

# Friends Are Important, But Choose Them Wisely

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## ➤ Intro:

- **friends were important to Jesus**
  - **illus.:** Jesus called Lazarus His friend ( Jn. 11:11), and wept after he died, before raising him from the dead
- **friends are important to all of us, especially when we're young**
  - they help us through hard times
  - they celebrate life's victories with us
  - they weep and mourn with us
  - they can push us to be more than we ever imagined
- **friends can be very helpful, or very destructive**
  - they make life worth living, when the world is against us
  - or they can make life miserable
  - than can turn a bad day into a good day, or a good day to a bad day
- **lesson:** friends are important, but choose them wisely
  - **review a few truths regarding friends**
    - **Old Testament:** have a goal of 1 OT sermon per month, of which most of this will come from
  - **young people particularly in mind with this lesson**

## ➤ Jesus is our best friend

- **Jn. 15:13** Jesus is our friend because He died for us
  - **story:** Jesus' birth, life, preaching, death, resurrection, ascension, work in heaven as Mediator and Advocate
- **If someone asked, "Who is your best friend?" would you say Jesus?**
  - why?
  - why not?
- **Do you view Jesus as our best friend, and put him first, before all others?**
  - if so, you'll serve Him faithfully

➤ **Christians are our best friends on earth**

- our best earthly friends are people helping us get to heaven
  - **Pr. 12:26** the righteous is a guide to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray
  - **Pr. 27:17** “As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” (NKJV)
  - the best friend we can be to people is help them get to heaven, share gospel, encourage brethren

➤ - so Christians are our best friends on earth

- **3 Jn. 1:15** Christians are called “friends”
- **Rom. 12:10** we are devoted to one another in brotherly love

➤ - we can't be friends with unbelievers the same as Christians

- **2 Cor. 6:14** not bound together with unbelievers
  - can't have as close of relationship with unbeliever as believer
- **1 Cor. 15:33** bad company corrupts good morals

- choose friends carefully: a friend encouraging you to sin is not a friend

- marriage: if you want your spouse to be your best friend, make sure you marry a Christian, then him/her faithfully serve God

➤ **We'll only have few true friends in life, relative to the way the world thinks about it**

- **Pr. 18:24** having too many friends is a bad thing, but having the best friend of all is necessary (Christ)

- **Matt. 7:13-14** most people take the broad (easy) way that leads to eternal death

- the world has many people to be friends with
- but we have only a few (relatively speaking)

- **Ja. 4:4** “whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God”

- don't expect to have a lot of friends, as the world counts friends, expect to have a few who are true and faithful to God

- illu.: young folks often count their worth by the number of “friends” they have

- e.g., FaceBook
- Christians shouldn't have this attitude

➤ **Some people want to be our friends just to use us**

- **Pr. 19:4, 6** some people want to be friends just for what they can get – money, prestige through association

- **wealth attracts** worldly friends, **poverty shuns** worldly friends

- **true friends don't care who you are or what you have, they just care about you**

- **illus.: Potiphar's wife wanted to be friends with Joseph to take advantage of him**, when Joseph refused she lied about him and he was thrown in prison (**Gen. 39**)

- **illus.: Pharaoh's chief cupbearer wanted to be Joseph's friend to have his dream interpreted**, but then didn't keep his promise but forgot about Joseph, until 2 years later when it was to his advantage to tell Pharaoh about Joseph (**Gen. 40**)

- **illus.: Delilah wanted to be friends with Samson to get information from him** about his strength, and then sold it to the Philistines for **1,100 pieces of silver** (**Judg. 16**)

- **illus.: Judas was Jesus' friend, but stole** from the treasury He used during His earthly ministry, then Judas **betrayed Him for 30 pieces of silver**, resulting in His arrest and crucifixion (**Matt. 26**)

- **some people will want to be our friends just to use us, get something for us**

➤ **Evil friends get us in big trouble, just through association**

- **Pr. 13:20** if we have evil friends, we're going to get into trouble just by being around evil people – **suffer harm**

- **1 Cor.1 5:33** bad company corrupts good morals

➤ - **1 Ki. 16:8-13** Zimri killed Elah (king of Israel) and took the throne, then killed Elah's relatives and friends, according to God's word

- **Elah's friends got in big trouble (killed) just by being as evil man's friends**

- **if we have evil friends, we're going to get in big trouble, possibly even die by associating with evil**

- **illus.: kids, drunk on the weekend, go by a house and pick up a friend who hadn't been drinking**, get in a car wreck, all die – the one who hadn't been drinking was as dead as the others

➤ **Friends can give us bad advise, even if they mean well**

- **Es. 5:9-14** Haman's friends advised him to build a gallows to hang Mordecai
  - advise pleased Haman, built gallows, finally was hung on the gallows by order of the king because of the conspiracy his friends convinced him of

- sometimes friends give advise, thinking it's good, but it's bad

- **illus.:** Rehoboam's bad decision to follow advise of friends (young men) when he took the throne of Israel, after Solomon's death

- people petitioned Rehoboam to lessen their burden of work which Solomon had placed upon them
- young men advised Solomon to make life harder for the Israelites
- elders advised him to grant their petition and speak good words to them, and then would be his servants forever
- Rehoboam followed the advice of the young men (friends), and the kingdom split, most of Israel departed and followed Jeroboam as their king

- we have to be careful to get wise counsel, and not just follow the advise of friends

- particularly important for young folks, who tend to follow the advise of friends rather than adults (parents)

➤ **Worldly friends will often depart, when we choose God over Satan**

- **Jn. 15:18-19** world hates Jesus' disciples

- world will not want to be our friend if we choose God over Satan (**Ja. 4:4**)

➤ - **Lk. 21:16-17** even betrayed by relatives and friends, hated because of Jesus' name

- don't be surprised if worldly friends betray you

➤ - **1 Jn. 3:13** don't be surprised if the world hates you

- application to the very young:

- when you get to the point in life when people are deciding whether to obey God or sin, don't be surprised if a lot of your friends leave you when you choose God
- when childhood friends begin to make bad decisions, you'll grow apart

➤ **A true friend will lay down his life for you**

- **Jn. 15:13-14** Jesus laid His life down for you, and His friends lay down their lives for Him – obey Jesus

➤ - **1 Jn. 3:16-18** so we lay down our lives for our brethren

## Summary / Inv.

- review PP

- **inv.: Will you be a friend to Jesus?**

- He's already become your friend by dying for you on the cross

- will you become His friend by obeying Him

- # 121 I'll Be A Friend To Jesus