

## **FRIENDSHIPS**

### **TO BE AVOIDED**

**G**od made us for friendships, friendship with Him and with one another. There are some friendships which are noxious, poisonous, toxic and should be avoided. Jesus spoke of wolves in sheep's clothing who try to destroy our faith and the unity of the believers. *Toxic* friendships are:

**THOSE THAT DISCOURAGE:** Every friendship ought to be considered in light of where it is leading us. Some relationships encourage us, build us up, inspire hope, goodness, and brings us closer to God. Other friendships may inspire criticism, promote gossip, create a spirit of judging, and lower our standards of behavior. Discouraging friends are negative rather than positive. Discouraging friends complain more than they compliment. Discouraging friends will discourage you.

**THOSE THAT ARE DIVISIVE:** Divisive friends drive wedges between others. They feed fires of ill feelings, separate, alienate, and destroy others. Divisive friends are jealous of others. Divisive friends will make enemies in a household. Divisive friends will split churches. Divisive friends are opinionated and self centered. Divisive friends will rally you to their side of an issue until you too become divisive.

**THOSE THAT DESTROY:** There are some people who can influence you to leave the Lord and what the Bible teaches. They will introduce words that you would never say. They will practice things that you would never do. It is at this point that you have to make up your mind whether or not you want to keep them as a friend. If you do, you will start saying things, doing things and going places that you would never do. These friends will take you on a journey that leads away from Christ. Your faith will become bruised, broken and destroyed.

**Toxic Friends Should Be Avoided**

## **BUILDING GREAT FRIENDSHIPS**

Thomas Edison built "the Walk of Friendship" in the garden of his summer home in Florida. Each stepping stone in the garden was given to him by a friend. Solomon wrote about friendship: "*Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up*" (Ecc. 4:9-10).

The Bible shows us some great friendships.

- Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi (Ruth 1:1-18)
- David and Jonathan (1 Sam. 18:1-3)

Some have never learned how to make wise choices in developing friends. Some relationships may hurt us physically, emotionally, or spiritually (1 Cor. 15:33).

- ☑ **Friendships are based upon sharing.** To develop a close friendship, a person must share their time and their heart with another. Someone that is not interested in you or what you want to do is selfish and such a person will not make a great friend. Friendship is about sharing!
- ☑ **Friendships are based upon trust** (Pv. 16:28). You can trust a friend. You can trust them with your word. You can trust them with your possessions. If someone has broken your trust in them, the friendship will be strained.
- ☑ **Friendships are based upon honesty** (Pv 27:6). True friends tell the truth. Sometimes that truth hurts and is hard to tell, but a real friend will. Friends are interested in helping each other become better people.
- ☑ **Friendships influence us.** This is why the Bible warns about the influence of an evil companion (1 Cor. 15:33) or one who is easily angered (Pv 22:24-25). Your friends can bring you closer to the Lord. You have the opportunity of bringing your friends closer to the Lord. Pick friends out of people who have good hearts and attitudes.

Great Friendships last through time and trials. Great friendships don't just happen - they are built by love, work and sharing.

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