

A FRIEND THAT STICKETH CLOSER

TEXT: Proverbs 18: 24 we find one of the greatest verses in the Bible dealing with the matter of friendship. It describes, defines and denotes friendship in a marvelous way. It reminds us that, contrary to popular opinion, a dog is not man's best friend.

I. THE PERSON THAT DEMANDS FRIENDSHIP!

o Again, these words give the clear indication that man is a person who demands friendship. Man is a being who needs people to be his friends for two reasons. First, because:

A. IT IS A BASIC HUMAN REQUIREMENT!

o John Donne was right when he said, "No man is an island." In other words, he was saying that, in life, everybody needs somebody.

o In "Men's Health" magazine a study was conducted to uncover the 3 most basic human needs. After many years, and much research the world's most-renown psychologists

revealed that the 3 most basic human needs are:

1. Something to believe in.
 2. Something to look forward to.
 3. Someone to love, or someone to love them.
- (2)

A. IT IS A BASIC HUMAN REQUIREMENT!

B. IT IS A BLESSED HUMAN FULFILLMENT!

In Proverbs 17: 17 this same writer, Solomon, said: [A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

A friend will go on loving you, no matter how successful either of you become.

A friend is someone who believes in you when you have ceased to believe in yourself.

A friend is someone who strengthens you with his prayers, blesses you with his love and encourages you with his hope."

I. THE PERSON THAT DEMANDS FRIENDSHIP!

II. THE PRINCIPLE THAT DEFINES FRIENDSHIP!

A. HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS!

The advice for making friends is found in the words:

[A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly]

The principle is clear. If you want to HAVE a friend, then you must BE a friend. Someone penned the words:

"I went out to find a friend
But could not find one there;
I went out to be a friend
And friends were everywhere!"

When you are a friend, then you will have a friend. You see, a person does not take friends, they make friends. The best way to find a good friend is to be a good friend.

A. HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS!

B. HOW TO MEASURE FRIENDS!

The words of Solomon are not only words of wisdom, but words of warning. He is not only instructing us how to make friends, but how to measure friends. One translation renders our text:

"A man of many friends brings himself to ruin."

In other words, Solomon is warning us by saying that it is sometimes risky to have too many friends, because not every so-called friend is a "true" friend. Benjamin Franklin once said: "Be slow in choosing a friend; and, even slower in changing a friend."

In Proverbs 12: 26 COMENTARY we're reminded:

"The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray."

What Solomon is saying is this: be friendly to everyone; but, don't have everyone as a friend! Why, because if the truth were known, there are people in hell today because they chose the wrong friends. Our jails are filled with thugs and criminals who chose to run with the wrong crowd.

I. THE PERSON THAT DEMANDS FRIENDSHIP!

II. THE PRINCIPLE THAT DEFINES FRIENDSHIP!

3. THE PROMISE THAT DELIVERS FRIENDSHIP!

Perhaps you're thinking, "Preacher, having the type of friends you have described sounds almost too good to be true." It may from a human standpoint, but not from a heavenly standpoint. There is someone who is such a friend, and our text describes Him.

o In Proverbs 18: 24,

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

A. THE PROMISE OF AN EARTHLY COMPANIONSHIP!

This verse is an Old Testament foreshadowing of a New Testament friend. It is pointing to, and speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, our greatest friend. He is the fulfillment of this Old Testament proverb. Solomon looks down his family tree and sees man's greatest friend coming through the "seed" of his father David, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word "**sticketh**" that is used was a Hebrew medical term. It was used to describe how skin would stick to the bone.

There have been times when people, who I thought was my friends, have turned their backs on me. But, blessed be God, there has never been a time when Jesus has turned His back on me. There have been times when my "friends" could not help me; but, there has never been a time when Jesus couldn't help me. He has been a friend that sticks to my side like my skin sticks to my bone.

He has been food when I was hungry, and water when I was thirsty. He has been a shoulder to cry on, and a staff to lean on. He has been a Rock to give me safety, and a Refuge to give me security. Oh yes, I agree with the songwriter:

There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus,
No, not one; No, not one.
There's not an hour when He is not near us,
No, not one; No, not one.

Jesus knows all about our struggles,
He will guide 'til the day is done.
There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus,
No, not one; No, not one.

A. THE PROMISE OF AN EARTHLY COMPANIONSHIP!

B. THE PROMISE OF AN ETERNAL RELATIONSHIP!

o I call your attention to the word "**brother**" which Solomon uses. He describes the Lord **Jesus as a "friend that sticketh closer than a brother."** It is a word that not only denotes companionship, but relationship.
GET THE SONG BOOK AND READ WHAT A FRIEND