

# "Like Money in the Bank"

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Theme: Friendships will be some of the wisest investments you will ever make.  
Text: Proverbs 27:10

Here's a thought: Aesop warned, "Whoever neglects old friends for the sake of new deserves what he gets if he loses both."

Watch the video "BFFs" at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Th9F9xUn5Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Th9F9xUn5Y).

Fewer people seem to have long-term friendships these days. In our electronic age of social media, we can so easily and quickly "unfriend" someone when they upset us. Friends can become like disposable batteries – rather than recharge them we throw them out. We talk about being Best Friends Forever or BFFs but is this really true?

King Solomon counsels us in Proverbs 27:10:

Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you - better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away. NIV

A loyal friend values:

**Longevity**



One of the greatest examples of a long-lasting, faithful relationship goes back to about 1300 years Before Christ when the men in the lives of Naomi, Ruth and Orpah died. When Naomi urged her daughters-in-law to return to their homes, Orpah did but Ruth surprised her in Ruth 1:16-17:

16 But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from

you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." NIV

Ruth proved herself faithful to Naomi through good and bad times over the years. As a result of her faithfulness, Ruth became the grandmother of King David and a part of the Messiah's lineage. Imagine that, a Moabite woman was grafted into the Jewish ancestry of nobility! Ruth's faithfulness over time positioned her to be used by God in a powerful way.

The late Bob Pierce (1914-1978) was a man to admire. One day he wrote in the margin of his Bible, "Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God." Those words inspired him to start World Vision, a mission organization that has served hurting people around the globe since 1950, and Samaritan's Purse since 1970.

But his life also contained tragedy. As Marshall Shelley described in "The Healthy Hectic Home" (Word, 1988), the dream to launch World Vision left Bob little time for his family. While he was building a world-class ministry, his family was crumbling. Bob's wife eventually divorced him, and he was alienated from his children.

The story of Bob Pierce is a grim reminder to keep a healthy balance between the work God has called us to do and the family God has given us to develop (from "Home is Where the Hedges Are" by Phil and Bev Haas at [http://blog.thrivingpastor.com/home-is-where-the-hedges-are/?refcd=480801&utm\\_campaign=Thriving+Pastor%3A+Home+Is+Where+The+Hedges+Are&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=nl\\_thrivingpastor](http://blog.thrivingpastor.com/home-is-where-the-hedges-are/?refcd=480801&utm_campaign=Thriving+Pastor%3A+Home+Is+Where+The+Hedges+Are&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nl_thrivingpastor)). This grim reminder applies to all human relationships.

The most satisfying relationships are cooked not in a microwave oven but in a slow cooker. The best food is not handed to us at the drive-thru window but served at home where it has been patiently and lovingly prepared.

Aesop warned, "Whoever neglects old friends for the sake of new deserves what he gets if he loses both."

Most millionaires did not get where they are overnight by winning the lottery or by investing in a "get rich quick" scheme. Instead, they grew their wealth slowly and gradually over decades by depositing more into their bank accounts than they withdrew, by saving and investing wisely. These principles apply not only to financial wealth but to relational wealth.

In "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People", Stephen Covey describes the

Emotional Bank Account. Ruby Payne adapts this concept to make a chart in “A Framework for Understanding Poverty”

([www.aboutlearning.ca/2011/07/29/deposits-and-withdrawals](http://www.aboutlearning.ca/2011/07/29/deposits-and-withdrawals)):

<b>Deposits</b>	<b>Withdrawals</b>
Seek first to understand	Seek first to be understood
Keeping promises	Breaking promises
Kindness, courtesies	Unkindness, discourtesies
Clarifying expectations	Violating expectations
Loyalty to the absent	Disloyalty, duplicity
Apologies	Pride, conceit, arrogance
Open to feedback	Rejecting feedback

For a strong Emotional Bank Account with others

([www.evokepotential.com/284](http://www.evokepotential.com/284)):

- Remember the 5:1 rule: It may take five deposits to make up for one withdrawal.
- Take the time to understand the other person’s “currency”. What constitutes a deposit to one person may be a withdrawal to another (example: public awards and recognition).
- Practice being sincere and consistent in your deposits. Small deposits over time build large account balances.

