

How to Make Life Work



WISDOM FROM PROVERBS

Wisdom for Friendship

Selected Proverbs



Proverbs 27:5-6, 9

⁵ Better is open rebuke than hidden love.

⁶ Wounds from a friend can be trusted,
but an enemy multiplies kisses.

⁹ Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart,
and the pleasantness of a friend springs
from their heartfelt advice.



Proverbs 27:10, 17

¹⁰ Do not forsake your friend or a friend of your family,
and do not go to your relative's house
when disaster strikes you—
better a neighbor nearby
than a relative far away.

¹⁷ As iron sharpens iron,
so one person sharpens another.



Outline

1. What is friendship?
2. Why is friendship so important?
3. How can you be a good friend?



1. What is friendship?

Selected Scriptures



1. What is friendship?

Kinds of friendship

- Aristotle's three kinds of friendship: based on (1) utility, (2) pleasure, or (3) virtue



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Kinds of friendship

- Aristotle's three kinds of friendship: based on (1) utility, (2) pleasure, or (3) virtue
- Aelred of Rievaulx's three kinds of friendship: (1) carnal, (2) worldly, or (3) spiritual



1. What is friendship?

Friendship in Scripture

- the knitting of souls (1 Sam. 18:1; 20:17)



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Friendship in Scripture

- the knitting of souls (1 Sam. 18:1; 20:17)
- the face-to-face encounter (Ex. 33:11; Num. 12:8)
- partnership in the gospel (Philip. 1:5; cf. Acts 2:42)



1. What is friendship?

The irreducible core of friendship

- Common interest





Friendship arises out of mere Companionship when two or more of the companions discover that they have in common some insight or interest or even taste which the others do not share and which, till that moment, each believed to be his own unique treasure (or burden). The typical expression of opening Friendship would be something like, 'What? You too? I thought I was the only one.'

—C. S. Lewis



That is why those pathetic people who simply 'want friends' can never make any. The very condition of having friends is that we should want something else besides friends. Where the truthful answer to the question, "Do you see the same truth?" would be "I don't care about the truth — I only want [you to be my] friend." no friendship can arise. Friendship must be about something, even if it were only an enthusiasm for dominoes or white mice. Those who have nothing can share nothing; those who are going nowhere can have no fellow-travelers.

1. What is friendship?

The irreducible core of friendship

- Common interest
- Shared time & space





Friendships [based on virtue] need time and intimacy... The wish for friendship develops rapidly, but friendship [itself] does not . . . Nothing is so characteristic of friends as spending time together.

—Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

1. What is friendship?

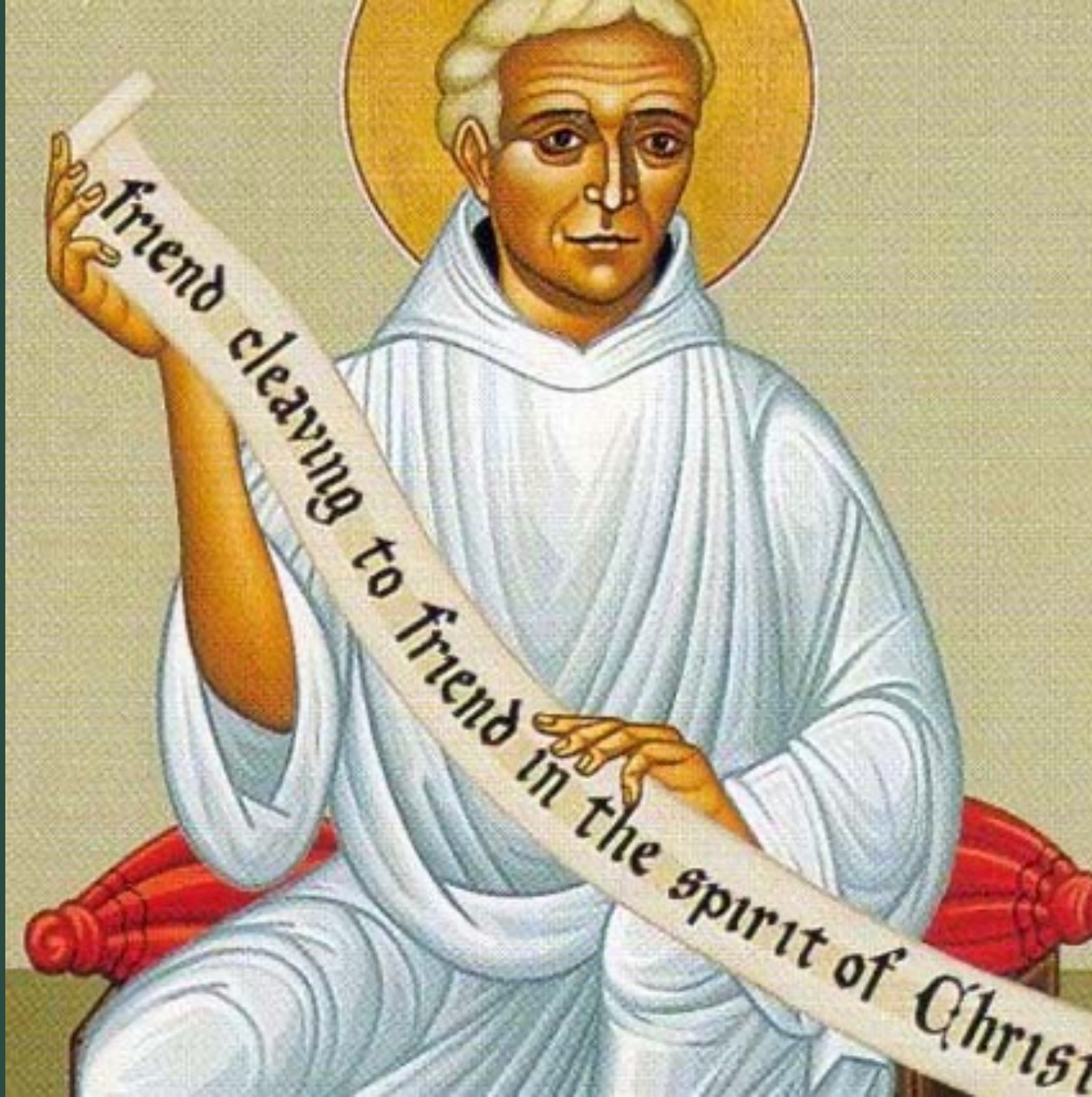
The irreducible core of friendship

- Common interest
- Shared time & space
- Mutual commitment



For what more sublime can
be said of friendship, what
more true, what more
profitable, than that it
ought to, and is proved to
begin in Christ, continue in
Christ, and be perfected in
Christ?

—Aelred of Rievaulx



2. Why is friendship so important?

Selected Proverbs



2. Why is friendship so important?

a. Value

Prov. 20:6

Many claim to have unfailing love,
but a faithful person who can find?





Friendship is the greatest of worldly goods.
Certainly to me it is the chief happiness of life.
If I had to give a piece of advice to a young
man about a place to live, I think I should say,
'Sacrifice almost everything to live where you
can be near your friends.'

—C. S. Lewis

2. Why is friendship so important?

b. Scarcity

Reasons for the scarcity of friendship

- Radical individualism
- The sexual revolution
- Breakdown of the nuclear family
- Social media
- The pandemic and political polarization



2. Why is friendship so important?

a. Power and influence

Prov. 12:26

The righteous choose their friends carefully,
but the way of the wicked leads them astray.



2. Why is friendship so important?

a. Power and influence

Prov. 13:20

Walk with the wise and become wise,
for a companion of fools suffers harm.



2. Why is friendship so important?

a. Power and influence

Prov. 16:29

A violent person entices their neighbor
and leads them down a path that is not good.



