

Choosing Your Friends

In His Word, God has provided the wisdom necessary for us to develop good relations with those around us, and avoid the pitfalls that too often destroy good friendships.

THE VALUE OF A FRIEND:

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

ADVICE ON THE SELECTION OF FRIENDS:

1. BE CAUTIOUS IN SELECTING FRIENDS:

Proverbs 12:26 A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

2. PEOPLE YOU DO NOT WANT AS FRIENDS...

- Gossips ? *Proverbs 20:19 A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much.*
- Short-tempered ? *Proverbs 22:24-25 Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.*
- Those given to drinking and gluttony ? *Proverbs 23:20-21 Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.*
- The rebellious ? *Proverbs 24:21-22 Fear the LORD and the king, my son, and do not join with the rebellious, for those two will send sudden destruction upon them, and who knows what calamities they can bring?*
- Liars, those untrustworthy, and those inconsiderate ? *Proverbs*

25:18-20 *Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is the man who gives false testimony against his neighbor. Like a bad tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in times of trouble. Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on soda, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.*

- The violent ? Proverbs 1:10-19.

As Paul said, the wrong kind of friends can be a corrupting influence (1 Corinthians 15:33).

• THE SORT OF FRIENDS YOU WANT...

- Those who display wisdom ? Proverbs 13:20 *He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.* For their teaching (counsel) will help lead you in the right way ? cf. Proverbs 13:14.
- Those whose love is constant ? Proverbs 17:17 *A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*
- Those who are loyal ? Proverbs 18:24 *A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*
- Those who give counsel ? Proverbs 27:9 *Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of ones friend springs from his earnest counsel.*
- Those who are not afraid to wound you ? Proverbs 27:6 *Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.*

THINGS TO AVOID, WHICH CAN DISRUPT A GOOD FRIENDSHIP...

1. Dont repeat everything you hear ? Proverbs 17:9
2. Avoid senseless arguments ? Proverbs 17:14
3. Dont overstay your welcome ? Proverbs 25:17
4. Dont meddle in affairs not your own ? Proverbs 26:17
5. Dont play bad jokes ? Proverbs 26:18-19
6. Dont be contentious ? Proverbs 26:21

By avoiding these things, one is less likely to offend his or her friends. But sometimes friends are offended, and re-gaining their confidence is not easy. Proverbs 18:19 *An offended brother is more unyielding than a fortified city, and disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel.* What can be done when problems arise?

SOLVING PROBLEMS WITH OUR FRIENDS...

1. Make sure that you are at peace with the Lord ? Proverbs 16:7 *When a mans ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.*
2. Be slow to anger ? Proverbs 15:18 *A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.* Cf. Ja 1:19-20
3. Be slow to respond ? Proverbs 18:13 *He who answers before listening that is his folly and his shame.*
4. Avoid quarreling ? Proverbs 20:3 *It is to a mans honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.*
5. Speak gently ? Proverbs 15:1 *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up more anger.*
6. Speak briefly ? Proverbs 10:19 *When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.*
7. Be quick to show love ? Proverbs 10:12 *Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs.*
8. But if necessary, rebuke rather than flatter ? Proverbs 28:23 *He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favor than he who has a flattering tongue.*

CONCLUSION

If we apply the wisdom of God found in the book of Proverbs we enjoy the blessings of good friends in this life, and can look forward to enjoying these dear friends in eternal life! Rather than depend upon trial and error to learn how to win friends and influence people, let Gods Word be your guide!

But of all the friendships we could possible develop, none can excel the one we can

have with HIM who truly sticks closer than a brother ? our Lord Jesus Christ! Have you become His friend? Consider what He has done for you... *Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down ones life for his friends.* (John 15:13). Consider what He asks of you... *You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.* (John 15:14).