I have burned and been burned enough times to know that faithfulness and loyalty are not always reciprocated. Remember how Judas betrayed Jesus and how Peter denied knowing Jesus? Maybe they were in the back of Paul’s mind when he wrote 2 Timothy 2:11-13:

11 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him [Jesus], we will also live with him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; 13 if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself. NIV

Friendships are forged over time as trust is built. Thankfully, friendships are not reserved for perfect people but are enjoyed by committed people. This is modelled for us by our Lord and Saviour then He calls us to model this for others. Jesus calls us to extend the same loyalty to others that He has extended to us. Difficult times provide opportunities for faithfulness to be proven.

Who have been in your life for a long time? Will you pause and give thanks for them? Will you commit to proving yourself faithful over time to those the Lord gives you?

A loyal friend values:

## Longevity

### Location



When disaster strikes you - better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away. When asked, "Who is my neighbour?" Jesus went on to explain that our neighbours are the people we encounter in everyday life. We often come across opportunities to love, serve and give without having to go looking for them. The most fruitful and fulfilled people are those who think less about what others can do for them and more about what they can do for others.

The Good Samaritan in His parable embodies "the ultimate neighbour" in Luke 10:30-37:

30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' 36 Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." NIV

The 25-kilometre-long road between Jericho and Jerusalem has been used by merchants, armies, and pilgrims, proving to be important throughout history. It was notorious in Jesus' time for its danger and difficulty

([www.bibleodyssey.org/en/places/related-articles/road-to-jericho](http://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/places/related-articles/road-to-jericho)). A Samaritan would have been despised and avoided by Jews along this road but this was of no concern to him. Coming across this man who had been beaten and robbed, the Samaritan instinctively stopped to help without any thought of their ethnic or religious differences. Rather than wondering if the wounded man was a neighbour to him, the Samaritan demonstrated that he was a neighbour to the man.

Our understanding of what it means to be a good neighbour is undergoing a

radical change. We live in the country and farmers once know each other by stopping on the road for a chat or by catching up on community news at the grain elevator. City folk would lean over their fences and talk while they were out doing yard work or shovelling snow. Now we have attached garages, higher fences and locked gates that restrict interactions with the people living next door. So, who is your neighbour today? This might be the person who lives next door or it might be the person you sit next to in class, work with, exercise with or do business with at the store. They might even be the person on the other side of the globe that you chat with regularly via social media.

The limitations of long-distance friendships show up when you go on vacation and you need someone to check your house and water the plants while you are away. The first person to help when your house is on fire is not the guy in Liechtenstein that you follow on Twitter; it will be the guy who lives next door. Such relationships are still important in our 21<sup>st</sup> century lives. We need to develop the skill and capacity to develop friendships with people who are geographically close. The first step is to decide these relationships are valuable.

It's Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final, and a man makes his way to his seat right at centre ice. He sits down, noticing that the seat next to him is empty. He leans over and asks his neighbour if someone will be sitting there.

"No," says the neighbour. "The seat is empty."

"This is incredible," said the man. "Who in their right mind would have a seat like this for final game of the Stanley Cup playoffs and not use it?"

The neighbour says, "Well, actually, the seat belongs to me. I was supposed to come with my wife, but she passed away. This is the first Stanley Cup we haven't been to together since we got married in 1967."

"Oh ... I'm sorry to hear that. That's terrible. But couldn't you find someone else, a friend or relative, or even a neighbour to take the seat?"

The man shakes his head, "No. They're all at the funeral."

People come and people go. There are high risks and rewards. Our capacity for friendship is limited – whether it is on Facebook or in our personal socializing – so we should stop feeling guilty for failing to maintain every connection that we accumulate over the years. Some relationships are so special that we can simply pick up where we left off without communicating for extended periods of time. Other relationships prove to be temporary or geographical when we or they move away and we drift apart.

Someone has observed, "A friend allows you distance, but is never far away."

People will disappoint you, but without deposits in those that are around you there won't be much opportunity for withdrawals when necessary. Jesus taught in Luke 6:31-38:

31 Do to others as you would have them do to you. 32 If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even "sinners" love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even "sinners" do that. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even "sinners" lend to "sinners," expecting to be repaid in full. 35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. 37 Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. 38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. NIV

We usually apply this principle of "give, and it will be given to you" just to finances but here Jesus also applies it to relationships. Whether it is love, money, judgment, condemnation or forgiveness, what we sow in relationships will typically be what we reap. Be generous and compassionate with the person eating Christmas dinner on the next chair, living next door, working in the next cubicle, studying at the next desk or standing in front of you at the check-out line. You never know when you will need their generosity and compassion.

How can you strengthen the ties with those around you? What needs do these people have and how can you help them?

A loyal friend values:

**Longevity**

**Location**

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