

## Choose Good Friends

### Int.

1. Aim: To discuss the need for making good friends and how we do it.
2. Solomon addresses one of the most important choices a person can make, i.e., their choice of friends. - Prov. 1:8-19
  - a. A Christian should carefully consider who they have as close friends
  - b. Prov.12:26 NKJV "The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray."
3. Choosing the wrong sort of friends is worse than having no friends at all.
  - a. The principle that "evil companionships corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33 asv) is true because their ideas soon become ours.
  - b. Solomon expressed the same thought when he said, "He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed." - Prov. 13:20 - NKJV
4. This lesson will consider a number of Biblical principles that will allow us to choose our friends wisely and to help us make wise decisions about who our friends will be.

### Discussion

#### I. THE NEED FOR CLOSE FRIENDS

- A. We need the close association of others.
  1. We cannot happily or meaningfully live our lives to ourselves,
    - a. We need to be with other people,
    - b. Man was created a social being - Gen. 2:18 "It is not good that man should be alone;"
  2. No one lives to himself. (Rom. 14:7) "For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself."

3. Eccl. 4:9 NKJV "Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor."

B. We need the love our friends have for us.

1. Life is much more pleasant when we have those who care for us and our welfare

2. We need to know someone loves us no matter what may come our way or theirs

Prov. 17:17 - NKJV "A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity."

3. A friend will hang in there with you when the going gets tough.

4. Fair weather friends are not worthy of the name and certainly are not deserving of our confidence.

C. We need someone to share our joy and happiness. - Rom. 12:15 NKJV "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."

D. We need someone to help us when we need cheering.

1. Prov. 27:9 "Ointment and perfume delight the heart, And the sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel."

2. A true friend will give you good advice.

E. We need relaxation and recreation from the routine and pressures of life so we enjoy visiting with friends. We all need a friend and we need to be one.

- F. Illustration: A young man was away from home and he sent a letter to his father saying: "I am in the big city without money or friends. What shall I do?" His father wrote back: "Make some friends at once."

## **II. What Is a Friend?**

### A. Definitions.

1. Simply, a friend is one with whom you associate.
2. Webster's Dictionary defines friend as "a person who has a real liking for and confidence in another person."
3. W.E. Vine says it is one who is "loved, dear." (Expository Diet, of NT Words)
4. The term itself suggests a companion.

### B. The word "friendship" occurs only once in the New Testament in James 4:4.

1. It comes from philia which is akin to philos which is translated "love."
2. Vine says it suggests "loving as well as being loved."
3. Biblical examples of friendship illustrate the idea of loving and being loved,
  - a. David and Jonathan. - 1 Sam. 18:1-2
    - (1) Theirs is a classic example of friendship.
    - (2) Their love for and confidence in one another is a lesson for any who would have friends.
  - b. Paul and Timothy developed a liking for and a confidence in one another.
 

2 Tim. 1:3-5

4. The term means the same today—our close friends are those whom we love and are dear to us.
    - a. Not only do we love them but if they are friends then they hold us dear and love us.
    - b. We should be grateful often for those who consider us their friends.
- C. Friends fall into two categories: good and bad.
1. Good friends are those who are not just good to us but good for us.
    - a. A true friend will tell us when we are wrong
    - b. Prov. 27:6 "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."
    - c. Genuine friends should be cherished and not forsaken.
  2. Prov. 22:24 NKJV - tells us not to be friends with certain kinds of people:  
"Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go,"
    - a. Friendship = to associate with, companion, keep company with -
    - b. This word is from the word talking about tending a flock, to pasture it.
  3. We need to be careful not to choose friends who will lead us astray.

### **III. Peer Pressure**

- A. Everyone wants to be approved by their peers but the young seem particularly concerned with the need for approval from their peers.
  
