

# **Friends:**

## **They will make or break you and your children.**

### **Why the Concern?**

- A. We want to climb the spiritual ladder of spiritual success as a Christian, just as others spend many hours planning and working to climb the carnal ladder of professional success.
- B. Christian excellence is our goal, not mediocrity, but average Christian friends will ruin you.
- C. Recent events have caused us to consider child training and walking with God in the Spirit.
- D. We cannot accomplish any or all of these objectives without wisely managing our friends.
- E. God made it easy for Israel by ordering the annihilation of all worldlings (Ex 23:31-33; etc.).
- F. America has proverbs ... *you are the company you keep ... birds of a feather flock together.*
- G. You will never rise above your friends, without a miracle, for which we can never presume.
- H. A Christian closely associating with carnal Christians will be a carnal Christian, guaranteed!
- I. A Christian closely associating with contemporary Christians will lose convictions for truth.
- J. You cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit choosing Spirit-less friends (I Cor 6:20; II Cor 7:1).
- K. The Holy Spirit will be grieved and quenched by your choice to be around carnal worldlings.

### **Friends Can Be a Good Thing**

- A. If wise men are your friends, they will pull you up by their wise words and lives (Pr 13:20).
- B. Paul exhorted the Philippians to observe and choose those saints most like him (Phil 3:17).
- C. A great friend by the Bible's definition, even of your father, is worth protecting (Prov 27:10).
- D. Real friends are there for you when the going gets tough, not just in good times (Prov 17:17).
- E. Real friends can make your life better and more productive than being alone (Eccl 4:9-12).
- F. It is for these reasons that parents ought to direct a child toward friends that are spiritual and noble and direct them away from friends that will bring temptations to compromise manners.

### **Friends Can Be a Bad Thing**

- A. Evil communications corrupted Corinth away from basic apostolic doctrine (I Cor 15:33).
- B. Blessings come on those who choose their friends carefully, rejecting worldlings (Ps 1:1-3).
- C. Solomon warned his son against the enticements of sinful friends (Proverbs 1:10; 4:14-17).
- D. Moses commanded to kill best friends, if they tried to seduce (Ex 32:25-29; Deut 13:6-10).
- E. The devil used Mrs. Job and Michal to destroy their husbands (Job 2:9-10; II Sam 6:20-23).
- F. Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom; the friends there corrupted his entire family (Gen 13:12).
- G. Dinah went to the mall to see the world's girls, and Shechem seduced her (Genesis 34:1-2).
- H. It is for this reason that parents ought to direct a child away from friends that would be bad and direct them toward those friends that would lift them up and help perfect them in Christ.
- I. Parents should not allow or encourage weak children to befriend weak children, for it is the strong and the spiritual who must help and support the weak (Rom 15:1-2; Gal 6:1-2).

### **What Is Real Friendship?**

- A. Why the question? Because the world has corrupted and diluted the definition of real friends.
- B. This question can be answered by another question and its answer, What is real love?
- C. Why the question? Because the world has confused the definition of love with that of lust.
- D. Real love and real friendship aim for perfection as measured by God's standards for another.

- E. Real friendship involves rebukes and wounds as opposed to flattering fun (Proverbs 27:5-6).
- F. Real friendship has a common bond and purpose – fear, love, and faith in God (I Sam 23:16).
- G. Jehu and Jehonadab were great friends in ending Baal worship in Israel (II Kings 10:15-16).
- H. Friends have a purpose (Ec 4:9-12), and it may not include fun, listening, or understanding.
- I. Real friendship is constantly sharpening one another like iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17).
- J. Real friendship has a goal to win souls of those in error (Jas 5:19-20; Gal 6:1-2; I Thes 5:14).
- K. Real friendship is summed up this way: “Blood is thicker than blood,” meaning that a relationship based on Jesus Christ is superior to any relationship of human blood or family.
- L. Real friendship is being your brother’s keeper, in the sense of Gal 6:1-2 and James 5:19-20.

