe there are friends you need to take a couple of steps back from. Maybe there are friends you need to take a couple of steps *toward*.

You need to be the one who decides what happens next.



TEACHING SCRIPT

CREW | WEEK 1

BOTTOM LINE

YOUR FRIENDS CAN MAKE YOU OR BREAK YOU.

INTRODUCTION

1 Minute

Who are *your* people? You know, the people you hang around the most? The friends you call when you score concert tickets? The people you text when you have a fight with your step-dad? The people you can count on to laugh at your jokes, like your photos on Instagram, and never leave you alone at the lunch table?

Whether you call them your squad, your crew, or just your friends, those people are some of the most important in your life. In fact, even though we all go through times when we don't feel like we have a great crew, there's still something

in all of us that wants one. There's something built into each of us that knows we're supposed to be connected to other people. And, according to research, that desire is a really good thing.

Studies show that the *benefit* of having great friends goes beyond having someone to sit with at lunch or hang out with on a Friday night. They show that having great friends is as essential to your health as getting enough sleep, eating well, and not smoking.¹ Friends don't just make our lives better; they can make our lives *longer*.

TENSION

3 Minutes

So we all agree, having good friends is awesome. But here's a question you've probably never thought about: How exactly did you get these friends? **How did your crew become your crew?**

- Maybe their family just happened to move into the house down the street.
- Maybe you all played the same sport as kids.
- Maybe you randomly sat next to each other in Chemistry.
- Maybe you both got dumped by the same person.

Most of us, if asked how our friends became our friends, would probably say, "I have no clue. It just kind of happened."

And that's not bad. There's nothing wrong with meeting a new friend in the marching band or on the basketball court. It totally makes sense to hang out with people who like the same things you do.

But at the same time, you should know this: **Our friends have a huge influence on us.** Not only does *having* friends influence our health and well-being, but the *kind*

¹ http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/the-health-benefits-of-strong-relationships



of friends we have can guide our decisions—right now and long term.

But for most of us, our friends just kind of “happened.” And even though we may not like to admit it, most of us are just happy to have any friends at all! We’ll take what we can get.

So add a fear of not having friends to a fear of missing out (FOMO), and that creates an interesting combination:

Friends that influence us + Fear of missing out = Decisions we wouldn’t normally make.

Now, before you think I’m lecturing you, let me be clear: Sometimes this combination is a *good* thing. Some of you have become better students, better athletes, and better people because of your friends. They’ve encouraged you to try things you wouldn’t normally do, and those things have helped you improve as a person. Or, you had a fear of missing out—and it just so happened to be a really *good* thing that you didn’t want to miss—and so you jumped in and became a better person in the process.

But we all know the opposite is true, too. Some of us have done some really dumb things because of our friends.

We’ve ended up in bad situations and made stupid choices that we could’ve avoided if only we had been wise when it came to choosing the people who influence us most.

So part of my goal today is to encourage you to reconsider how you choose your friends. Because ultimately your friends will have a big influence on how good your life is *now*, and where it ends up *later*.

But before we begin, I want to be super-clear. This is not a message about dumping all your friends and starting over. It’s not a message about how you should only hang out with Christians, church-goers, or people who listen to worship music. **It’s simply an invitation to think differently about how you choose who is in your crew.** It’s about allowing the *right* kind of people to influence what you do and who you become.

TRUTH
5 Minutes

Now, the Bible has great advice about a lot of areas of life. In fact, even if you don’t believe in God or the Bible, some of the advice and wisdom found there can still be really helpful to you.

One of the books where we see a lot of that wisdom is called Proverbs. It’s full of these amazing bite-sized pieces of truth and insights that can make all of us better at life. It was written by a King named Solomon, most likely as a book of advice not only for his people, but also for his own sons.

Maybe that’s why Solomon had some good stuff to say about friendship. He knew that who his people, and especially his sons, chose to hang out with would eventually influence the direction of his whole country. There was a lot on the line here. So you have to imagine this is a big deal to Solomon as he says this:

The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray (Proverbs 12:26 NIV).

At first this concept seems so simple. The people who are going to make *right* decisions in their life do so because they have the right kind of people around them. And the people who make *wrong* decisions do so because they are

influenced by the wrong kind of people. But the main idea is this: **Your friends have influence on your life.**

I don’t think any of us would disagree with that. But we may not realize just how true it is. Think about it. Your friends have a lot to do with the quality of your life—good or bad. For example, think for a second about your biggest regret in life. It probably didn’t take you too long to think of it. My guess is whatever that regret is, you didn’t get into the situation alone. Chances are, there was a friend right there alongside of you.

