

PROVERBS & FRIENDSHIP pt 2

Selected Proverbs



JULY 28, 2019 | DAVID SCHALLER

Have you ever learned a lesson the hard way? For many of life's lessons the hard way is the only way, but a lot of the wrecks we encounter through the years could be avoided with a little wisdom. What if I told you that I knew of a book that held treasures of wisdom designed by God to teach you to live skillfully so that you don't have to learn all your lessons the hard way?

One of the most practical books in the Old Testament is Proverbs—a collection of short, pithy statements of inspired truth and wisdom. Proverbs deals with wisdom and stupidity, justice and revenge, diligence and laziness, poverty and wealth, life and death. These maxims give us God's principles for godly living.

It takes only a few seconds to read one of God's proverbs, but the dedicated Christian will spend a lifetime living out the implications of that truth. Not surprisingly, skillful living begins with your attitude toward God: *The key to skillful living is fear of the Lord!* To fear God is to relate your entire world to Him as you stand in awe of Him and determine to trust Him by humbly depending on Him and obediently doing what he says.

CHOOSING FRIENDS

- a. Caring for our hearts.

Proverbs 4:23: "Guard your heart with all vigilance, for from it are the sources of life."

This is a command to externally guard the heart because whatever comes into the heart impacts it. The heart is centered outwardly to receive - truth, beauty, God and His word, or positive friendships. The heart is NOT a hard wrecking ball - it can't take in porn, violence, abusive/unhealthy relationships and not be impacted.

- b. Categories about choosing friends. These proverbs regarding choosing friendships:
 - Use a range of action verbs used to describe these kinds of relationships.
 - Describe WHO it is we can potentially associate with:
 - good characters (the wise, those with good advice or one who keeps God's words)
 - bad characters (the foolish, the gossip, the angry, etc.)
 - Detail the inevitable result of being in these relationships, both good and bad.
 - The benefits: "I gain wisdom" or "I have a future/my hope won't be cut off."
 - The consequences: "I get entangled in a snare" or "I become impoverished and poor."

BENEFITS AND CONSEQUENCES

- Proverbs 12:26: The righteous person is cautious in his friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.
- Proverbs 13:20: The one who associates with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.
 - Fool he ends that fool befriends. He who associates with a fool will be left a fool.
- Proverbs 23:17-18: Do not let your heart envy sinners, but rather be zealous in fearing the Lord all the time. For surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.
- Proverbs 28:7: The one who keeps the law is a discerning child, but a companion of gluttons brings shame to his parents.

- Proverbs 27:9: Ointment and incense make the heart rejoice, likewise the sweetness of one's friend from sincere counsel. (Just as ointment and incense brings joy to the heart, so the sweetness of one's friend comes from his/her sincere counsel.)
- Proverbs 14:7: Walk abreast with a foolish person, and you do not understand wise counsel.
- Proverbs 16:29: A violent person entices his neighbor, and then leads him down a path that is terrible.
- Proverbs 20:19: The one who goes about gossiping reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with someone who is always opening his mouth. (If such a person is willing to talk about others, he/she will be willing to talk about you, so it is best to avoid him/her altogether.)
- Proverbs 22:24-5: Do not make friends with an angry person, and do not associate with a wrathful person, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.
- Proverbs 23:20-21: Do not spend time among drunkards, among those who eat too much meat, because drunkards and gluttons become impoverished, and drowsiness clothes them with rags.

Seek out life-giving relationship – be careful who you give your heart to in friendship.

Solomon is NOT saying we should only be friends with people who build into us and shun people who we know take more than they give. He is not advocating a refuge mentality. Solomon is counseling us to discern who it is we let in because of the great power and influence that associations have – both for good and for evil.

Could God be prompting you to pray about carving out space in your schedule to seek life-giving relationships through a HUB group this fall?

HUB (Home/Unity/Bible) groups meet in homes to promote unity/deeper relationships that are centered on the Bible.

Could God be speaking to you about setting aside the time to grow in discipleship to Jesus with someone?

Discipleship just means personal training in the way of Jesus. It means spending time with a more mature believer who is willing to share life experience with you, and show you how to walk with Christ Jesus.

I'd love to partner with you if God is moving you to more intentionally enter into a life-giving relationship through HUB or discipleship. Write your interest on a Connection Card or contact us at info@churchoftheopendoor.com.

The advice in (these friendship proverbs) provides a good example of what prudence is. A prudent person is one who is capable of exercising sound judgment in practical matters. He or she is cautious and discreet in conduct, is circumspect, and is sensible. We often describe a prudent person by saying that he or she has common sense. A prudent person can foresee the consequences of possible actions (e.g. of choosing friendships) and behaves accordingly. A godly (wise) person can be prudent because God's revelation helps us see the usual consequences of our actions before we commit them. This is largely what the Book of Proverbs helps us do. (Dr. Tom Constable's Proverbs commentary)