

The Vincennes Voice

"...The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight..." (Matt. 3:3)

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THE WONDERFUL WORTH OF FRIENDSHIP

Larry R. Ping II

Having true friends is a wonderful thing! True friends are hard to come by in this day and age. Exacting a value of true friends is a difficult thing to do. The worth of true friends, in many ways, is incalculable. But we all need these friends. Would you consider what the Bible has to say on this good subject?

1) True Friends Do Not Solicit You To Do Evil. Moses warned, *"If thy...friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods...Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him...But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death"* (Dte. 13:6-9). Certainly we are not advocating putting to death other folks, but we do promote choosing friends carefully and wisely. They are not your true friends if they are imploring you to do wrong.

2) True Friends Take Pity Upon The Afflicted. Job said, *"To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his*

friend" (Job 6:14). To their credit, Job's three friends, upon hearing of their afflicted friend, *"made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him"* (Job 2:11). Note also, *"they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great"* (Job 2:13). It is not always what you say to an afflicted friend, but just the fact you are with them during their time of trial.

3) True Friends Can Be Trusted. The wise man reminded, *"he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends"* (Prov. 17:9). Earlier he said, *"A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter"* (Prov. 11:13). It is hurtful to share sensitive information with an individual only to have it leaked. Solomon stated, *"The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly"* (Prov. 26:22). Be sure you can be trusted.

4) True Friends Are Willing To Correct. Being friends is not always about "good" and "fun" times. At times, it means doing the hard things. David's son uttered, *"A friend loveth at all times"* (Prov. 17:17). Ecc. 3:1 reminds us there is *"a time to every purpose under the heaven,"* including a time for correction. Jesus taught, *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent"* (Rev. 3:19). A true friend will recognize his friend's spiritual trouble, and will do all he can to help and assist. *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful"* (Prov. 27:6).

5) True Friends Are Friendly. This seems obvious. But Solomon cautioned, *"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother"* (Prov. 18:24). True friends often are seen as "blood" relatives. They are *"kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another"* (Eph. 4:32). They are *"kindly affectioned one to*

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another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10).

6) True Friends

Generate More Wisdom.

The wise man authored, "*Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend*" (Prov. 27:17). To have wisdom is to be in possession of something very treasured, "*For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it*" (Prov. 8:11). To have friends to study and learn with is immeasurable. Find and make friends with those who have the same attitude about God's Word as did the Psalmist who said, "*Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it*" (Psa. 119:140).

7) True Friends Are Essential To Persistence. The book of vanity authors, "*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 hath*

not another to help him up" (Ecc. 4:9-10). I will get knocked down in this life from time to time, and I need a friend who will extend a helping hand. I need a friend like the Good Samaritan who, unlike the passing Levite and priest, had "*had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him*" (Lk. 10:33-34). If I have no true friends, who will help pick me back up?

8) True Friends Refuse To Forsake When The Going Gets Rough.

And in life, it sometimes does. Paul remarked, "*At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge*" (II Tim. 4:16). There was a time when "*all the disciples forsook him (Jesus), and fled*" (Matt. 26:56). As we sometimes sing, He stood in Pilate's Hall "without a friend." True friends stick together through the thick and the thin. Demas forsook Paul

probably at a time the apostle could have really used his help (II Tim. 4:10). Let it not be said of us we have forsaken and abandoned our friends in their difficulties.

9) True Friends Are Willing To Lay Down Their Life.

The Greatest Friend of all said, "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*" (Jn. 15:13). John penned, "*Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*" (I Jn. 3:16). Paul was thankful for his friends and fellow tent-makers Aquila and Priscilla "*Who have for my life laid down their own necks*" (Rom. 16:4).

Jesus gave His life for us. Prior to His death He said, "*Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*" (Jn. 15:14). Are you doing what He asks? Are you obeying His commands (Jn. 14:15)? If so, you have the best Friend of all! Keep Him!

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MEETING TIMES (EST)

SUNDAY

Bible Study – 10:00 am

Worship – 11:00 am & 3:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study – 7:00 pm