

PRECIOUS RICHES OF FRIENDSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Friends are a reflection of our own worthiness and a source of help for our own inadequacies. Friends are precious responsibilities; therefore, I have the problems of choosing friends, and of making and holding friends, and of being a friend.

Someone has well said: "A friend is like bread for a hungry appetite; like a balancing pole for waling the tightrope of life; like a soothing ointment for the cuts and bruises of life; like a golden link in the chain of life; and like a vine that clings to us despite our weaknesses."

What one lacks, another possesses. We all possess some things in common, but we all are not endowed alike. We find strengths in others for our weaknesses, and they find help in us for their failings. This is what makes friendship so delightful.

"There's happiness in little things,
There's joy in passing pleasure.
But friendships are, from year to year,
The best of all life's treasures."

I. A MAN SHOULD CHOOSE HIS FRIENDS WELL AND HOLD THEM DEAR AND PRECIOUS.

- A. Prov. 22:24-25: "Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man do not go - lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul."
- B. Making friends involves our being friendly.
 - 1. Prov. 18:24: "A man who has friends must himself be friendly."
- C. Be helpful in adversity.
 - 1. Prov. 17:17: "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

NOTE: That is what a friend is for - born for adversity. You cannot get and retain friends with bare compliments. They are drawn and held by giving them tokens of your love, which in reality are tokens of yourself.

- 2. "There are several good things about adversity, one of which is that it will show you who your real friends are. Adversity

is society's laboratory where many a misnamed friendship is proved to be only an acquaintanceship. There are many people who are good at being a friend until you need one."

D. Making friends involves a sense of humility and unselfishness.

1. Phil. 2:3: "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself."
2. Phil. 2:4: "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."
3. Matt. 20:28: "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

NOTE: Some get up each morning with the attitude: "Well, let's see what my friends can do today to make me happy."

A childless couple's prayer was:

"Lord, bless us two, and that will do."

A bachelor prayed:

"Lord, bless only me, that's as far as I can see."

E. Keeping friends involves being tolerant.

1. Col. 3:13: "Bearing with one another ..."
2. Matt. 7:1: "Judge not, that you be not judged ... "
 - (a) Taking a look closely at our own shortcomings will help us have a loving care for the faults of others.
 - (1) Matt. 7:3: "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye ... "

F. We must maintain sincerity and honesty.

1. Phil. 1:10: "That you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ."
2. Rom. 13:13: "Let us walk properly"

G. Be stable in our friendships.

1. James 1:8: "He is a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.
2. Psalm 1:3: "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters, that brings forth its fruit in its season ..."

NOTE: Real friendships grow from the tiny shoots of a beginning into the tall and strong oaks of dependency.

CONCLUSION:

A. Be Loyal.

1. In a lovely statement to Timothy about his friend Onesiphorus, the great apostle Paul could write:
 - (a) 2 Tim. 1:16: "The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain."