

# Iron - January 12th - Around - Troy Knight

## TALK IT OVER

### Key Scriptures from the Message:

Proverbs 27:17  
Acts 19:8-12  
Acts 19:18-20  
Acts 20:16-21  
Acts 20:28  
Acts 20:35-38  
Luke 16:31

### Start **reading**.

#### Acts 19:18-20

Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices. A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value of the books was several million dollars. So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect.

#### Acts 20:35-38

And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"When he had finished speaking, he knelt and prayed with them. They all cried as they embraced and kissed him good-bye. They were sad most of all because he had said that they would never see him again. Then they escorted him down to the ship.

#### Ephesians 2:19-22 NIV

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

#### Hebrews 10:24-25 NLT

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

### Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Do you prefer to spend time with people or time by yourself? Which do you find most energizing?
- With what group of people do you feel most "at home" and connected?

### Start **thinking**. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read Acts 19:18-20. In what ways did Paul's sharpening skills affect those who he had connected with in this passage?
- Has a connection with another person ever changed your life? In what ways has this connection sharpened you?
- Read Acts 20:35-38. Paul and the Ephesians had only known each other for a short time, yet Paul's departure brought tears of sadness. What caused them to have such a strong connection?
- In what ways can you be like Paul and pour into the lives of others?

### Start **sharing**. Choose a question to create openness.

- Read Ephesians 2:19-22. What does it say about God that He desires to give us a place to belong?
- What does the phrase "Circles are better than rows" mean? Read Hebrews 10: 24-25. How does this scripture tie into this statement?
- One of Troy's points in the message was "Sometimes you need the group and sometimes the group needs you". What does this mean? Discuss the responsibilities involved in both scenarios.

### Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Honestly evaluate the friendships in your life. Do you feel like you are always pouring out and not getting poured back into? Or do you feel like you are holding people at arms length? Step in where God is showing that you are needed.
- Listen to those who are pouring into your life. Identify any change God prompts you to make based on their input and make it.

### Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- Father, thank You for valuing connection. Thank You for reaching out to establish a relationship with us, and thank You for encouraging us in our relationships with others. Help us value these relationships like You do. In Jesus' name, amen.

### Start **digging**. For further study.

- Read the article on the back and discuss.

**Question: "What does it mean that iron sharpens iron?"**

**Answer:** The phrase "iron sharpens iron" is found in Proverbs 27:17: "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." There is mutual benefit in the rubbing of two iron blades together; the edges become sharper, making the knives more efficient in their task to cut and slice. Likewise, the Word of God is a "double-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12), and it is with this that we are to sharpen one another—in times of meeting, fellowship, or any other interaction.

The proverb also indicates the need for constant fellowship with one another. Man was not made to be alone, for did not the Lord God say this, even before the Fall (Genesis 2:18)? How much more, then, after the Fall of Man, do we need to come together with our brothers and sisters in Christ for seasons of fellowship and prayer? Clearly, this was recognized by the saints of the early church (Acts 2:42–47), who "devoted themselves" to teaching, fellowship, communion, and prayer, all corporate activities that provided opportunities for sharpening one another.

There are two points to make about the above proverb. First, the meeting of two together in the Lord's name will always guarantee blessing. It is a means of grace that the Lord Himself promised—where two or more are gathered in His name, there He is among them (Matthew 18:20). Also, we see a similar meaning in Malachi, for those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard (Malachi 3:16). When we sharpen one another in real Christian fellowship, the Lord bends an ear from heaven and is pleased. Not one word about Him which brings Him glory escapes His notice.

The fragrances of divine unity are best sensed in the relationship of David and Jonathan, son of Saul. When David was being hotly pursued by Saul, Jonathan sought David out "to help him find strength in God" (1 Samuel 23:16), which leads us onto our second point. Iron sharpening iron is an opportunity to fulfill the Law of Christ. The apostle Paul says that we are to carry and share the issues and burdens that we face daily, to lament over personal sin, advise on how best to repent of it, and rejoice over the conquest of it. This is the same "royal law" mentioned in James 2:8, where we are exhorted to love one another.

Returning to the analogy, if a knife is blunt, it still continues to be a knife, although it is less effective, less useful in service. Let us therefore be encouraged to spend more time together, exhorting, encouraging, praying, admonishing, sharing God's Word, praying over God's Word and the needs of our local church, that we become sharper, more cutting in the ministry that the Lord has assigned to each of us. Too often what passes as fellowship in the modern church is centered on food and fun, not on sharpening one another with the Word of God. In far too many instances, the only knives being sharpened are the ones used at potlucks.

Finally, a knife that has been sharpened will also shine more because all the dullness has been rubbed off its surface. Likewise, we will shine better for our Lord if we do the things mentioned above consistently, all of which will unite us in harmony. "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity" (Psalm 133:1). Therefore, as the author to the Hebrews says, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24–25).