

Your Children's Friends and Yours

Pastor Tony Miller

I Corinthians 15:33 says, “*Evil communications corrupt good manners*” which in paraphrase says, “*Wicked associates destroy good morals.*” Your child could be living a godly, moral life and choose companions that would destroy his good moral life. There is a powerful reality to the truth of this statement. This is why children need parents to protect, model, and guide them into the right friendships. We would do well to teach our children to be friendly to all, friends with some, and companions with only those who fear God. The term “friends” implies a factual, informational, functional procedures level or the sharing of facts. Companionship implies a heart-to-heart level—equally sharing one another’s hearts.

I. What will your children’s friends do for them? Answer: make them either fools or wise individuals. Proverbs 13:20: “*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*”

A. A companion turning your child into a fool:

1. A fool is someone who takes a wrong means to a bad end. Note the end of covetous murderers (Proverbs 1:10-19).
2. The wrong means is always contrary to Scripture, God’s desires, and wise counsel.
3. The bad end could be in any part of life—social, physical, material, spiritual, emotional, mental. Note that all of these areas are affected by a young man getting involved with a strange woman as seen in Proverbs 5 and 6.

B. Companions turning or strengthening your child toward being a wise person:

1. Wisdom is taking the best means to the best end in the best timing.
2. Wisdom, like folly, is related to all areas of life—mental, physical, material, spiritual, etc.
3. Note that the way a young man gets wisdom can come from many sources other than friends and companions:
 - a. Wisdom literature (Proverbs 1:1-6)
 - b. Wise counsel (Proverbs 1:5)
 - c. The fear of the Lord (Proverbs 1:7)
 - d. Parents’ instruction (Proverbs 1:8-9)
 - e. Failures of others (Proverbs 1:10-19)
 - f. Prayer (Proverbs 2:2-6; James 1:5)
 - g. Correction (Proverbs 29:15)
 - h. Ants or other animals (Proverbs 6:6-11)

Peers and peer pressure are a major factor in whether your children gain wisdom depending with whom they companion (II Samuel 13:4). Jonadab to Amnon is a negative example of this, and Jonathan to David is a positive example (I Samuel 14 – 20).

II. What your children’s friends will do for you:

Companions make fools or wise individuals of our children. How will that affect not only your children but you?

A. Negative effects upon parents:

1. Sorry (Proverbs 10:1, 29:15)
 2. Shame (Proverbs 28:7)
 3. Financial loss (Proverbs 23:21, 29:3)
 4. Early death (Proverbs 29:17)
 5. Strife (Proverbs 15:1-2, 29:22)
 6. Eternal loss (Proverbs 11:30—*forfeited his life which could have been invested for eternity*)
- These are a few.

- B. Some positive effects upon parents: [Note Proverbs 23]
1. Joy (Proverbs 10:1, 23:15, 29:17)
 2. Pride—not arrogance but wholesome honor (Proverbs 23:24)
 3. Financial gain
 4. Full life
 5. Social harmony
 6. Eternal dividend (Proverbs 11:30)

III. What should you do to determine your children’s friends or companions? Remember Show-and Tell times for young children? That is what we need to do for our children: show, tell, and sell.

- A. Show them the right companions.
1. Your choice of companions speaks volumes on how to choose friends (Philippians 4:9).
 2. Your choice of a church speaks volumes (Hebrews 10:24-25).
 3. Your relationship as husband and wife model how to be companions of a godly sort (I Samuel 1:5).
- B. Tell them what companions they will have. Good discipline involves communication and control. You are responsible for controlling your children’s associations when they are young and before they leave home.
- C. Sell them on what companions they should have. The older children become, the more you should be talking with them about why they need to choose certain companions.
1. Read about good companions—Jonathan and David, and books such as *Quality Friendships*.
 2. Study. Go through the book of Proverbs studying wise and foolish companions. Pages 130-138 in *Wellsprings of Life* give most of the verses in Proverbs concerning companions.
 3. Define types of people so they quickly recognize positive and negative characters.
 - a. Strange woman—note her use of the tongue, etc.
 - b. Flatterer—“appealing to one’s pride to use them.”
 - c. Sluggard—his delay of work by excuses.
 4. Illustrate those with whom they should companion and not companion. All these are in Proverbs unless stated otherwise.

No

Yes

Consumers of alcohol (23:20)
 Gluttons (23:20b)
 Sluggards (23:10b)
 Riotous (28:7)
 Vain persons (28:19)
 Harlots (29:3)
 Envious murderers (1:10-19)
 Angry and bitter (22:24-25)
 Rebellious youth (II Samuel 13:3)
 Envious (James 3:14-18)
 Unfaithful (24:21)
 Wealth seekers (23:6-7)
 [Look at seven negative characters in Proverbs 6:16-19]

Character helper (27:17)
 Rebukes wrong (27:5)
 Mentors friends (27:9)
 Companions with the godly (13:20)
 Faithful (18:24)
 Responds meekly (15:1-2)
 Receives reproof (17:10)
 Humble (27:1-2)
 Fears God (Psalm 119:63)
 Delights in God’s Word (Ps. 1:1-2)
 [Read Proverbs 17, 18, 27]

Conclusion: In teaching your children the effects of friends use examples from your own life, examples from the daily lives of others, and from the Bible. You have experienced the positives and negatives of friends in your life and children listen when their parents share their hearts as it applies to friendships. Proverbs 23:26 says, “*My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.*”

Bibliography

Inrig, Gary. *Quality Friendship*.

Merritt, James. *Friends, Foes, or Fools*.

Orthner, Donald. *Wellsprings of Life*.

Positive Action for Christ. *Proverbs, the Fountain of Life*.

Staton, Knofel. *Check Your Lifestyle*.