- B. Why peers can pressure us.
  - 1. God made man a social creature, not a loner. - Gen. 2:18
    - a. He needs another to fully complete himself—he needed a peer to fulfill his social needs,
    - b. A “peer” is one regarded as having equal standing.
  - 2. It is natural for man to love his own flesh (Eph. 5:28-29) and to love a consenting opinion from those of like flesh.
  
- C. Since God made man with a desire for social approval, He also gave Him a standard upon which to give and receive that approval.
  - 1. As long as approval is given and withheld based upon God's approval, the innate societal needs of man serve him well.
  - 2. But as with all other God-given human desires, man can choose to fulfill that desire to his harm.
    - a. By refusing to fully accept God's standard of “good”:
      - (1) Eve sinned then exerted pressure, as a peer, and invited Adam to become like her.
      - (2) Adam chose her approval rather than God's.
    - b. Eve and Adam began a societal pressure which works contrary to the good of man.

- D. How to deal with a nature that yearns for approval in a society which would destroy you.
1. You must realize that as long as you live in the world its pressures will be upon you. - Rom. 12:1-2
  2. You must recognize and accept our innate need for approval and begin to look for sanctified ways to receive it.
    - a. Your approval from others should be sought from those who first seek God's approval,
    - b. Even in matters of indifference or opinion, caution must be exercised.
      - (1) Some things, though not wrong in and of themselves, can lead to things that are wrong or can cause others to stumble.
      - (2) On the other hand, there is no merit in being different just for the sake of it.
  3. Though the world exerts a great deal of pressure on you, as a Christian you have a greater pressure at your disposal—Jesus Christ. (1 John 4:4)

#### **IV. Some Guidelines in Choosing Friends**

- A. Apply the principle of 1 Corinthians 15:33 asv "Be not deceived: Evil companions corrupt good morals." "Bad company ruins good morals" esv
1. A Christian should very carefully consider who they have as close friends.
  2. Realize it is better to have a few friends, even just one, who will be the right kind than to have a multitude of the kind who would cause you to lose your soul.
- Matt. 16:26

- B. Choose friends who will be good examples to you and others (It is best to have Christians as your friends.). Choose those who:
1. Have good morals [1 Cor. 15:33] and whose standard of morality is the word of God.
  2. Are modest. - 1 Tim. 2:9
  3. Abstain from alcohol and strong drink. - 1 Cor. 6:10
  4. Can bridle the tongue. - Jas. 1:26
  5. Are honest. - Luke 8:15
  6. Are law-abiding. - Rom. 13:1-7
- C. Select friends who respect God and things spiritual, who regard spiritual things as more important than material things.
1. A true friend is one who will strengthen you spiritually and draw you closer to God. - Prov. 27:17
  2. When a godly friend sees error in your life, he will not hesitate to admonish you.
    - a. Some people get upset when confronted with the truth but those who desire to live for the Lord will rejoice in the fact that another cares for their soul,
    - b. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." Prov. 27:6
    - c. I would rather be criticized constructively by a friend than be praised by a foe - who, as the hypocrite, will not speak his true feelings except behind your back.
    - d. "Ointment and perfume delight the heart, and the sweetness of a man's friend does so by hearty counsel." Prov. 27:9
  3. Never be deceived into thinking you can choose otherwise and not be affected.

## CONCLUSION

1. Friends are priceless.
  - a. Prov. 18:24 NKJV "A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."
  - b. A friend is loyal
  - c. Friendship is a two-way street.
  - d. Poem - The gift of Friendship
  - e. We should thank God daily for the friends we have.
  - f. No amount of money could be enough to replace true friends, especially Christians.
  - g. We can rejoice in their faithfulness and delight in being around them.
2. Friends are surely among our most valued possessions.
3. Would you want yourself as a friend.
4. May the day never come when we do not have friends.
5. Let us all be friends of Jesus.
  - a. We must meet the standard of friendship He has set down. - John 15:14 "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."
  - b. As our friend, He will never forsake us or let us down in any way.