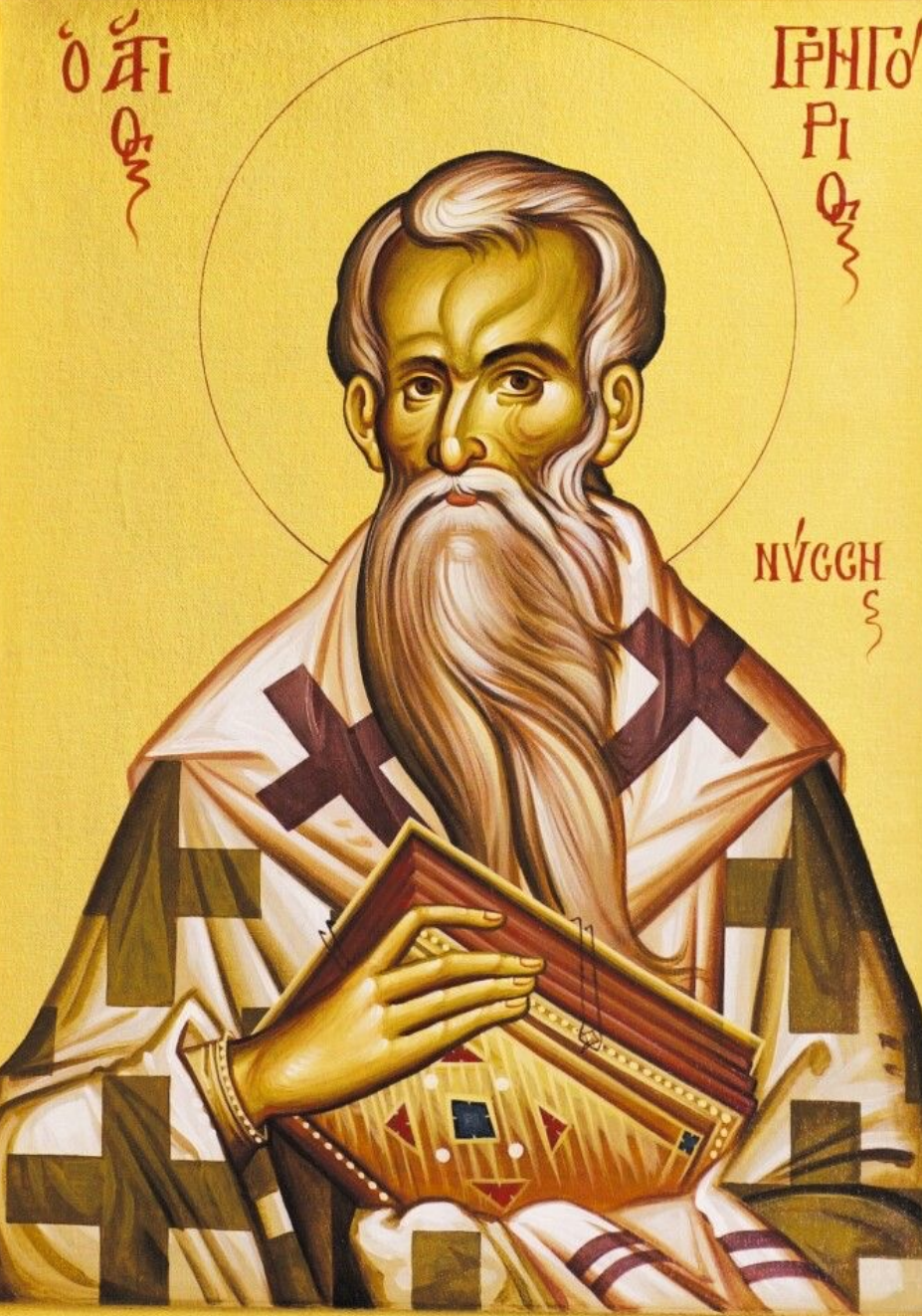
2. Why is friendship so important?

a. Power and influence

Prov. 22:24-25

Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person,
do not associate with one easily angered,
²⁵ or you may learn their ways
and get yourself ensnared.





