

# Choosing Close Friends



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Anyone can say they believe in God and are a follower of Christ, but their life-style; their conduct; general speech; attitude; conversation; and treatment of those around them, means much more than statements of faith. What church do they attend and support; and what teaching are they listening to every week—is it the full Truth of the Bible—that is the issue in choosing close friends.

We must select companions on their desire to follow New Testament teaching, because we will be influenced by their attitudes and opinions on faith in God. 1 Corinthians 15:33-34 *“Do not deceive yourselves: ‘Evil companionships [company; communications] corrupt good morals [habit].’ ‘Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God.’”*

What God has to say about choosing close friends is important. How we personally decide on this 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 anyone’s opinion, but only by the Word of God.

Non-believing friends will influence our personal faith in God. We can be easily influenced by their opinions; their interests; their selection of music; topics of conversation; or about what trust on God really is. Our choice of *friends* reveals our level of *faith* in God. We should want to be with those who trust God as we do—those who support and attend a church that teaches God’s full Truth.

Our close friends should follow the teachings of Christ on important matters like financial trust—having no laid up treasure on earth; divine healing by faith in the Blood of Jesus; forgiving others no matter what they did to us; obeying God’s Word on employment matters—being content with any wage and submissive to any boss—not quitting a job, but praying for change.

We feel comfortable around friends who truly follow the teaching of Christ as we do, because divine principles of trust on God is so important. Amos 3:3 *“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”* We should desire the companionship of those who truly believe and trust God in faith.

We should be cordial, friendly, and Christ-like to anyone outside our church group, but we should not *desire* to be close friends with them until we know them on a much deeper level—are they truly following Jesus’ teaching on divine healing; finances; work issues; rejecting insurance of every type; having no real estate possessions; and taking no legal action against anyone for any reason.

The deciding factor on choosing close friends is their agreement with us on our life of faith in God for everything—not just some things, but *everything*—if not, we would have little in common with them. Being righteous is only through an active faith in Christ. Romans 1:17 *“Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith”* Habakkuk 2:4.

Many have been deceived by the devil to think that God will not protect them; He will not heal them; will not provide their needs; and will not do what He promised to do. Many Christians today say they trust God, but who do not really trust Him in faith for important things in life.

Choosing close friends is very important, because the people with whom we spend our time and share our thoughts, will affect *our attitudes, our thoughts, and our faith* in God. Salvation is by a trusting faith on the Atonement Blood of Christ,

so we must be close friends with those who trust God in the same way.

Satan has many counterfeit substitutes for faith in God—for healing, financial security, avenging wrongs, protection from loss or harm, and for other life issues. He has deceived the world to trust in drugs and the medical profession for healing at high cost—instead of trusting God by faith for divine healing at no cost. Satan robs people of the spiritual benefits that accompanies God’s 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* 51—so we could know *true* friends from *false* Christians when choosing close companions.

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 *people*, 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.”*

Choosing close friends must be done as the Bible instructs us. 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 their *conduct; attitudes; speech; what church and teaching they attend and support*, because their *life*, and ours, must *“prove their change of heart”* Luke 3:8.

An unbeliever is anyone who does *not believe* that God heals, protects, provides, and saves by divine power and by faith in Him alone—therefore, we should not associate with those who do *not believe* and do *not trust* God—*“For what fellowship can light have with darkness?”* 2 Corinthians 6:14. The sin nature wants to socialize with sinful lifestyles.

Serious sins that would disqualify us for Heaven are 1 Corinthians 6:9-10—*idolaters*—anything ahead of God; *adulterers*—unfaithful to God or a spouse; *fornicators*—abnormal or perverted lifestyle; *theft*—taking something belonging to another; *greed*—wanting more and more, and never being thankful or contented; *drunkards*—abusing alcohol; *slanderers*—ruining reputations, and *swindlers*—being dishonest. Those who do *not* repent 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 person or any interest to come between us and God—because Matthew 10:37 “*Anyone who loves his father, mother [or anything] 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 *do* God’s *will* in our life, then we will not have close fellowship with non-believers—or anyone who is *not doing* God’s *will* in their life. We should not be close friends with those who are doing unscriptural things; going to questionable places; and having worldly interests. If we will obey God, “*I will receive you. I will be their God, and they will be my people*” 2 Corinthians 6:17.

Bible examples give spiritual light on friends and 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* of God’s will, because the Lord had commanded Israel not to

associate with Moabites. They went anyway—but Elimelech and his two sons eventually lost their lives. When Naomi returned to Bethlehem, she was back in God’s will, so He *blessed* her in many ways.

God’s Word is clear Revelation 18:4 “*Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*” We con-done the unscriptural actions committed by those with whom we keep company—*guilty by association* it is termed.

Acts 20:28-31 “*Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of [feed] 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 who *say* they are Christians, but do *not believe* that God will heal their body. Their decision to seek medical help shows that they reject God’s healing promises through the Blood of Christ. In choosing close friends, we need to know if their church teaches on divine healing, and are the ministers trusting God for health and healing in their own lives.

Many reject God’s financial plan. In choosing friends, we need to know if a proclaimed Christian is attending and supporting a church that rents the building where services are held—in compliance with Jesus’ teaching Matthew 6:19. Most religious organizations *own* the church building and then *insure* the building to protect it. God’s command Matthew 6:19-24 to *sell, give* to the poor, *place* treasure in heaven, and *follow* Him in faith on a daily basis, is flatly rejected.

If anyone does not accept, nor live by, God’s full Truth, we are *not* to accept their invitations, and we are *not* to be close friends with them. 2 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 company pension; every type of insurance; government welfare; tax refund consisting of *more* than we *paid* in tax; or any laid-up money for financial protection, is *wrong* because it eliminates *trust* on God. Jesus said *not* to lay up treasure on earth Luke 12:34, because “*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*” Our *trust* is on *treasure* on earth, when we accept Social Security from the government.

When choosing close friends, we need to have honest answers. It is not whether they *say* Jesus is their Savior, but whether they follow His teaching on financial trust; divine healing; being subject to our boss; rejecting all responsibility for insurance coverage; having no earthly treasure; forgiving everyone from the heart, and never hiring a lawyer to defend them in court. What teaching are they accepting as *God’s Truth*; and what church are they supporting as *giving* God’s Truth—is where we need honest answers.

We must choose to be close friends only with those who will support our faith and trust on God, and who live by the same Truth and who hear the same teaching from the Bible in church services. We must make scriptural choices on this important issue—because “*Anyone who loves [anyone] more than me is not worthy of me*” Matthew 10:37.

Choosing close friends who believe God as we do, and who live by the same Truth we hear in these church services, is a vitally important issue. If God says to *give up close fellowship* with someone for *His* sake, then we have to *do* it. If we will obey His Word, He promises Mark 10:30—that we, “*shall receive a hundredfold now in this time*”—any friend, any land, or anything we gave up for His sake—“*with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*”



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