

Subj: Friendship
Text: 1 Cor. 15:33-34
Meth: Textual

Titl: Friend or Foe?

G.Pp: Exhortation and instruction.

S.Pp: Exhort to steadfastness and faithfulness by carefully evaluating and choosing friendships.

Thesis Sentence: Friendships may be one of life's richest blessings, or one of life's greatest snares for the soul.

Introduction:

- A. Human beings are social beings
- B. Seen in both secular and religious worlds
- C. Friendships are an important part of our social lives
- D. Can either help us and others get to Heaven, or lead us to destruction in Hell

I. The power of the social principle

- A. Social instinct is shown from man down to insects
 1. Where human friends are denied, animals often take their place
 2. Social principle also found in Godhead - God neither dwells nor works alone (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)
- B. When men first discovered Christ they began bringing friends and relatives to him
 1. Jn. 1:40-41 - Andrew found and brought his brother Simon
 2. Jn. 1:43-45 - Philip found and brought Nathaniel
 3. Acts 10:24 - Cornelius had called together all his kinsmen and near friends
 4. Thus, throughout the ages the social element has been important as we worship God
- C. Social principle is chief channel through which good and evil are worked out in the lives of men

II. Deadly influence of wrong friendships:

- A. Story of Amnon shows the influence wrong kind of friendship can have (2 Sam. 13, esp. v. 3 - But Amnon had a friend...)
 1. Jonadab's friendship with Amnon was "affirming"
 2. Resulted in Tamar's humiliation, Amnon's death and Absalom's alienation from David
- B. Like the greatest and best of God's blessings, friendship can be perverted and abused
- C. How people are wrecked through friendships:
 1. Hastily formed and ill-chosen (Prov. 25:19)
 2. We will account to God for the character we bring to him (2 Cor. 5:10)
 3. Subject is more important when we realize few things contribute more to character building than the influence of our friendships!
- D. In human relationships people of equal character are seldom thrown together
 1. One is usually stronger or better than the other
 2. It seems more often than not that the less good person has the stronger will and exerts the greater influence
 3. It is exceedingly difficult for a good person to associate closely with wicked people without being influenced for the worse (Read Rev. 2:18-26 and Rom. 12:21)

III. Safeguards for good friendships

- A. All Christians should try, test and evaluate friendships
 1. If found lacking fundamental virtue and basic principles of righteousness, should not give one's self over (2 Tim. 2:22-23)
 2. When forming friendships of lasting value, do not overlook Christian standard, if we would have no regrets (Prov. 18:24) (Cf. David and Jonathan)
- B. Some thoughts that may help:

1. Remain firmly fixed upon Biblical principles: i.e.. Moses of Heb. 11:24-27, and Joseph of Gen. 39-50 (How he was influenced by his relationship w/God; was faithful in his work, even as a slave; resisted/ran from temptation; took the pressure and persecution for doing what was right; was honored by men, because he never moved from honoring God!)
2. People of no direction and determination are easily influenced, but those who know what they want and where they want to go are not!
3. Right kind of person can usually find right kind of friends, with effort, but if not, has courage to solitude and right rather than companionship with those who would cause compromise
4. Any one who endeavors to cause one to forsake Christ and His way cannot possibly be a desirable friend - look for friends who will build you up, not tear you down (i.e.. sowing seeds of doubt, urging compromise, tolerance, etc.)

Conclusion:

- A. Social instincts are a part of our makeup -- social principle is chief channel through which good and evil are worked out in the lives of men
- B. Wrong, ill-advised friendships, such as Jonadab's with Amnon can be destructive and deadly
- C. Good friendships can be developed and guarded by:
 1. Trying, testing and evaluating
 2. Not overlooking Christian standards
 3. Insisting upon upholding the fixed principles of the Bible
 4. Having the courage to choose solitude over the wrong types of friends
 5. Seeking out friend who will build you up rather than tear you down

Randall F. Matheny
PO Box 911, Warren, PA 16365