

BOOK OF PROVERBS - VI

"A Friend Closer Than a Brother"

Proverbs 18:24

I. TYPES OF FRIENDS

A. *"A man that hath friends (rea) must show himself friendly (neighborly); and there is a friend (ahab) that sticketh closer than a brother."*

1. Friends (rea) - an associate; neighbor
2. Friendly (neighborly)

B. Friend (ahab) - to have affection for

1. Close bond that exists between two people whose hearts and minds are blended together as were those of David and Jonathan; a true friend who will love us as his own soul--will stick closer than a brother.

2. Moses was friend of God
3. Jesus - *"I call you friends..."*
4. Our spouse should be our best friend

C. Close friends are few - large number indicates insecurity--everyone should have a friend that they can confide in; to go to in a time of need.

II. NEIGHBORS

A. Love thy neighbor - Mt. 22:35-40

B. Who is my neighbor?

C. Neighbor does not necessarily have to be your best friend

III. FRIENDSHIP MUST BE CULTIVATED

A. Formula for getting and keeping good friends

1. One thing to find good wife, another thing to build a happy and harmonious marriage.

2. One thing to find a friend; another thing to keep that friendship strong and healthy.

3. In both cases, it takes work.

a. Become lax and self-indulgent.

b. Expect something for nothing; expect other person to do all the giving.

B. Cultivating friendship like cultivating any other crop.

1. Sowing and reaping--giving to receive

a. To get something out, put something in.

b. He that would have friends must show himself friendly

2. Cultivating and weeding--guarding against hurt feelings, evil reports, jealousy, envy, mistrust

C. Diligence to develop friendships

1. Improve your personality

2. Be friendly

3. Show more kindness

4. Demonstrate more respect for opinions of others
5. Be less critical and demanding
6. Talk less, and listen more
7. Become interested in someone besides yourself
 - a. Put the other fellow first for a change
 - b. More respect for opinions of others
8. Be trustworthy; worthy of friend's confidence
9. Be a person friend would like to be around

IV. VALUE OF FRIENDSHIP

A. Eccl. 4:9-12

1. Two are better than one
2. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow
3. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone? (keep each other warm)
4. And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him, and a threefold cord is not quickly broken (two better than one)

B. A friend corrects

1. Pr. 27:6 - *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the disguises of an enemy are deceitful."*
2. Pr. 27:5 - *"Open rebuke is better than secret love."*
3. Love is honest; truth may hurt--for the moment.
4. Pr. 28:23 - *"He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favor than he that flattereth with the tongue."*

C. A friend counsels - Pr. 27:9 - *"Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel."*

D. A friend supports - verse 10 - *"Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not neither go into thy brother's house in the day of calamity; for better is a neighbor that is near than a brother far off."*

E. A friend sharpens - v. 17 - *"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend"*

F. A friend reflects - v. 19 - *"As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."*

V. HOW TO KEEP FRIENDS

A. Show mercy - Pr. 3:3-4

1. *"So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man."*
2. Having good report of those without

B. Show love - Pr. 17:17 - *"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."*

C. Be honest - Pr. 25:9 - *"Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself; and discover not a secret to another."*

1. Go directly to person
2. Don't gossip about them

D. Be dependable

1. Pr. 25:13 - *"As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters."*

2. Pr. 25:19 - *"Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint."*

E. Be considerate

1. Pr. 25:17 - *"Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee"* (Don't wear your welcome out! Give your friend some space--some time to him or herself; don't overstay your visit; don't make them dread seeing you come; don't force them to hide, and pretend they're not at home!)

2. Pr. 27:14 - *"He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him"* (Don't call before 8:00 A.M. or after 10:00 P.M. when you know they're in bed--unless emergency or of extreme importance).

VI. A TRUE FRIEND--JESUS