And you may not have realized it at the time, but those regrets *then* affect the happiness in your life *now*. Because the more regrets and mistakes you make, the more difficult life is. It’s not so much that you’re being punished. It’s just the way regret works. **It plants itself in the present, and grows into the future.**

Now think about some of your *best* moments. My guess is that you had a crew right there with you then as well. You were surrounded by the right kind of people. Looking back, you see that your friends were there when you created positive experiences and great memories. And those, as much as anything in life, determine the quality of your life.



But it's more than that, too. Just like your friends influence the *quality* of your life, they also have a lot to do with your *direction* in life. **Whether it's a good direction or a bad direction, your friends are leading you and steering you.**

Now, I know what you're thinking: *Hang on. I have friends, but I also make my own decisions. I'm not some peer-pressure junkie that does whatever people tell me.*

It's true that your crew may not technically make your decisions for you. But that doesn't take away from the fact that they *influence* your decisions. Sure, you're the one to make the final call. **But I promise, the crew members closest to you will play some part in what choices you make.** Maybe not all the time, but waaaaaay more than you realize.

That's why the question of *how* you got your friends is so important. Because this is about more than who you hang out with on Friday nights. It's about more than which couples will be in your group at prom. **Friends determine the quality and direction of your life.**

So track with me for a second:

- If friends have a huge impact on the quality of your life,
- and they influence a ton of your decisions,

- why do most of us put more time, energy, and thought into buying shoes and hair products than we do finding the right type of friends?

Isn't that strange? But it's true for almost all of us. That's the common, normal way for friendships to develop. Which is EXACTLY why Solomon wrote, "The righteous choose their friends carefully." He's saying, "I know it's normal for friendships to just *happen*, but you have to pay attention!" Here's why:

Your friends can make you or break you.

So choose wisely! In the next chapter, he says the same thing in a different way:

Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm (Proverbs 13:20 NIV).

In other words, if you spend time around wise people, you'll become wise. The quality of your life will go up. If you spend time around fools, you'll experience harm, consequences, and hurt. The quality of your life will suffer.

It's cause and effect. And while you can't control effect, you can change the people who influence you, which means you can change the cause. You have a choice about who you hang out with and walk through life with. Why not choose people who will make it better?

APPLICATION

2 Minutes

So what does it look like to choose your friends carefully? Here are a couple of questions to ask yourself when it comes to the people in our crew.

1. **Do they make wise decisions in their own life?**
If you want to know what kind of influence someone will have on your life, look at what kind of influence they have on their own life. Do they make good decisions? Or are they constantly dealing with the fall-out of bad decisions? Are they living at peace—as much as possible—with the people around them? Or are they *always* caught up in drama? Be careful not to let your decisions be influenced by people who consistently make bad ones.
2. **Do they have my best interest in mind?** Ask yourself, "Is this person really looking out for me?"

For my future? Are they helping me make decisions that make my relationships healthier and stronger? Or, are they simply a friend that keeps me around for their benefit?"

Some of you, if you're honest, have friends that care more about themselves than they care about you. Somewhere in your heart you know this is true. And listen, that doesn't make them bad people! **They're probably good people, they just aren't good for you right now.**

Maybe you have no idea if they have your best interests in mind or not. That's fair. You're not a mind reader. But here's a trick for making an educated guess. Look at how they treat others. What do they say about other people at school? If they constantly



put other people down, they aren't the type of person you need to be close to. Why? Because if they treat other people that way, they will eventually treat you that way.

Friendship is too important to just let it "happen." **Your friends can make you or break you.** So choose them intentionally.

LANDING

1 Minute

Maybe there are friends you need to take a couple of steps back from. Maybe there are friends you need to take a couple of steps *toward*. But whatever it is, *you* need to be the one who decides what happens next. Don't be passive—be intentional. Move in the direction of people who will move your life forward. People who will help you love God and love others better. People who will help you make good

decisions. People who want something *for* you, not just something *from* you.

This is your life. And with God's help, *you* get to decide the quality you want it to have, and the direction you want it to go, by picking friends who set you up to win.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS