

CHAPTER 12

Friends and Foes

In this chapter we want to think about the people around us, whether they are **friends** or **foes** (whether they are those we get along with or those we do not get along with).

What is a Friend?

There are two common words in the Old Testament that are used to describe a friend (just as in English we have two words: "friend" and "companion"). The first word means "someone that I love, someone that I am fond of." This word is found in 2 Chronicles 20:7 where we learn that A _____ was God's **friend**. The other common word for **friend** in the Old Testament means "someone that I delight in or take pleasure in, a companion." This word is found in 2 Samuel 15:37. This verse tells us that David's friend was named H _____.

There are also two words in the New Testament that are used to describe a friend. The first word means "someone that I love, someone that is dear to me, someone that I like and that I am fond of." This word is also used of Abraham in James 2:23: Abraham is called "the **friend** of _____." The word is also found in John 15:14. Jesus said, "Ye are my _____, if ye do whatsoever I command you." This means that if a person really loves Jesus they will do what Jesus says (see John 14:15, 21, 23). The other word for **friend** in the New Testament means "a comrade, a companion, a partner." In Matthew 26:50 Jesus used this word as He was talking to **Judas**, the man who betrayed Him: "F _____, wherefore (why) art thou come?" For many months Judas had been one of Jesus' companions because he was one of the twelve disciples.

The English word "**friend**" means someone that I am attached to, someone that I love, someone that I know and like and who knows and likes me." What word would mean the **opposite** of friend?

What kind of person is a true friend and why? What makes a friend? What makes a **real** friend? A true friend is described in Proverbs 17:17.

My Parents and My Friends

Parents should help children to grow up in the right direction (Ephesians 6:14; Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Proverbs 22:6). Do all parents do this? _____ Most parents would like to do this, but not all really do as they should. We need to **pray** and ask God to help our parents to do as they should. We need to **pray** and ask God to help our friends' parents to be what they should be and to do as they should do.

Parents have an important influence on their children. Are your friends going to be what their parents allow them to be? (Here's an example using a pet dog. If a family were to allow their pet dog to get up at the table and eat off the plates, would the dog do this? Do most dog owners allow this? Children are not dogs, but children often do whatever they are allowed to do. If you were allowed to stay up until midnight, would you do it? _____)

Is it important that your parents know something about the parents of the persons who you are with?
 _____ Parents have a big influence on their children even though it is possible that a person with good parents could choose to go the wrong way (Ezekiel 18:5-10) and it is also possible that a person with wicked parents could choose to go the right way or God's way (Ezekiel 18:10-17). Your parents should know something about the parents of your friends. This goes the other way also. The parents of your friends may want to know something about your parents.

Trouble and Troublemakers

1. Not all children are bad because they want to be bad. Some young people are highly active, highly imaginative and they need direction and restriction (they need to be kept within bounds). They have a great deal of energy which needs to be channeled in the right way.
2. Troublesome children may be sparked by some other children, but they should not and cannot blame other children for wrong actions (acting in a bad way). When we do wrong, whose fault is it? _____ Whom should I blame when I do wrong?
 - a. my parents
 - b. my school teacher
 - c. my friends who are bad examples to me
 - d. me, myself and I
3. It may be wiser for this troublesome person not to be with me at this point in my life. If being with a troublemaker makes it easy for me to get into trouble, then should I be with this person?
4. What then should I do? First, **I should make sure that I am not a troublemaker**. Second and most important of all, **I need to know the Lord as my Saviour**. He's the greatest Friend of all. Third, **I need to let the Lord Jesus Christ be saving me from myself** (saving me from all the trouble that I would get myself in). Finally, **I should not think or act wrongly towards others, but I should pray and petition God for them**. The best weapon to use against the troublemaker is **prayer!**

