

LESSON 8. Choose Good Friends

Psalm 1

MEMORY VERSE: “For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile” (1 Peter 3:10).

In this first Psalm, David proclaims the difference in the lives of the good and those who are ungodly. It begins, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful” (Psalm 1:1). Another word for blessed is “happy.” David was saying that in the long run we will be much better off (happier) if we seek the advice and friendship of people who love God. God has given us the privilege of making choices in life, and we all make choices every day. We can choose those things that are good, or we can make poor choices that bring sorrow and trouble to our lives. James reminds us that life here on earth is just a vapor (James 4:4). We should always choose to follow God. This will insure us of all spiritual blessings which are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).

FRIENDS ARE IMPORTANT

Our friends can have a great influence on us. Think about the type of clothes you really like Mom to buy for you. Aren't they much like the clothes your friends wear? We all want to be accepted among our peers - even adults have this same desire. In order to be accepted, we often tend to conform to the standards that those around us enjoy or prefer. This is not always bad if we are wise in choosing our friends; but it can be a tragedy if we follow the wrong crowd. God wants us to listen to those whose counsel is true and righteous.

A GOOD FRIEND

David realized the need for good friends as he wrote Psalm 1. David had a very special friend in Jonathan, the son of Saul. Jonathan was a good influence on David. David had the same kind of influence on Jonathan, and encouraged him to do that which was right. On two occasions Jonathan saved David's life when his father, King Saul, wanted to kill him. Jonathan still loved David even when he realized that David would be made king instead of him. He illustrates the type of person that Paul said a Christian should imitate. Paul wrote, “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Philippians 2:3, 4).

A POOR CHOICE

Samson, a judge in Israel before they had a king, made a poor choice in choosing a friend. Samson fell in love with a Philistine woman by the name of Delilah (Judges 16:4). Delilah chose some bad friends of her own, and they bribed her to find out the source of Samson's great strength. Samson listened to his friend and tried to please her. She took advantage of Samson's love, and got him to reveal that the source of his strength was in his hair, which had never been cut because he was a Nazarite unto God (Judges 16:6-18). God was not pleased with Samson for revealing his Nazarite vow. God took away Samson's strength when Delilah lured him to sleep and had his hair cut. The Philistines put Samson in prison. He later died along with 3000 Philistines as his strength returned and he pulled down the pillars of their sports arena. Samson's poor choice for a friend resulted in his imprisonment, torture, and death.

TRAITS OF A GODLY PERSON

In verse two of Psalm 1, David said that a godly person delights in the law or word of the Lord. While evil people refuse to believe God's Word, those who receive it and believe it will be blessed. Those who love God's Word meditate on it. This means they study it often and ponder its meaning. It isn't enough to just read and think about God's Word; those who delight in it will obey what God has said.

The person who delights in God's Word is like a healthy and prosperous tree that grows where there is plenty of water for its roots and branches. It bears fruit in abundance at the proper season. Its leaves are healthy and don't wither from lack of nourishment. A Christian's nourishment is God's Word. The more that he drinks (studies) the stronger his faith and trust in God will become. This enables a Christian to bear fruit by living a life that is pleasing to God. He brings forth more fruit by telling others about God. Then, when trials come for that person, he - like the prosperous tree - has enough faith in God to withstand every trial or temptation that comes in life.

A godly person is a prosperous person, not in worldly goods or possessions, but in living a life that is humble and obedient to God.

THE UNGODLY

The ungodly are those who have no love for the Lord. They do not desire to learn about Him, nor to obey His Word. David said they are like the "chaff which the wind driveth away" (Psalm 1:4). When grain is harvested, combines separate the grain from the chaff with fans. The chaff is useless and is left in the field, while the good grain is taken to storage bins. Because they have no fruit, nor love for God, the ungodly - like the chaff - will not stand, nor be with the righteous on the day of judgment. Instead they will be left to burn with the wicked of the world.

Jude describes those who are ungodly as "clouds they are without water, trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging winds of the sea, foaming out their own shame" (Jude 12, 13). The Lord will one day execute judgment on these people for all their ungodly deeds (Jude 14, 15).

CONCLUSION

David concluded his Psalm by saying, "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Psalm 1:6). This was the same conclusion that Jude gave us almost 1000 years later.

Paul wrote, "Be not deceived: evil communications [company or companions] corrupt good manners [conduct]" (1 Corinthians 15:33). If we choose for our friends those who lie and cheat, we will find it hard not to become like them. If we choose to be around those who daily use foul language, it won't be long before the same words creep into our conversations. But when we choose for friends those who attend worship, believe and obey God, stand for the truth, obey our parents, and are honorable, we will tend to imitate their actions.

Psalm 1 points out the difference between the godly and the wicked. I want to be one who seeks and follows the counsel of the godly. I hope you do as well.

UNDERLINE THE CORRECT ANSWER(S)

1. Jonathan was David's friend and saved him from being killed by (King Saul, Samson).
2. David was a (good, bad) influence on Jonathan.
3. In Psalm 1, David said we should not follow the counsel of the (poor, ungodly, happy).
4. Those who love God's Word (sometimes read it, meditate on it, don't need to study it).
5. Samson made a poor choice when he fell in love with (David's wife, Ruth, Delilah).
6. Jonathan knew that one day (he, David, Absalom) would be king after Saul died.
7. A person who delights in God's Word is like a tree that is planted where there is (water for its roots and branches, plenty of shade from other trees).
8. Jude said the ungodly are like (trees without fruit, clouds without water, Christians).

SCRIPTURE SEARCH

1. "Be not _____: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Corinthians 15:33).
2. "Blessed is the man that _____ not in the counsel of the _____, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the _____" (Psalm 1:1).
3. "Thou shalt not _____ a multitude to do _____"(Exodus 23:2).
4. "There be many that say, Who shall shew us any _____? Lord, lift thou up the _____ of thy countenance upon us" (Psalm 4:6).
5. "Be ye therefore _____ of God, as dear _____" (Ephesians 5:1).

TRUE OR FALSE

- ___ 1. As a whole, our friends have very little influence on us.
- ___ 2. There are some adults who desire to be accepted by their peers, but most don't care.
- ___ 3. Delilah took advantage of Samson's love for her and deceived him.
- ___ 4. Jude said that one day the Lord will execute judgment on the ungodly.
- ___ 5. We should study and meditate on God's Word often.
- ___ 6. A good Christian will bear fruit for God by living a life that is pleasing to God and one that bears fruit through teaching others.
- ___ 7. Only those who possess many earthly possessions can be godly.

POINTS TO PONDER

1. What does it mean to meditate on God's Word?
2. Why is it not wise to choose the ungodly for our friends?
3. How does a Christian get nourishment in spiritual matters?
4. How does knowing God's Word help us withstand the trials of life?
5. Discuss the friendship of David and Jonathan.