Has a Friendship Gotten Out of Hand?

Arriving back to your apartment after a quick dinner, you notice a text from Tom, a freshman on campus whom you met at one of the early kickoffs for the Christian student organization that you belong to. Since that first meeting, your contact with Tom has been through attendance at the same campus church and a couple of attempts you have made to mentor him. The latter involved some Bible study but with a very narrow scope as you recognize that his Biblical understanding is limited at best.

In a text he just sent you, he says, “Andy, you know my buddies from my hometown? We’ve been friends forever, but I’m afraid things are getting out of hand. I’ve enjoyed the Bible studies we’ve done, could we meet soon to discuss scripture and this situation?”

You immediately text him back, “Sure, let’s get together Monday after class.”

Reflecting on his situation, you remember some of what Tom shared with you during your previous meetings. He and his friends, Nate and Mike, have been together since they were young kids. Their ties were strong, much more than normally seen these days among college students. First, they come from a small town where they went from their own bicycle gang as kids to playing flag football on weekends during their high school days. That small town atmosphere also carried over into their attending the same church. All three come from Christian homes and attended the one church in the town. In their high school days, this meant their ties included church activities such as youth group and playing on the church softball team. If asked, all three would have said they considered themselves believers. However, there was little training at the church or at home that focused on developing Biblical insight as to how to live out their lives as Christians.

During their senior year in high school, as all expected, they decided to attend Central University together. It seemed a natural thing to do from their strong ties but, at the same time, there was evidence that they were drifting apart. Tom continued to attend church throughout their senior year. He also was active in the church’s youth ministry. Nate and Mike only attended church occasionally during that same year.

Tom was optimistic the three of them would get back together as college freshmen. The chance of that became more remote as the fall semester wound down. Outside of school, Tom decided to attend different churches in search of the right one for him. He invited Nate and Mike but they repeatedly said no. Beyond this separation, Tom’s friends and even his roommate became more a part of the partying scene, getting more and more comfortable with both alcohol and marijuana. They went so far as to ask Tom if they could store their vodka in
his refrigerator. The breaking point for Tom came when Nate and Mike asked Tom to stall the RA from going into their room until they had hidden their empty beer cans. At this point, he knew he had to do something. The question was what. Was merely not drinking himself or using drugs enough of a witness to them?

You know that this situation is haunting Tom to the point it was affecting his course work. Interestingly, he has reached out to you to help him work through the Bible to come up with the right answers. Again, he is not well versed in the Bible. Therefore, as you consider what scripture would be appropriate to help in his interaction with his friends, you also recognize that what scriptures you select could have a powerful effect on his faith journey as well.

It is critical that your scriptural advice be well thought out. You will have only less than an hour between your classes to provide meaningful scripturally based advice for Tom. You know that he probably has had considerable advice from other freshman buddies on campus. However, you are also sure that the Bible had little to do with that advice. This is an unexpected opportunity for you to directly influence Tom but also perhaps through him to his friends.

**ASSIGNMENT**

Using the facts of this situation, examine what scripture might provide unique insight for Tom in this situation. Based on that Biblical insight, what would you recommend that Tom do?
My Scriptural Research:

Group Scriptural Research:

Decisions / Recommendations:

Primary Scriptural References: