

The book of Proverbs - Friendship

Introduction

Our particular need for friends: *Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you— better a neighbour nearby than a brother far away.* (27:10)

Why we have neglected biblical friendship

The consequence: our friendships suffer the same flaws as those of our non-Christian friends.

1 Friends and Us

There are lots of great things to be said about friendship in 21st century Britain!

But four problem areas (probably lots more!)

a) The “Facebook” problem

True friendship consists not in the multitude of friends, but in their worth and value.

Ben Johnson

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A new term: *Facebook Friend*.

In Proverbs friendship is not an exclusive category; but it is definitely a limited one.

b) The “Ryan Air” problem

The results?

Proverbs operates on the basis that most of our friends are also neighbours – they will be physically as well as emotionally close.

c) The “When Harry met Sally” problem

What I'm saying is — and this is not a come-on in any way, shape or form — is that men and women can't be friends because the sex part always gets in the way. Harry Burns (Billy Crystal)

The sexualisation of friendship...

David and Jonathan

Sam Gamgee

Katy Perry

d) The “Jeremy Kyle” problem

2 Friends and Proverbs

The most common word for friend and neighbour in Proverbs is *rea'*

a) Choose your friends carefully

13:20: He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.

14:7: Stay away from a foolish man, for you will not find knowledge on his lips. 22:24-25: Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.

Don't choose bad friends!

- You, of course, do not have any unsuitable friends! But, assuming that you know someone who does how would you advise them to get rid of such friends?
- What implications do you think this has for friendships with people who are not Christians?

Do choose good friends!

27:17: As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

Based on this criteria who are your two best friends? What will you do to cultivate those friendships?

Implication:

12:26: *A righteous man is cautious in friendship.*

b) Treat your friends well

Most of the teaching [of Proverbs] reflects the value of friendship by warning against behaviour that will hurt or damage a friendship and encourages good behaviour towards your friends.

Don't annoy your friends

Read 25:17 and 27:14. What one thing do you do that you think most annoys your friends that you need to repent of?

Gossip set out in Proverbs as particularly damaging to friendship:

16:28: *a gossip separates close friends.*

17:9: *He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.*

Don't lend your friends money

The holy passion of friendship is so sweet and steady and loyal and enduring in nature that it will last through a whole lifetime, if not asked to lend money. Mark Twain

6:1-5, 14:20-21

Ralph Emerson: The only way to have a friend is to be one.

22:11: *He who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious will have the king for a friend.*

3 Friends and the gospel

Two women in Proverbs.

3:13-18.

5:1-5.

The question is: who will we become intimate with?

Some of passages on friendship in Proverbs

3:27-31

17:9, 17, 18

24:1-2, 28-29

6:1-5

18:17, 24

25:8-10, 17-18

11:9

19:4, 6, 7

26:18-19

11:12

20:6

27:4, 9-10, 14, 17

13:20

21:10

14:20

22:11, 24-25

16:28-29

23:10-11, 20-21