**Tenth Grade – Worldly Friendships vs Godly Community**

*In this week’s curriculum, we want to spend a good chunk of time talking about a subject that is super relevant to our students, friends. Our world has a very interesting and specific kind of friendship that it glorifies, meanwhile, people are reporting feeling lonelier than ever. We want to talk about why. And then we want to look at an alternative social relationship, a community. More specifically, a Christian community.*

Introducing the Topic

*As we begin talking about friendships and community, we have to remember that for many of our students, this is a deeply painful area of their lives. So as we begin asking these questions, we need to be gentle.*

* Do you think our culture has an “ideal” kind of friendship it promotes? How would you describe that kind of friendship?
* How many friends do you think you are “supposed” to have?
* Do you think our culture (American culture) has a healthy view of friendships, why or why not?
* What has been your experience of friendships? Are they easy? Hard? Why?
* Do you think “Christian” friendships are any better? How come?
* Do you think having friends is enough to avoid being lonely? Why or why not?
* What is the difference in a friendship or friend group and a community?
* Do you think humans need both or is one enough?

Scripture Study

*As you transition to the Scripture Study portion of this session, remind students that Scripture is where we turn for truth. We want to continually reiterate that we study Scripture not just for the “Christian take” on a matter, but God’s revealed word, given to us out of love for our good.*

* FIRST, we are going to look at what the Bible has to say about friendships. Proverbs is a book of wisdom literature, and has a lot to say about friendships.
  + Read Proverbs 16:28, Proverbs 17:9, Proverbs 17:17, and Proverbs 18:24, Proverbs 27:9 and Proverbs 27:17 together.
  + Divide a piece of paper into two columns, title one “Warning about Friends” and the other “Encouragements about Friends”, as you read through those verses together, write down all the kinds of friends we are warned about, then write down all the things we are encouraged to look for in friendships.
  + What is true of good friendships according to proverbs? What is true of bad friendships? What makes a friendship good or bad?
* Now lets look at something different than friendship, let’s look at the idea of community. Specifically, Christian community.
  + What is the difference between friendships and community?
  + What makes a community “Christian”?
* Read Romans 12:3-21 together.
  + How does this passage describe us as Christians?
  + How does it tell us to treat other believers?
  + Does it mention friendship in here?

Practical Application

*We live in a world that is increasingly lonely and isolated. That is not how humans were meant to live. We are communal creatures created by a communal God. We were designed for both friendships, and for community. We can’t have either or, we need both. God gives us wisdom that we are to apply to choosing our friends. But through Jesus, we as Christians have been brought into a family of faith that spans generations and cultures and friend groups. When we think of our social circle, we need to be wise and faithful in both our friendships and in the way we participate in our Christian community, the church.*

* What are some ways our culture has friendship wrong?
* What are wise things to look for in friends?
* Sometimes we put too much expectation on friendships to do the job of a whole community, what are some ways we do that in our own lives?
* Do you view your Christian community as “there for you”?
* What are ways we, as a class, can be a good community for each other?