

Words of Truth

Does Your Choice In Friends Really Stink?

By: Brian A. Yeager

Sadly, there are a great many things that have plagued God's people. One problem that has existed since the times of the Old Testament is evil companionship. God, in His supreme wisdom (Romans 11:33-36), has always instructed His people to keep distance between themselves and those who are not His people (Proverbs 4:14-17). In the Old Testament, God told His people to rid the land of the heathen (Deuteronomy 7:1-2). God's instruction, to rid the land of the heathen, was to keep His people from their ungodly influence (Deuteronomy 7:3-6). As we know, the children of Israel did not obey God and they certainly did end up following the influence of the heathen to serve their god's (Judges 10:6-7).

When we read the New Testament we do not find any commands to rid the land of the heathen. However, we do find plenty of instructions concerning how we are not supposed to have friendships with those of the world. Now listen, one will answer that statement with something like this: "WHAT, I am not supposed to have friends?" The person who says that is an absolute MORON! If a Christian cannot find friendships among other Christians that person has a problem. Now, to be clear, notice what God says (NOT ME) about choosing friends from the world: "*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God*" (James 4:4).

The New Testament, including the book of James, is the words of Christ (Hebrews 9:15-17; cf. John 16:13-14 and Hebrews 1:1-2). To be a friend of Christ you have to obey what He says (John 15:14). Therefore, if you choose your friends from among the world you are disobeying the words of Christ and He is not your friend. To make it even clearer, you are either with Christ or against Him (Matthew 12:30). So, the next time you are at your best friends house, who is a child of the devil (I John 3:8-10), whose side are you on? Hard lesson, right!

Our involvement with people of this world is often a necessity because we have to live in this world (I Corinthians 5:9-10). We have to work (II Thessalonians 3:10), evangelize (Colossians 1:27-28), have business dealings (Acts 16:14 and I Corinthians 10:25), etc. Yet, not once do we find the authority to bring the children of the devil into our lives for mere social pleasure. Read what worldly influences caused in the life of Solomon (I Kings 11:1-8).

This article should have been able to be concluded at the end of the second paragraph. However, as many times as I have preached and taught on these things, I have rarely seen the consistent application of what James 4:4 teaches. My family is often looked upon as fruitcakes because of our limited interaction with people of the world. Brethren, have we forgotten that the world is wicked (I John 5:19)? Have we ignored lessons such as those in the Parable of the Wheat and Tares (Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43)? Sadly, these and other Scriptures are often ignored by people who proclaim to live the word of God. It must

stop! Besides this, think of all of the other Scriptures we know and discuss that should really make us turn away from those who are not faithful children of the Almighty God!

Think On These Scriptures...

How can we have friendship with those of the world when we read the following Scriptures from the Old Testament which have lessons for us today (Romans 15:4): *“I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked... Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked... I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me... Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way... An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked... I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation”* (Psalms 26:4-5, Psalms 97:10, Psalms 101:3, Psalms 119:104, Proverbs 29:27, and Jeremiah 15:17)?

How can we have friendship with those of the world when we read the following Scriptures from the New Testament: *“Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good... Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners... Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty... And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”* (Romans 12:9, I Corinthians 15:33, II Corinthians 6:14-18, and Ephesians 5:11).

So, what do you think is bound to happen if you have worldly friends? Let me give you a “hint”: *“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed”* (Proverbs 13:20). How can anyone disobey the commands above and think Heaven is in reach? I know, “Brian is just mean!” I’ve actually heard that in response to these very lessons!

Folks, if I am “mean” I am following the right example. Remember, Jesus was only a friend to those whom obeyed Him (John 15:14). This was even true when it came to His fleshly family (Matthew 12:46-50). Of course, that point applies to us too (Matthew 10:34-39).

Conclusion

This article will certainly not be one of my most popular among the fakes. Where does it sit with you? I said nothing in this article that the Scriptures do not say. I backed up everything with an ABUNDANCE of Scriptures. I have had people choose to become my enemy because I have preached and taught these very principles (cf. Galatians 4:16). Sadly, those people have chosen friendship with the world over one who truly cares. Listen up, the best friends you could ever dream of are those who are Christians willing to help you be saved (Proverbs 17:17, Proverbs 27:6, Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, John 15:12-13, Galatians 6:1-2, and James 5:19-20). So, does your choice in friends really stink?