In studies, in lodgings, in discussions I had him as companion . . . We had all things in common . . . But above all it was God, of course, and a mutual desire for higher things, that drew us to each other. As a result, we reached such a pitch of confidence that we revealed the depths of our hearts, becoming ever more united in our yearning . . . If anyone were to ask me, 'What is the best thing in life?' I would answer, 'Friends.'

—Gregory of Nazianzus

3. How can you be a good friend?

Selected Scriptures



3. How can you be a good friend?

a. Open your heart → intentionality & transparency

Prov. 27:9, 17

Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart,
and the pleasantness of a friend
springs from their heartfelt advice.

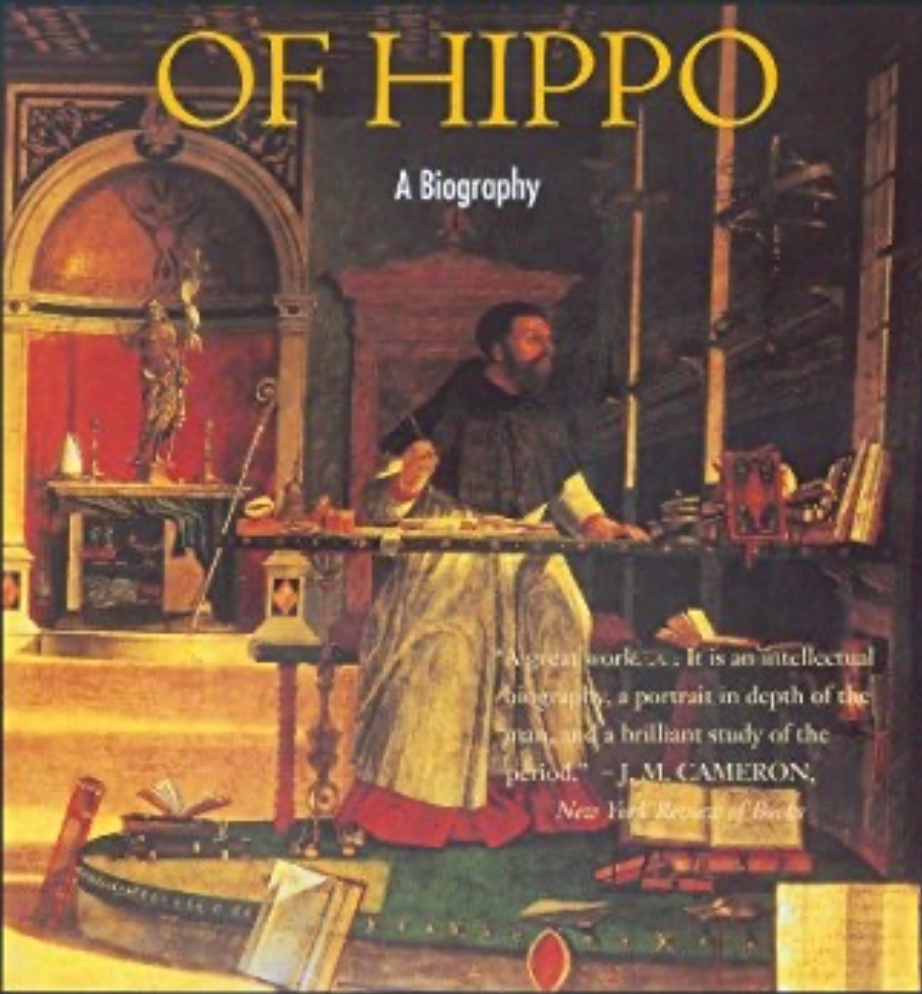
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PETER BROWN

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

A Biography



"A great work... It is an intellectual biography, a portrait in depth of the man, and a brilliant study of the period." — J. M. CAMERON,
New York Review of Books

When he was younger, Augustine said that the wise man could 'live alone with mind,' but in his later life he prayed for friends. He said, "for when we are harassed by poverty, saddened by bereavement, ill and in pain . . . let good men visit us – men who can not only rejoice with those that rejoice, but weep with those that weep, and who know how to give useful advice and how to win us to express our own feelings in conversation..."