### **What Is a Real Friend?**

- A. David chose his friends from those that feared God and kept His commandments (Ps 119:63).
- B. A real friend will stop you when you do something wrong in order to perfect you (Ps 141:5).
- C. How many of these friends are there? Very, very few. Jesus told us the same (Matt 7:12-14).
- D. A good man is the goal of real friendship. Loving good men shows great character (Tit 1:8).
- E. David rejected any that did not fear and obey God (Psalm 101:3-8; 24:1-5; 139:21-22).
- F. A real friend loves at all times, for he is born for adversity and trouble (Prov 17:17), which is why we ridicule fair weather friends, for they will leave when adversity or trouble arrives.
- G. A real friend is more than a person to have fun with, that listens, that “understands me,” or that “accepts me.” These are merely the sound bites of daydreaming, pubescent girls.
- H. Paul said the ones in a church we ought to follow and watch are like him (Phil 3:17-19).
- I. Should we look for perfect friends? Why not? David directed us to do so (Psalm 37:37).
- J. Do you mean I can only have godly, spiritual, and wise friends that will help me be a better Bible Christian? Duh. You are getting the message!
- K. Should you also ask, Do I have to wait until marriage for sex? Do I have to obey my parents?
- L. Friends agree on important issues, for two cannot walk together, if they disagree (Am 3:3).

### **How Do I Get More Friends?**

- A. You must first have the character traits described here of real friends for others to want you.
- B. Then you must be gracious, which is the most winning character trait (Prov 11:16; 22:11).
- C. Then you must show yourself friendly, for you may be doing unfriendly things (Prov 18:24).
- D. But remember ... you do not need many friends or even one friend ... for you have the Lord!

### **How Should I Be Concerned?**

- A. Parents are obligated by God to train children, including picking and rejecting their friends.
- B. Children are too foolish, immature, and inexperienced to be able to pick their own friends.
- C. Wise husbands will monitor their wives’ friends, in order to nourish and perfect them wisely.
  1. A wife’s friends will either improve her as a Christian wife, or divert her drive to virtue.
  2. A man carefully chose his wife’s friends, so another man decided to marry on his criteria.
- D. Friends are one of the five great inputs ... Bible reading, prayer, *friends*, movies, and music.
- E. Do not be so gullible and lax that you assume conservative organizations afford great friends.
  1. Because you send your children to a Christian school does not mean all students qualify!
  2. Because you send your children to a homeschool association does not mean they qualify!
  3. Because you go to a conservative church does not mean all attendees or members qualify!
  4. This author met one of the most destructive “friends” at a retreat for Baptist pastors!

5. Even in a peaceful and unified church, parents should wisely select children's friends, with the same discrimination they qualify church members for marriage, wills, etc.
  6. Like marriage, you want to aim as high as you can spiritually in selecting a friend.
  7. Like marriage, children and youth are not wise enough to pick the best friends.
  8. Weak children need strong friends (Romans 15:1-2), faulty children spiritual (Gal 6:1-2).
- F. Schooling is one of the biggest parental decisions, for it creates a pool of friends for children.
1. Most fuss occurs for kindergarten and first grade, but 6-year-olds are not corrupted much.
  2. Accelerating a child to a technical college exchanges high school peer pressure for adults.
  3. Classes at night in a technical school have very different students than during the day.
  4. Peer pressure exists between the ages of 12-20, where the greatest efforts must be made.
- G. Evangelism is an entirely different thing – Jesus sat with sinners? Repentant, and listening!
- H. Friendships depend on verbal exchanges! whether by words, phones, texts, emails, notes, etc., so parents must be vigilant and diligent to monitor all such forms of communication.
- I. Carefully consider the ages of children and their vulnerability to friends and peer pressure.
1. A 6-year-old can easily be corrected from bad friends or peer pressure in hours or days.
  2. But a 16-year-old is a very different story, for the forces at work are much stronger.
  3. The 16-year-old craves friends, will sneak for friends, and often worships peer approval.
  4. Parents spend much to protect their 6-year-olds with the best schools they can find, but they often relax their standards for friends and peer pressure by the age of 16! Why? No!

**For Further Study:**

1. The sermon, "Protecting Daughters," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/protecting-our-daughters.pdf>.
2. The sermon, "Blood Is Thicker," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/blood-is-thicker-than-blood.pdf>.
3. The sermon, "A Brother's Keeper," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/am-i-my-brothers-keeper.pdf>.
4. The Proverb commentary, "Proverbs 13:20," ... [http://www.letgodbetruer.com/proverbs/13\\_20.htm](http://www.letgodbetruer.com/proverbs/13_20.htm).