

**FRIENDSHIP**

PR 27:17

## INTRODUCTION

- A. Friendship can be among the most wonderful of relationships, but it can also be among the most ruinous.
- B. It is a critical time for knowing the significance of friendships.
  - 1. Picking friends in youth.
  - 2. Picking a marriage partner.
  - 3. Most people don't pick a friend; they just allow it to happen.
- C. Sometimes we chose a friend for no particular excellence in themselves, but merely from some circumstance.
- D. By the definition in our text, most people don't have friends. What we commonly call friendships are nothing but acquaintance and familiarities. We have people to suffer and rejoice with, but not who are integral to the development of our lives.
- E. Proverbs is universal in application. "Wisdom" is the keynote of the book. Cf. 1 KI 4:29-34. Different approaches are taken throughout the book to instruct those who are willing to receive God's counsels.
  - 1. The word "friend" – Hebrew "rea" is found 30 times in the book.
  - 2. Proverbs seeks to help us see the difference between a good friend and one who will lead us down a path of destruction.

## DISCUSSION

- I. THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE IN CHOOSING FRIENDS.
  - A. PR 12:26 – "neighbors" – NKJ = "friends". A person should choose his friends carefully, for a wrong choice can have far-reaching consequences for a person's life. Proverbs recognizes that we need godly counsel in choosing those who will be their closest companions.
  - B. Illustration of the effects of bad friends – PR 1:10-14.
    - 1. The one being propositioned is faced with numerous temptations.
    - 2. There is the hope of quick and easy money – a desire of many.
    - 3. There is the prospect of being one of the gang – yearning to be accepted.
    - 4. There is the prospect of excitement and adventure.
    - 5. It would be hard to say "no" to this invitation.
  - C. Wisdom urges the young man to look to the end of the path, not just its beginning. PR 1:16, 18.
    - 1. Wisdom argues that there is much more in this package than just money, club membership, or excitement.
    - 2. One who chooses such a path must be prepared for its ultimate destination.
    - 3. Now look at PR 1:17. When birds see the snare for what it is, they avoid being trapped in it. But if a bird is unaware that the food before it is bait, it becomes easy prey.
    - 4. What is Solomon saying? That awareness of the snares is made possible by God.
  - D. How do I get this wisdom?
    - 1. It is not an easy task; having someone else give direction for choosing friends requires humility.
    - 2. PR 1:7.
    - 3. It is a fool who refuses to accept guidance in the everyday situations of our lives.
    - 4. How much better to look to God for help with every choice we make, especially the choice of friends!

## II. THE KINDS OF FRIENDS TO AVOID.

- A. Proverbs is designed to open our eyes to the true nature of some people. Not all who say they are interested in our welfare really are. By heeding the warnings about various types of deceptive people, the person who receives God's instruction will avoid many hurtful relationships.
- B. PR 2:10-22. Two kinds of people are pictured in 2:11-12, 16 – those who speak rebellion and disdain all authority, and those who put the focus on physical pleasure.
  - 1. How am I expected to see through the false promises and devious language?
  - 2. God's wisdom is the best protection, and it draws vivid pictures of evil in its different forms.
- C. PR 6:12-14 – is another discussion of friends to avoid. To emphasize this warning look at 6:15. In case of the person has not yet been duly warned away from the practitioner of evil, the ultimate fate of the wicked it described. Far worse than lung cancer looming before those who smoke, sin leads to one being "broken without remedy."
- D. Some are often deluded into feeling sufficiently strong to step away from sin before it becomes a master. To counter this type of thinking, warnings are given – PR 4:14-16. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."
- E. If the prodigal of LK 15 had studied the Proverbs, he would have avoided the mistake of thinking he had friends. They were only out to get what they could!

## III. SKETCHES OF THOSE TO AVOID.

- A. Proverbs gives different faces of false friends.
- B. Sketches to avoid.
  - 1. PR 11:13 – "the latest gossip" – gossip will change when YOU are not present! YOU become the subject.
  - 2. PR 11:22 – physical beauty – look beyond the physical beauty – what do they really look like in the sight of God.
  - 3. PR 17:5 – those who are less fortunate – health or wealth. Shows no compassion for those who are in need is a symptomatic of even deeper problems.
  - 4. PR 12:10 – A warning of what might be in store for people.
  - 5. PR 22:24-25 – Chronic anger. Don't fear their fists, for that would last only for a while. Fear their example, for that can cause everlasting harm.
  - 6. Solomon states the conclusion one should reach after considering the offer God makes in PR 7:4-5.

## IV. THE VALUE OF GOOD FRIENDS.

- A. Is it worth the effort? Would it not be better to be a loner, trusting no one and looking only to one's own resources? Proverbs answers this question.
- B. Listen to the wise man Solomon.
  - 1. PR 17:17. A friend is someone who walks in when everyone else walks out. The trails of our lives reveal our deep need for friendship; we just cannot make it on our own.
  - 2. PR 27:5-6. Friends do not always speak pleasing things. One of the values of true friendship is honesty, sometimes even to the point of pain. It is a devastating experience to learn that a supposed friend has not been honest. We should appreciate those who have the love and the courage to risk our friendship in order to set us straight.
  - 3. PR 27:17. "Countenance" normally refers to one's face, but in this passage it seems to point to a man's personality. Point: We are made better by being with

others who are of a like mind. Without such friends, we cannot achieve our full potential. True friends will help us grow.

4. PR 27:9. Repeats the value of good friendship.
5. PR 18:24. Sometimes there is a friend that is nothing akin to us, the bonds of whose esteem and love prove stronger than those of nature. Christ is a friend to all believers that sticks closer than a brother.
6. Friends are to be carefully nurtured and highly esteemed. PR 27:10.

#### CONCLUSION

- A. Summary: PR 13:20. The destruction will not usually come quickly; rather, it is a gradual erosion of morals and values. The gradual nature of the destruction is why so many turn to bad friendships rather than heed the counsel of God. Those who are wise will allow God to guide them in this important matter of close companions.
- B. Solomon's example – 1 KI 11:4-6 – though he was endowed by God with incredible amounts of wisdom, he made foolish choices that were the undoing of himself and eventually of his nation. How far had Solomon fell! Listen to 1 KI 3:7, 9. God heard this prayer – 3:10. God gave Solomon the wisdom that made him a legend in his own time – 1 KI 4:34; 10:1-9. But wisdom must be exercised if it is to be effective, and Solomon seems to have turned away from his wisdom in his later years.
- C. The attainment of wisdom is not a quick and easy task. It requires humility, patience, and a willingness to be reproved. It requires that we acknowledge God as the Teacher and the King.
- D. JN 15:13-15.