

What a Friend – Proverbs 12:25-26

This morning, we are continuing our look into the “Book of Wisdom.” As you know, Proverbs contain advice covering a myriad of topics. Some of the best advice one can find on “friendships” can be found in this terrific book. I think we can all say that having a good friend is truly something special. Having a good friend who is loyal and can be trusted is a tremendous blessing. Since we live in a populated world, it is difficult to go through life without encountering people and then developing relationships with some of them. God – in His Word has given us pointers on how we can develop good relationships with those around us. He has provided us with instructions on how to choose our friends wisely. He has provided sound instruction on avoiding pitfalls that can destroy the friendships we have. Much of this advice can be discovered in Proverbs.

Let me draw your attention to **Proverbs 12:25-26**. When I consider these words, I understand the significance of having a friend or friends who can be trusted, who can provide comfort when needed, who provides good counsel when needed, and who will help you stay on the right path. Proverbs, in several places remind us of the values associated with such friends. **Proverbs 17:17** says, “*A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*” A trusted friend will be there... in the good times and the bad. The easy and the difficult. **Proverbs 18:24** says, “*A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*” Is it ok to have lots of friends? Sure, it is. But even then, it is a blessing to have one friend you know who will have your back. This is one who will comfort you when no one else can or will. This is the one who will go to war with you if necessary. And since we are constantly at battle with the enemy, we need these people in our life.

What about the friend who gives great advice, or as we see in Proverbs 11 and 27, the one who provides great counsel? **Read Proverbs 11:14 and then 27:9**. The world is filled with opinionated people who are more than willing to give you advice, but is it always great advice? When you can trust the counsel of a friend, King Solomon says it can “*make the heart glad.*” Remember the advice from earlier where we are encouraged to choose our friends wisely. Proverbs inform us about the friends we should choose and the ones we should avoid. Look at the ones we should avoid first.

1. Gossips - Proverbs 20:19
2. Short-tempered – Proverbs 22:24-25
3. Those given to drinking and gluttony - Proverbs 23:20-21
4. Those given to change - Proverbs 24:21-22
5. Liars, those untrustworthy, and those inconsiderate - Proverbs 25:18-20
6. Those given to violence - Proverbs 1:10-19

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:33, “Bad company ruins good morals.” The wrong kind of friend will be a bad influence.

Now consider the ones we should choose.

1. For their teaching (counsel) will help lead you in the right way - **Proverbs 13:14**
2. Those who display wisdom themselves - **Proverbs 13:20**
3. Someone who will hold you accountable – **Proverbs 27:17**
4. Those who build you up – **Proverbs 22:11**

Another crucial factor today is this... If you want good friends, start by being a good friend. Be the friend that possesses the attributes of the friend you are looking for. Also be the friend who is willing to work towards maintaining healthy relationships. Proverbs help us in this area of life as well.

You want to damage a good friendship, do these things.

1. Repeat everything you hear - Proverbs 17:9
2. Get into senseless arguments - Proverbs 17:14
3. Overstay your welcome - Proverbs 25:17
4. Meddle in affairs not your own - Proverbs 26:17
5. Play bad jokes - Proverbs 26:18-19
6. Be contentious - Proverbs 26:21
7. Engage in insincere flattery - Proverbs 27:14

What can you do if a friendship goes sideways? Yes, there’s advice in Proverbs for this too!

1. Make sure that you are at peace with the Lord - Proverbs 16:7
2. Be slow to anger - Proverbs 15:18
3. Be slow to respond - Proverbs 18:13
4. Avoid quarreling - Proverbs 20:3
5. Speak gently - Proverbs 15:1
6. Speak briefly - Proverbs 10:19
7. Be quick to show love - Proverbs 10:12
8. If necessary, rebuke rather than flatter - Proverbs 28:23

Properly applying the wisdom of God as found in His Word can assure that we enjoy the blessings of good friends in this life and can help us look forward to enjoying these dear friends in eternity. Rather than depending upon our ways; things like "trial and error" or learning "how to win friends and influence people", are you willing to let God's Word be your guide?

You know... of all the friendships we could develop, none is better than the one we can have with the One who truly "sticks closer than a brother" - our Lord Jesus Christ! We sing that old hymn, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*, but is HE that for you? Have you found the friend of all friends? Let me close by sharing with you one of my favorite recordings of Jesus as found in John 15. **Read John 15:12-17.** Will you consider today all that Jesus has done for you and will you then receive Him into your life, not just as a friend, but as your Savior? If today is your day, will you come forward during our time of invitation? Will you choose Him?