

Bible Friendship

“Thine own friend, and thy father’s friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother’s house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.”

Proverbs 27:10

Introduction:

1. A godly friend in the sense of this text is one of the greatest blessings God gives His children on earth.
2. We are saying farewell to a brother and sister (and three dear children), who have been great friends.
3. I call this congregation to duty before God not to forsake their dear friend and my friend in the future.

I. THE TEXT

- A. The text may simply be summarized by the last clause of another proverb – Prov 18:24.
 1. Family ties should be a close bond, but they often lose to selfishness and envy.
 2. Tried and true friends of character and principle (godliness) excel mere brothers, for the bond of blood is quite meaningless compared to the bond of godliness.
 3. Joseph found far greater kindness from foreign captors than his own brothers.
 4. David found far greater love and loyalty from Jonathan than his own brothers.
 5. David found far greater loyalty, affection, and service from vagabonds than he did from his own envious brothers (I Samuel 22:2; II Samuel 23:14-17).
 6. Jesus found far greater sympathy, esteem, and loyalty from His disciples than from His brothers (John 7:1-5; Luke 22:15). He knew His true friends – and family – were those who heard the word of God and kept it (Matthew 12:46-50).
 7. Such friends are more valuable than brothers, so we cultivate and preserve them.
 8. In trouble, a friend of godly character is far more help than a blood brother.
- B. True friends are superior to blood brothers, for the relationship is on a better foundation.
 1. Christian friends are on a better foundation – consider it wisely – regenerated hearts, the precious blood of Christ, the absolute truth of God’s Word, godly hatred of compromise, a life pursuit of holiness, and the hope of eternal life.
 2. Scripture recognizes friends as dear as one’s own soul, even distinguishing them from the wife of thy bosom (Deuteronomy 13:6; I Samuel 18:1,3; 20:17).
- C. The very context, unusual in Proverbs, gives valuable traits of godly friends (27:4-5,9).
- D. Examples of following this rule of wisdom are very enlightening and very encouraging.
 1. Jonathan was a friend far superior to David’s envious brothers (I Samuel 17:28).
 - a. When he appeared before Saul, his brothers should have been with him.
 - b. God appointed David ruler over His people for his purity (I Sam 16:13).
 - c. We never read of David’s brothers again, for they were envious children, who revealed the wickedness of their hearts by accusing his pure heart.
 - d. Jonathan, who stood to lose much, loved him dearly (I Samuel 18:1-4).
 - e. Jonathan, who loved righteousness more than family sentimentality and career ambitions, chose David over his father easily (I Samuel 19:1-7).
 - f. Their covenant was against the blood ties of Jonathan (I Sam 20:1-17).
 - g. Jonathan, heir to Saul’s throne, chose to serve David (I Sam 23:14-18).
 - h. And this covenant between them included their children (I Sam 23:42).
 - i. David valued Jonathan’s love better than that of women (II Sam 1:26).
 - j. By the covenant, David preserved Jonathan’s son (II Samuel 9:1; 21:7).
 2. Solomon was friendly with Hiram, King of Tyre, David’s friend – thus practicing the wisdom of the very text we are considering (I Kings 5:1-12).
 3. Paul had a sister, but his closest friend was likeminded Timothy (Phil 2:19-22).

- E. Examples of profaning this rule of wisdom are very enlightening and very frightening.
 - 1. Rehoboam rejected his father's friends and lost the kingdom (I Kings 12:1-20).
 - 2. Joash killed the son of the man who protected and trained him (II Chr 24:20-25).

II. TRUE FRIENDS

- A. True friends love at all times, regardless of favorable seasons or events (Prov 17:17).
- B. The friendship must be based on the fear of God, truth, and righteousness (Ps 119:63).
- C. The blood of Jesus Christ provides an instantaneous bond greater than human blood, when two lovers of Jesus Christ are allowed to meet by the grace of God's providence.
- D. There is no selfishness, self-protection, fear, doubts, agenda, or intents in such friends.
- E. Jonathan's armourbearer trusted him with loyalty that is very rare (I Samuel 14:6-7).
- F. When he found him, Jonathan strengthened David's hand in God (I Samuel 23:14-18).
- G. Jehu and Jehonadab had an agreement in spiritual zeal without trying (II Kgs 10:15-16).

III. FALSE FRIENDS

- A. Fair weather friends are there while it is easy and goodies abound (Prov 14:20; 19:4).
- B. Carnal friends are those whose friendship is based on the foundation of this world.
- C. Weak friends are those you must constantly be helping due to their lack of character.
- D. Loners don't have any true friends, for they are too selfish to give or be exposed.
- E. Rebels don't have any true friends, for their rebellion is evidence of an unruly spirit.
- F. Compromisers don't have any true friends, for they will cheat truth again when needed.
- G. Strange children lie with lips and handshakes, for they know not God (Psalm 144:11).
- H. They go out from us, because they were never truly of us (I John 2:19; I Cor 11:19).
- I. Unruly spirits were too much for David, even from faithful nephews (II Samuel 3:39).

IV. THE APPLICATION

- A. True friends are precisely limited by the character traits of righteousness in Scripture.
 - 1. David carefully defined the friends he would have (Psalm 101:4-8; 119:63).
 - 2. Family love is a curse when it approaches love of godliness and truth, for compromise is imminent; Jesus came to bring a sword in family relationships (Matt 10:34-39); and if we fail here we cannot be His disciples (Luke 14:25-26).
 - 3. No man has forsaken such family ties without reward (Luk 18:28-30; Ps 34:22).
- B. Friendships can be sought, promoted, and protected; but it requires wisdom and grace.
 - 1. The point of our text is to not forsake these valuable friendship (Prov 27:10).
 - 2. It takes communication of hearts (John 15:15; Amos 3:3; Exodus 33:11).
 - 3. It takes friendliness and the giving of true friendship (Proverbs 18:24).
 - 4. The greater zeal a man has for Christ the greater he will be loved by such men.
 - 5. Godliness and virtue attract godly and virtuous men; and godliness and virtue disappoint carnal and unprincipled men. Holy living will bring you holy friends.
- C. Brothers and sisters in Christ are brought together by God's grace and providence, and the resulting relationships should be the strongest and most pleasant of human friends.
 - 1. There is a strong basis and duty of love, regardless of compatibility (I John 5:1).
 - 2. The members in a church were hand picked by God Himself (I Cor 12:18).
 - 3. Marriage is leading about a sister, which is to marry such a friend (I Cor 9:5).

Conclusion:

- 1. In order to have friends, even great godly friends, a man must show himself friendly (Proverbs 18:24).
- 2. Some can be thankful they have double brothers and sisters, as they are united by blood and BLOOD.
- 3. Brother and Sister, you are true friends in the Lord Jesus Christ and a dear brother and sister in Him.