NEW EDITION, WITH AN EPILOGUE

3. How can you be a good friend?

b. Seek to understand → tact & empathy

Prov. 25:11 (ESV)

A word fitly spoken

is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.



3. How can you be a good friend?

b. Seek to understand → tact & empathy

Prov. 25:20

Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day,
or like vinegar poured on a wound,
is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.



3. How can you be a good friend?

b. Seek to understand → tact & empathy

Prov. 26:18-19

Like a maniac

shooting flaming arrows of death

¹⁹ is one who deceives their neighbor
and says, "I was only joking!"



3. How can you be a good friend?

b. Seek to understand → tact & empathy

Prov. 27:14

If anyone loudly blesses their neighbor
early in the morning,
it will be taken as a curse.



3. How can you be a good friend?

b. Seek to understand → tact & empathy

Prov. 20:5

The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters,
but one who has insight draws them out.



REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFE OF DAVID

LEAP OVER A WALL



*Earthy Spirituality for
Everyday Christians*

EUGENE H. PETERSON

Translator of *THE MESSAGE*

The greatest thing any person can do for another is to confirm the deepest thing in him, in her—to take the time and have the discernment to see what's most deeply there, most fully that person, and then confirm it by recognizing and encouraging it... Each of us have contact with hundreds of people who never look beyond our surface appearance... We meet hundreds of people who take one look at us, make a snap judgment, and then slot us into a category so that they won't have to deal with us as persons. They treat us as something less than we are; and if we're in constant association with them, we become less.

—Eugene Peterson

3. How can you be a good friend?

c. Speak the truth → courage & candor

Prov. 27:5-6

Better is open rebuke
than hidden love.

⁶ Wounds from a friend can be trusted,
but an enemy multiplies kisses.



3. How can you be a good friend?

c. Speak the truth → courage & candor

Prov. 29:5

Those who flatter their neighbors
are spreading nets for their feet.



3. How can you be a good friend?

c. Speak the truth → courage & candor

Prov. 17:9

Whoever would foster love covers over an offense,
but whoever repeats the matter separates
close friends.



3. How can you be a good friend?

d. Go the distance → constancy & faithfulness

Prov. 17:17

A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for a time of adversity.



3. How can you be a good friend?

d. Go the distance → constancy & faithfulness

Prov. 18:24

One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin,
but there is a friend who sticks closer
than a brother.



