

THE PROBLEM OF FRIENDS

Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION

1. The normal life is one of FRIENDSHIP.
2. Friends are a reflection of our own worthiness and a source of help for our own inadequacies.
 - (1) They are like a balancing pole for walking the tightrope of life.
 - (2) They are like a soothing ointment for the cuts and bruises of life.
 - (3) They are like a vine that clings to us despite our weaknesses.
3. What one person lacks, another possesses.
 - (1) We find strength in others for our weaknesses, and they find help in us for their failings.
 - (2) This is what makes friendship so delightful.

I. SELECTING FRIENDS

1. We must be careful in the selection of friends: "*Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man shalt thou not go*" -- Prov. 22: 24.
2. The next verse tells why: "*Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul*" -- Prov. 22:25.
3. The selection of friends should not be based upon their wealth, education, or prestige.
4. But, upon their being the right kind of people.

II. THE WRONG KIND OF FRIENDS

1. Pretending Friends: Zech. 13:6 -- "*And one shall say unto him, what are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, those which I was wounded in the house of my friends*".
 - (1) This is a prophecy concerning Christ.
 1. He is represented as being wounded in the house of his friends.
 2. John 1: 11; Matt. 27:22
 3. Judas Iscariot betrayed him -- Matt. 25: 14 - 16; 26: 47 - 50.
 - (2) Some of the deepest wounds a man can receive are at the hands of his pretending friends.
2. The wrong kind of a friend is one that will lift up his heel against you -- Psa. 41:9.
 - (1) Jesus had this kind of friend in Judas Iscariot -- John 13:18.
 - (2) Judas did this to the Lord for 30 pieces of silver -- Matt. 26: 14 - 16.
 - (3) Most of us have experienced this very thing that David referred to.
 - (4) It is a bitter experience when we do.
3. Fair-weather friends are the wrong kind.
 - (1) Prov. 14:20 -- "*The poor is hated even of his own neighbor; but the rich hath many friends.*"
 - (2) Prov. 19:4 -- "*Wealth maketh many friends*".
 - (3) Many people are friends to the rich.
4. A worldly friend is the wrong kind -- James 4:4; I Cor. 15:33.

III. MAKING AND HOLDING FRIENDS

1. Be friendly -- Prov. 18:24 -- "*A man that hath friends must show himself friendly*".

2. Be helpful in adversity -- Prov. 17:17.
3. Possess a humility that will cause you to mix and mingle with all classes of people.
(1) The Lord did -- Matt. 9: 10 - 12.
4. Be unselfish -- Phil. 2:4.
5. Be longsuffering -- Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:2.
6. Be sincere, truthful, and honest -- Phil. 1:10; Rom. 13:13.
(1) Insincerity will repel would-be friends.
7. Follow the golden rule -- Matt. 7:12.
8. Be stable -- James 1: 18.
9. Be loyal.

IV. THE RIGHT KIND OF FRIENDS.

1. Will stick closer than a brother -- Prov. 18:24.
2. He will tell us what we need to hear -- Prov. 27:6.
3. A friend helps sharpen our mind -- Prov. 27:17.
4. "*A friend loveth at all times*"-- Prov. 17:17.

CONCLUSION

1. Are you a friend of Christ??
2. He wants to be your friend -- John 15: 13 - 14.