Ground Rules

Ground rules are needed to protect me and to protect others with me. God's ground rules for togetherness protect God's holy character and His love for us (**His grace, His goodness and His glory**). For example, Jesus let Peter know what the ground rules were. See John 13:8. The rule was this: "Peter, I cannot have togetherness (partnership, fellowship) with you unless you let me wash you. If you want to have togetherness with Me, then I must wash you." Sin in the believer's life keeps him (or her) from having that togetherness with God until the sin is washed away. In Bible times people would walk the dusty roads with nothing but sandals on their feet. When they finally arrived at a home their feet would be quite dirty, and usually a servant would wash their feet. In John chapter 13 Jesus was telling His disciples that when a believer walks in this world he sometimes falls into sin (1 John 1:8,10). It is as if his feet get dirty! God has made a way for the believer to get clean: **the believer must confess the sin and God cleanses him** (1 John 1:9). In this way the believer is able to have **togetherness and fellowship** with God. But God's rule is this: **if you want to have togetherness with Me then I must wash you and cleanse from your daily sins.**

As the Christian walks from day to day, there is only one way to keep clean. He must
C_____ his sins (1 John 1:9). What does it mean to **confess** my sins? Consider the following:

1) The word "**confess**" in 1 John 1:9 actually means "to say the same thing." God wants us to say the same thing about sin that He says! If God says that lying is sin (Colossians 3:9), then I need to say the same thing! If God says that filthy language should not come out of my mouth, then I need to say the same thing and **agree** with God that such language is sinful (see Ephesians 4:29). I need to see sin as God sees it! If God says something is wrong and wicked, then I need to see that sin just as God does! If the doctor says that I have a broken arm, then I would be wrong to say that my arm was merely scratched!

2) The word "**confess**" means the opposite of the word "**deny**." God wants us to **confess** our sins, not deny our sins! Think of a criminal standing before a judge and jury. The judge says, "**You're guilty!**" and the criminal denies it: "No I'm not! I didn't do it! I'm innocent!" The believer must **confess** and **acknowledge** his sins: "I _____ my sin unto thee" (Psalm 32:5). God wants us to face up to what we have done and acknowledge it: "Lord, I was wrong and I'm guilty! I did it and I can't deny it!" Or as David said in Psalm 51:3-4: "I _____ my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only have I _____, and done this _____ in Thy sight!"

3) When we confess our sins we are not **hiding** or **covering up** our sins! Don't hide your sin (Psalm 32:5) but bring it out in the open! Don't cover your sin (Proverbs 28:13), but uncover it and bring it to God who can cleanse it! When Adam sinned, what was the first thing he did (Genesis 3:8)? _____ Sinners have been hiding ever since!

4) True **confession** also involves **forsaking sin**. Suppose you were to eat some cookies before supper contrary to your mother's instruction. She catches you in the act and you make your confession: "Mom, what I did was wrong and I disobeyed you. I cannot deny it. I ate those cookies. I'm guilty!" Then as soon as she turns her back, you eat another cookie! You confessed your wrong action (sin), but did you **forsake it** and turn from it? _____ God not only wants us to **confess** our sins, and what else does He want us to do (Proverbs 28:13)? _____

5) When I **confess** my sins, I am **judging** myself! God wants us to "Judge O _____" (1 Corinthians 11:31). I must pretend that I am a judge and the person I am judging is no one else but myself! I then arrive at a verdict: (write your own name)
" _____ you're guilty because this is what you have done."
(Acknowledge before the Lord what you have done and be specific.)

The account of Achan in Joshua chapter 7 is very instructive to us and helps us to understand what it means to **confess our sins**. How does verse 19 help us to understand what confession means?

_____ Achan's actual confession is found in verses 20-21. Did he tell the truth? _____ Was he specific about what he had done? _____ May the Lord help us to be honest before Him about our sins. Remember, nothing is hidden from Him!

When we have truly confessed our sins, what are two things that God promises to do according to 1 John 1:9?

1. _____
2. _____

Our feet are now clean and we can walk in close fellowship with the Lord! When we sin again, then we must confess again, and the Lord is always ready and willing to forgive us and cleanse us! God is **faithful** to forgive and cleanse you! Are you **faithful** to confess your sins whenever necessary?


Do you see the place and the need for rules that are right? These rules make a person healthy and happy and even better able to enjoy God's joy. See John 15:10-11 (verse 10 mentions the **rules** and verse 11 mentions the **joy**).

Did God Make a Mistake When He Made Me?

