

Friends And Faith



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What God has to say about our friends and close companions is something we need to hear. How we decide on this important issue, must come from His Word—because *2 Timothy 3:16* "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof [teaching], for correction, for instruction, [training] in righteousness." We are not to decide by opinion, but by the plain Word of God.

If we choose to keep company with those who do not follow the teaching of the New Testament, we will eventually be influenced by their attitudes and ways. *1 Corinthians 15:33* "Do not deceive yourselves: 'Evil companionships [company; communications] corrupt good morals.'" *34* "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God." Unbelieving friends influence our faith on God—we will find ourselves going along with their worldly ways, their unscriptural interests, or their wrong beliefs about trust on God.

Our choice of *friends* reveals our attitude on *faith*. We should desire the company of those who trust God in faith as we do, and who value His Truth like we do. Those who follow the teachings of Christ concerning important matters like finances, healing, forgiveness, and other issues, would be comfortable around those who follow the same principles of trust on God. *Amos 3:3* "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" We should want to be around those who believe and trust God in the same way as we do.

We must always be cordial when meeting someone, but we should not *desire* to keep close company with anyone who is not living according to New Testament teaching. The deciding factor on choosing friends is our trust on God and our faith in Christ. If someone does not agree with our believing faith in the Atonement of Christ, we would have little in common with them. Our focus every day is to trust God for health, healing, protection, provisions, spiritual growth, and eternal life.

Being righteous before God comes only through believing faith in what the shed blood of Christ accomplished for us. *Romans 1:17* "For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith'" *Habakkuk 2:4*.

Most people have been deceived by Satan to believe that God will not protect them; will not heal them; will not provide their needs; and will not do the other things He promised to do—if anyone will trust Him and act in faith on His Word. The majority of people in the world will not trust God in faith for anything in this life.

Being close friends only with those who share a common faith in God, is vitally important, because the people with whom we spend our time, our thoughts, and our interests, will eventually affect our attitudes, our choices, and our faith. Salvation depends on believing faith in the Atonement of Christ—faith that endures when tested, so we must fellowship with those who believe the same.

Satan has invented millions of counterfeit substitutes regarding healing, finances, avenging wrongs, protection, and many other issues. The devil has deceived the world to trust in drugs and the medical profession for healing with money—instead of trusting God by faith

for free. Satan wants to rob people of the spiritual benefits and increase of faith that accompany God's divine healing plan.

Jesus said *Luke 12:35-36* "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him." Jesus came to bring division *Luke 12:51*, so we can separate false Christians from true believers.

Scriptural fellowship was a major issue in the Bible, and it still is today. *Exodus 23:2* "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong [evil]." If we travel with the wrong crowd, we will soon follow their wrong behavior. *Exodus 23:32-33* "Do not make a covenant with them or with their gods. Do not let them live in your land, or they will cause you to sin against me."

Fellowship must be decided by God's Word. *2 Corinthians 6:15* "What harmony can there be between Christ and the Devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever?" We are not to judge the person's *character*, but we are to make a judgment on the person's *conduct* and *attitudes*—their *life* must "prove their change of heart" *Luke 3:8*.

An unbeliever is anyone who does *not believe* that God heals, protects, supplies, and saves by faith in Him alone. If we have the Holy Spirit, we would not want to associate with those who do not—"For what fellowship can light have with darkness?" *2 Corinthians 6:14*. The sin nature wants to fellowship with sinful lifestyles. We are to make a judgment on someone's *actions* and *attitudes*—*not* their character or intentions.

There is a list of sins that would keep us out of heaven *1 Corinthians 6:9-10*—*idolaters*—anything ahead of God; *adulterers*—unfaithful to God or a spouse; *prostitutes*, *homosexual of-*

fenders—immoral and unnatural sins; *theft*—taking anything owned by another; *greed*—wanting more and more; *drunkards*—abuse of alcohol; *slanderers*—ruining reputations, and *swindlers*—cheating or being dishonest. Those who do not repent of these sins will not “*inherit the kingdom of God.*”

1 Corinthians 6:11 “*That is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*” Anyone can be forgiven, if they will repent, and anyone can be justified, if they will trust God in faith.

We cannot allow any thing, or any one, to come between us and God, because Matthew 10:37 “*Anyone who loves his father [anything on earth] more than me is not worthy of me.*” Abraham did not love Isaac more than God, so he was willing to obey God Genesis 22:2. Abraham actively followed the *Word* of God, so he was righteous in the *sight* of God.

If we want to follow God’s *Word* in our life, then we must give up worldly companions, and not desire to associate with those who are not following the Scriptures. We should not *want* to keep company of those who are doing unscriptural things, going to questionable places, and having worldly interests. If we will obey God on this issue, He says “*I will receive you. I will be their God, and they will be my people*” 2 Corinthians 6:17.

Bible examples shed spiritual light on fellowship. Ruth 1 Elimelech and his wife were worried about food supplies, so they moved to Moab—*against* God’s will. Elimelech had the promise—being Jewish—“*In the days of famine my people shall be satisfied*” Psalm 37:19. If he had *believed* God’s promise, he would have stayed in Israel and trusted God in faith.

Moving to Moab took him outside God’s will, because the Lord had commanded Israel not to associate with Moabites. They went anyway—but Elimelech and his two sons lost their lives. When Naomi returned to Bethlehem, God blessed her in many ways.

The *Word* of God is clear Revelation 18:4 “*Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues.*” We condone the unscriptural actions committed by those with whom we keep company, and we are equally guilty, if we fellowship with those who do things against God’s *Word*.

Acts 20:28-31 “*Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!*”

There are many false Christians today who do not believe that God will heal their body. Their decision to seek medical help is evidence that they reject God’s healing promises through the atoning work of Christ. Many reject God’s financial plan, and most churches have insurance coverage on the buildings they own. God’s command Matthew 6:19-24 to *sell, give* to the poor, *place* treasure in heaven, and *follow* Him is flatly rejected.

If anyone does not accept God’s full Truth, we are *not* to invite them into our home, we are *not* to accept their invitations or their literature, and we are not to be close friends with them. John 1:10-11, “*If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching [doctrine], do not take him*

into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.”

Every type of insurance, pension plan, government tax credit—consisting of more than we *paid* in tax—or any type of laid-up money is unscriptural, because it eliminates trust on God. 1 Timothy 6:17 “*Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*”

Jesus said not to lay up treasure on earth Matthew 6:21; Luke 12:34, because “*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*” Our trust is on *treasure here* on earth—when we hold on to it. We are to be 18-19 “*rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*”

In deciding on fellowship, we need to ask and to give ourselves honest answers. *If I continue to have fellowship with a certain individual, will it hinder my believing faith and trust on the Atonement of Christ for things that pertain to this life—like healing and finances?* If the answer is *yes*, then we have to place God’s will first, and part company with that person, because “*Any one who loves [anyone] more than me is not worthy of me*” Matthew 10:37.

Friends and faith are important issues. If God says to *give up* some thing or some one for His sake, then we have to *do* it. If we obey, He promises Mark 10:30 that we, “*shall receive a hundredfold [back] now in this time*”—anyone, any land, or any thing we gave up for His sake—“*with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*”

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