

Don't Let the Lie Make You Build Alone

Sermon • October 7, 2026

Scriptures: Proverbs 27:17; Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

There is a very simple truth in Scripture that we somehow make incredibly complicated: Two are better than one. We know it. We quote it. We believe it. Until somebody hurts us. Until a partnership fails. Until somebody betrays our trust. Until we put our heart into something and it falls apart.

Then a different voice begins speaking: “You don’t need anybody.” “Do it yourself this time.” “Don’t trust anyone again.” “You tried working with people before. Look what happened.” And if we hear that voice long enough, we can begin calling fear “wisdom.” But Scripture says something completely different.

“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” Proverbs 27:17

Iron does not sharpen itself. And neither do we.

There is something interesting about iron sharpening iron. There has to be contact. There has to be pressure. There is friction. There may even be sparks. And yet after the process, both pieces of iron are better equipped for what they were created to do. That sounds a lot like relationships.

Sometimes the people God places in our lives will encourage us. Sometimes they will comfort us. But sometimes they will challenge us. Sometimes they will tell us that we are wrong. Sometimes they will see something in us that we cannot see ourselves. And sometimes they will make us uncomfortable because growth is not always comfortable.

Proverbs 27:17 says: “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” It does not say iron entertains iron. It does not say iron always agrees with iron. It says iron sharpens iron. That means some of the most valuable people God sends into your life may not be the people who tell you everything you want to hear. They may be the people who love you enough to tell you what you need to hear.

TWO REALLY ARE BETTER THAN ONE

Ecclesiastes says: “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion.” Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Look at how simple that is. Two people working together can accomplish more. When one becomes discouraged, the other can encourage them. When one becomes weak, the other can strengthen them. When one cannot see clearly, the other may see what they are missing. When one falls, the other helps them stand.

God never designed the Body of Christ around the idea that everybody should do everything alone. A body itself proves that. A hand cannot say, "I don't need the arm." An eye cannot say, "I don't need the ear." Every part has a purpose. And every part needs the others.

BUT THEN SOMEBODY HURTS US

This is where the message becomes personal. Maybe somebody betrayed you. Maybe somebody took advantage of your generosity. Maybe you went into business with someone and it ended terribly. Maybe you trusted a church leader and were disappointed. Maybe you opened your heart to somebody and they wounded you. And something inside you said: "Never again."

That reaction can feel like protection. But we have to be careful. There is a difference between boundaries and walls. Boundaries are built with wisdom. Walls are often built with fear. Boundaries say: "I learned something from what happened." Walls say: "Nobody will ever get close enough to hurt me again." And sometimes the enemy does not need to destroy the calling God placed inside you. He only needs to convince you to isolate yourself from the people who were supposed to help you fulfill it.

THE LIE SOUNDS REASONABLE

This is what makes deception dangerous. The lie often sounds reasonable. "You failed before." That may be true. But then comes the lie: "So you will fail again." Someone betrayed you. True. "So nobody can be trusted." Lie. A partnership fell apart. True. "You should never partner with anyone again." Lie. You made a bad decision. True. "You are incapable of making a good decision." Lie.

The enemy often takes something that happened and tries to turn it into an identity or a prophecy about your future. That is exactly why Paul writes: "We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5

Not every thought deserves your agreement. Some thoughts need to be arrested.

TAKE THE THOUGHT CAPTIVE

When the thought says: "You cannot trust again." Take it captive. When the thought says: "You already failed." Take it captive. When the thought says: "You have to do everything yourself." Take it captive. And then ask: Is this what Jesus says? Is this what Scripture says? Or is this fear interpreting my future through the pain of my past? That is a question every one of us should ask.

DISCERNMENT IS NOT ISOLATION

This does not mean trusting everyone. Scripture never teaches foolishness. Jesus Himself told His disciples to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. We need discernment. We need accountability. We need good agreements. We need healthy boundaries. We need to pay attention to character. But discernment and isolation are not the same thing.

You can learn from betrayal without becoming bitter. You can become wiser without becoming harder. You can establish boundaries without building a prison around yourself.

THIS MATTERS IN KINGDOM BUSINESS

I believe this principle is especially important for Christian business owners and ministry leaders. Sometimes we treat another person doing similar work as competition. But what if they were supposed to be collaboration? What if the electrician knows something the carpenter needs? What if one ministry has connections another ministry needs? What if one business has resources and another has experience? What if instead of asking, "How do I beat them?" Kingdom-minded people began asking: "How can we strengthen each other?"

Iron sharpens iron. Two are better than one. That does not eliminate business competition or wise boundaries. But it changes the heart behind how we operate. The Kingdom of God was never supposed to be built through jealousy and rivalry. We should be able to look at another believer succeeding and say: "If God is using you, I am going to celebrate it."

SOMETIMES THE PERSON WHO SHARPENS YOU CREATES SPARKS

Here is something else we need to understand. Sharpening creates friction. If somebody can never disagree with you, they probably cannot sharpen you very much. You need people who can say: "Have you prayed about that?" "Are you sure pride isn't influencing this?" "I think you're moving too quickly." "I think you're afraid." "I think God gave you more ability than you're using." "I think you need to try again."

Those conversations are not always comfortable. But comfortable people do not necessarily make strong people. Sometimes God sends someone into our life to challenge the very thing we have convinced ourselves is true.

THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER YOU WERE HURT

Some of us have spent years asking: "Why did that person hurt me?" Maybe today there is another question worth asking: "What did God teach me through it?" Because the experience that wounded you does not have to become the experience that defines you.

Maybe you learned discernment. Maybe you learned boundaries. Maybe you learned what character looks like. Maybe you discovered weaknesses in yourself that God needed to address. Maybe you became more compassionate toward people going through the same thing. Do not waste the lesson. But do not worship the wound either.

THE SIMPLE TRUTH

Here is the entire message in one sentence: Do not let one wrong person convince you that you no longer need the right people. That is worth remembering. One bad partnership does not mean partnership is bad. One betrayal does not mean trust is foolish. One failure does not mean the vision is dead. One disappointment does not mean God has stopped working.

Sometimes God closes one relationship because He is preparing another. Sometimes He removes one person because they were never meant to carry the next part of the assignment. And sometimes the very thing you have been praying for is going to arrive through another person.

THE CHALLENGE

So I want everyone listening to think about three things. What lie have I believed because of something that happened in my past? What wall have I built that I have been calling wisdom? And who has God placed around me that I may have overlooked? Because you may have been praying: "God, help me." And God may be saying: "I did. Look beside you."

CLOSING

Iron sharpens iron. Two are better than one. And every thought must be brought into obedience to Christ. So learn from the past. But do not live there. Use discernment. But do not live afraid. Set boundaries. But do not build walls so high that even the people God sends cannot reach you. And above everything else, remember this: You were never called to build the Kingdom by yourself. We are one Body. Many parts. Different gifts. Different assignments. But one Lord. One Christ. One Body. One mission.