At the end of Genesis 1:27 the Bible says, "M_____ and F_____ created He them." When God created man He made them male and female. **Remember**, you are what God has made you-- a **boy** (male) or a **girl** (female). God has not made a mistake. God has an **order** which He is concerned about (see 1 Corinthians 11:3):



God has made me to fit in to **His order** and to take my proper place in submission and obedience to **Him**. I need to be **thankful for the way God made me**. I also need to be rightly **thoughtful** about this (to think about it in a right and healthy way). If I have questions or problems I should talk to my parents or to my doctor or to my pastor. Good and right information helps to take the **load** or **weight** off of my shoulders:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Look to the Right Person--starting with the LORD GOD. 2. Look for the right information (from parents, doctors, pastor, etc.). 3. Trust the Lord and put the right information into practice. 4. The load will be relieved (lessened and lightened)
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Learning From Friends

Friends can help me to understand many ways in which people differ (what they do, how they do certain things, foods they eat and don't eat, fears they have and don't have, etc.)

Remember that the **pull** to be like those around you should be **governed** and **guided** by right and wrong, good and bad, by God and His Word. Therefore, **for God's glory** and **for their good** and **even for your good**, it is often **necessary** to be **unlike** them, especially if they are unsaved. According to 3 John 11 what are we to follow and imitate? _____
 What are we **not** to follow and copy (3 John 11)? _____

Have you felt that **pull** yet? Have you felt that **pull** to be like those around you and to copy them? What should you do **now** to stay away from forming bad habits that will harm and hurt you?

Sometimes young people will say something like this: "Everyone else does such and such." "Everyone else says such and such." When a person says this, remember that "everyone else" does not really mean "**everyone else**." Everyone does **not** do or say these things.

Also, you are **not** "**everyone**"--you are **someone** whom God made and brought into this world by way of your parents. You are **someone** whom God loves and died for and lives for.

To stand for the right even if it seems you are **alone** is the right thing to do. **You will be stronger and better for it**, and you will have better thoughts about yourself and others. It is better to do right all by yourself than to follow many others in doing wrong. The Bible says, "**Thou shalt not follow a** _____ **to do evil**" (Exodus 23:2).

Getting Right With God and With Others

Remember, a person needs to get right with himself and with God before he (or she) is able to get along with others. Sometimes a **group** of young people that is around us needs to get right with God and with themselves. We may have to **wait** until they do.

Remember that having many friends or having **popularity** is **not** the **key** to growing up and being a successful adult. **Success** as a person has very little relationship, if any, to being popular. Where does **popularity** fit into your thinking? How important is it to you that everyone likes you? Did everyone like the Lord Jesus Christ?

Remember, we want to be healthy, friendly, and concerned (full of energy in the right way about others). We want to be helpful and not up tight. Where does God's Word fit into this? Was the Apostle Paul concerned about the people that were around him even though he knew they were wrong (Acts 17:15-17,22-23)?

Some people are comfortable with being alone or staying by themselves, but they should work **at** caring about others. Others should work **at** caring about them.

Remember, you can become very upset and troubled in a bad way when it comes to making and keeping friends. Young people (and older people too) can change like the weather (one day hot, the next day cold, one day your friend, the next day your enemy). So **wait on the Lord**. Is **my** heart right? Don't **worry**. Wait on the Lord and pray for them.

Remember, God can help you to do right and be right. This will help you learn to work at caring for others and to talk with others and do things with others in the right way.

Remember to learn and practice **good manners**. **Good manners** are the right ways of doing things or saying things; acting or behaving in a right kind of way, in a polite way. For example, there is a right and polite way of eating a meal.

Remember to play games and sports in the right way. **Be fair** and be a **good sport** whether you win or lose (whether you strike out or hit a home run). Be concerned for the one who is not able to do as well as some of the others. Don't make fun of **anyone**. Keep in mind that each person has areas in life in which others can do better. The person who cannot play baseball as well as you might be able to spell and read much better than you!

Don't cause fights but also don't be afraid. Don't be a bully and don't let a bully bully you! Remember, it takes two to fight. **Don't add wood to the fire**. When we add wood to the fire we keep the fire going. If we don't add any more wood then the flames will die out. When two people are angry with each other they are like a raging fire. Unkind words and actions will only add fuel to the fire and may lead to a bad fight or some other kind of trouble. Be learning **self control** (the Bible calls this **temperance**--Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 9:25; Matthew 5:9).

Who can and will help you with the persons around you? Why? See John 15:12-17 and Romans 8:15-17.