

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

“I AM A COMPANION OF ALL THEM THAT FEAR THEE”
PSALM 119:63.

I. The Need of Friendship. “A friend loveth at all times.” Proverbs 17:17.

A. Encouragement and help.

“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he bath not another to help him up.” Ecclesiastes 4: 9,10.

B. Communication.

God has made us dependent on one another. We need to communicate and share with others. “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” Proverbs 27:17.

II. Basis of Friendship.

A. New Birth.

When we become a Christian we have a relationship with God as our Father, Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and the Holy Spirit as our Guide. Through new birth we are part of the family of God. Every Christian is our brother or sister in the Lord. We have the gift of eternal life, a new nature which desires to please God and a heavenly home. See John 1:12; 3:5; 14:2,3;16:13; 20:17; Romans 6:23.

B. Common interests. “Growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord.”2 Pet.3:18.

1. Bible study. 2 Timothy 2:15.
2. Prayer. Ephesians 6:18.
3. Witnessing to others. Mark 5:19.

C. Common goals. “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Philippians 1:21.

1. Living to glorify the Lord. “Christ magnified in my body.” Phil. 1:20.
 - a. Praising Him. Psalm 50:23.
 - b. Encouraging and helping others. 1 Thessalonians 5:11.
 - c. Using my gift to serve Him. “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

Note: If we are to have true, close friends then they also must share these common interests and goals with us. Amos 3:3. If our close friends are not Christians who are living for the Lord, the only thing we have in common with them are natural, physical things which will only satisfy the old nature. As a result close friendship with unsaved persons will cause us to grow cold in our relationship with Christ. We will be dragged down to their worldly level. See James 4:4; 1 Corinthians 15:33.

III. Finding Friends. Psalm 119:63; 2 Timothy 2:22.

A. Places to find friends.

1. Young People's meetings.
2. Young People's activities.
3. Bible studies.

B. Pray about finding a good friend. John 14:13.

1. Remember "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Proverbs 18:24.

C. An invitation to finding friends.

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Hebrews 10:24,25.

Note: Try to take advantage of every opportunity to be with other Christians when they get together for Bible studies, prayer meetings, sings or other activities. It will strengthen you in the Lord's things and you will meet other Christians who are seeking to please the Lord. It is in this atmosphere that you will find good friends.

IV. What to look for in a friend.

A. Some marks of a good and trustworthy friend

1. A concern and care for others. 1 Corinthians 12:25; John 13:34.
2. A desire to help and serve others. Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 4:10.
3. A forgiving spirit. Ephesians 4:32.
4. A readiness to confess faults. James 5:16.
5. An exhorter and encourager Hebrews 10:25
6. A prayer partner. Ephesians 6:18.
7. Speaks the truth in love. Ephesians 4:15; Proverbs 27:5,6.
8. Appreciative and courteous. Ephesians 4:32.
9. Loyal and committed. 1 Samuel 18:3,4; 19:4.

B. Some marks of a bad and untrustworthy friend

1. A desire to spread gossip and talk about others. Proverbs 16:28; 17:9.
2. Given to anger quickly. Proverbs 22:24.
3. Carelessness about telling the truth. Ephesians 4:25.
4. Envious or jealous of others. Galatians 5:26.
5. Blames others for personal failures. Genesis 3:12.
6. Displays a hatred of others. Titus 3:3; 1 John 3:15

V. Special friendship of the opposite sex.

A. Guidelines from the Bible.

1. Purity of life. “**Keep thyself pure.**” 1 Timothy 5:22.
2. Sanctification. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8. NAS
 - a. **“abstain from sexual immorality”**
 - b. **“possess his vessel in sanctification and honour”**
 - c. **“not in lustful passion”**
 - d. **“flee fornication (immorality)”** 1 Corinthians 6:18.
3. Abstain from every appearance of evil. 1 Thessalonians 5:22.
 - a. **Don’t put yourself in places or circumstances where you will be tempted.**
4. **“It is good for a man not to touch a woman.”** 1 Corinthians 7:1,2.
 - a. God knows our weaknesses better than we do.

B. Consequences of ignoring God’s guidelines.

1. A guilty conscience. Psalm 32:3,4; 51:3,4.
2. Physical and emotional scars. Proverbs 6:20-33; 7:1-27; 9:13-18.
3. Reaping what we have sown. Galatians 6: 7,8.

Note: Though God can and does forgive sinful acts, the results of sexual immorality can leave hurts and scars that will sadly affect us all of our lives. God leaves us free to make bad choices, but we are not free to choose the consequences of those choices. See 2 Samuel 11,12.

| | GOD | PARENTS | FRIENDS | TEACHERS | EMPLOYER |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|---|---|
| WHEN DOES IT BEGIN? | 1.) It begins at birth for us though God's foreknowledge knew about us from eternity | 1.) At birth | 1.) When we choose them or they choose us. | 1.) When we come under their teaching | 1.) When we first choose to begin working. |
| HOW LONG DOES IT LAST? | 1.) It doesn't end | 1.) For the length of our natural lives. | 1.) As long as we need it. | 1.) While we are in training. | 1.) As long as we need employment. |
| WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE? | 1.) He is our Creator. 2.) He desires a relationship with us, though it was destroyed by sin. 3.) He is our Judge. | 1.) They brought us into the world 2.) They desire a relationship with us. 3.) They are responsible before God for us till we become adults. | 1.) They provide peer companionship and support. 2.) We may develop this relationship because of special needs or interests | 1.) Their purpose is to provide instruction and role models. 2.) They are responsible to a higher authority. | 1.)To provide an income at different times in our lives. 2.) Testimony to the principle of sin that it is "by the sweat of the brow." |
| HOW CAN I BUILD IT UP? | 1.) By learning who God is, who I am and my responsibility to Him. 2.) By spiritual growth. | 1.) By being obedient to them. 2.) By honoring them. | 1.) By supporting them 2.) By spending time with them. 3.) By being tolerant of their short comings. | 1.) By being a diligent student 2.) By developing knowledge, understanding and wisdom. | 1.) By "doing it heartily as unto the Lord." 2.) By putting the company before our own lives. |
| WHAT WILL TEAR IT DOWN? | 1.) Sin 2.) Negligence 3.) Attitudes | 1.) Priorities 2.) Disobedience 3.) Rebellion | 1.) Violations of trust 2.) Competition 3.) Indifference | 1.) Slothfulness | 1.) Putting ourselves first 2.) Dishonesty 3.) Tardiness |