3. How can you be a good friend?

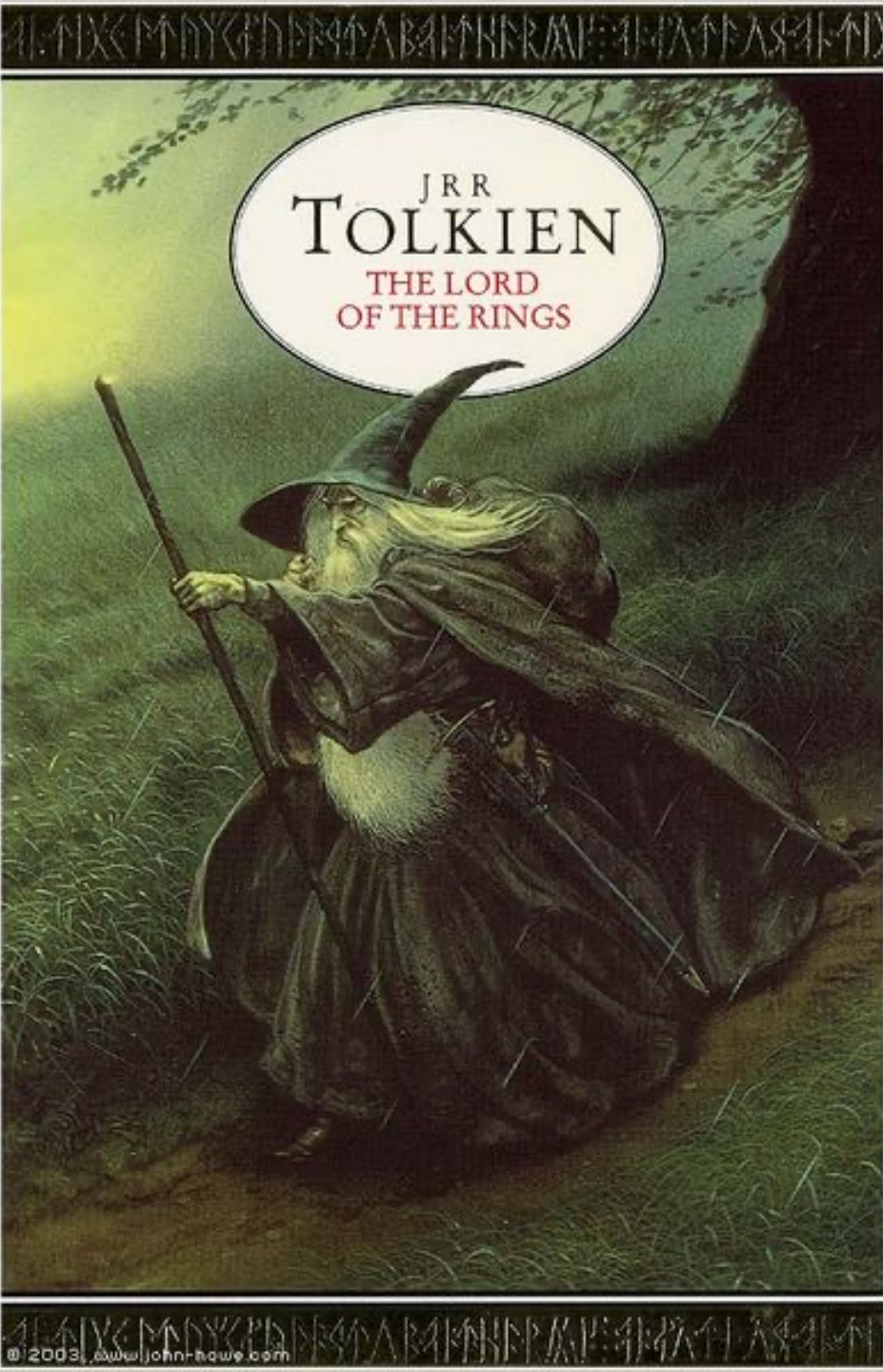
d. Go the distance → constancy & faithfulness

Prov. 27:10

Do not forsake your friend or a friend of your family,
and do not go to your relative's house when
disaster strikes you

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“[Sam] bent over Frodo, rousing him gently. Frodo groaned; but with a great effort of will he staggered up; and then he fell upon his knees again. He raised his eyes with difficulty to the dark slopes of Mount Doom towering above him, and then pitifully he began to crawl forward on his hands. Sam looked at him and wept in his heart, but no tears came to his dry and stinging eyes. ‘I said I’d carry him, if it broke my back,’ he muttered, ‘and I will!’ ... ‘Come, Mr. Frodo!’ he cried. ‘I can’t carry it for you, but I can carry you . . .’ As Frodo clung upon his back, arms loosely about his neck, legs clasped firmly under his arms, Sam staggered to his feet; and then to his amazement he felt the burden light.”

Conclusion: The Gift of Friendship

Friendship is a gift you can give

Prov. 20:6

Many claim to have unfailing love,
but a faithful person who can find?



Conclusion: The Gift of Friendship

Friendship is a gift that Jesus extends to us

John 15:13-15

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

