

## Problems Teenagers Face: Choosing Friends

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### Intro:

- **illus.: Two hunters**
  - **Two men were out hunting.**
  - **Suddenly one man saw a grizzly bear charging** them and **yelled**, frantically **putting on a pair of tennis shoes.**
  - His **friend looked** when he yelled, and **anxiously asked**, "**What are you doing? Don't you know you can't outrun a grizzly bear?**"
  - The **man responded**, "**I don't have to outrun a grizzly. I just have to outrun you!**" (adapted from SermonIllustrations.com, attributed to Unknown)

- - **one of the hardest thing to do, is choose a friend – make a good friend**
  - **friends are important, even needed, by everyone**
  - **a good friend is hard to come by – with whom you can entrust your life – trust not to sacrifice you to a charging bear**
- **this series:** Problems Teenagers Face
- **this lesson:** choosing friends

- **There are different types of friends** – categorize them
  - acquaintances: “one that is of the same nation, party, or group” (Merriam-Webster) – **call these people acquaintances**
    - **Lk. 7:34; Matt. 9:10-13** Jesus had acquaintances who were sinners, although it wasn’t popular
    - **illus.: all the kids at school and in your neighborhood can be your friends**, because you are in the same group – friend = acquaintance
  
- - **friendly people: “one that is not hostile”** (Merriam-Webster) – **friends with everyone who’s not hostile**
  - **Matt. 5:9** peace makers – want everyone to be friends
- - **Matt. 5:25** make friends quickly with opponent at law - not want to be hostile toward others
- - **Rom. 12:17-18** be at peace with all men, do good to all, be friends with everyone who will
- - **Christians strive to be friends (not hostile) with everyone**
  - **illus.: Jesse Owens**, 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, Germany – friendly, not companion, not best friends
  - **illus.: a friend is someone who will help a stranger**
  
- - **companions: “a favored companion” – “one who keeps company with another”** (Merriam-Webster) – **people we hang out with**
  - **illus.: companion, one keep company with**
    - **Mk. 2:25** David, men with him, **living and working together**, companions
- - **Acts 4:23** apostles’ companions, those they spent time, hang out, encourage, influence
- - **Acts 19:29** Paul’s companions, those he traveled with and lived with on journeys, worked and worshiped with
  - A British publication once offered a prize for the **best definition of a friend**. The winning definition read: **"A friend is the one who comes in when the whole world has gone out."** (SermonIllustrations.com, attributed to Bits & Pieces, July, 1991) – willing to be your companion when others desert you – Jesus, trial
- - **companions help you spiritually or tear you down**
  - **Ps. 55:13** “But it is you, a man my equal, my companion and my familiar friend;”
  - **Ps. 119:63** “I am a companion of all those who fear You, And of those who keep Your precepts.”
  - **Pr. 13:20** “He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.”
- - **must choose companions that influence positively**
  - **1 Cor. 15:33** bad company corrupts good morals – positive or negative influence

- - **close friend / best friend: “one attached to another by affection or esteem”** (Merriam-Webster)
  - **these are intimate friends that we love**
    - **Pr. 16:28** “A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer separates **intimate friends.**”
    - **Pr. 17:17** “A **friend loves at all times.** . . .”
- - **illus.: Jesus**
  - **Lazarus** was a close personal friend of Jesus, **with Mary and Martha**
  - **apostles** were His friends (even Judas, Matt. 26:50), but some were closer than others
    - **Peter, James, John** had a special relationship (transfiguration, garden)
    - **John** seems to have a more special relationship with Jesus than all of them (one whom Jesus loved, leaned on His breast at supper)
- **illus.: Sam Davis was a Confederate spy executed at Pulaski, Tennessee** – **friend is someone who will die for**
- **illus.: Jesus - Jn. 15:13** “**Greater love has no one** than this, that one **lay down his life for his friends.**”
- **even in the church, we are closer to some people than others**, for many reasons, one of which may be personality compatibility
  - **must be careful to not limit ourselves to closest friends**
  - **must be careful not to limit ourselves to family**
  - **examples of what to watch for:**
    - **limiting time outside of church** to mostly family or closest friends
      - e.g., spending Sunday afternoons with these, rather than becoming better friends with others
    - **before and after church** talking mostly family and closest friends before and after church
    - **not aggressively bring other brethren into your social group**, being clickish
- **“Picking” friends is more about “categorizing” than picking** – concept, expanded upon in remainder of lesson
  - **PP - illus. four categories**
  - 4 - **PP - illus. who in each category**
  - 4 - **PP - illus. moving friends from one category to another** – **up and down**

- **God factors into categorizing friends** – picking friends is really just proper categorization
  - **Ja. 2:23; 4:4** God is our “best friend” – we categorize our friends based on **our relationship** with God
  - **Jn. 15:14** Jesus friends are those who **obey Him**
  - **Our best friend is God (Jesus)!** – our best friend are God’s best friends
  - **Can we be best friends with people who aren’t friends with God and Jesus?**
  
- - we categorize our friends based on their relationship with God
  - **2 Cor. 6:14-16a** our “best friends” are going to be Christians
- - **2 Tim. 2:22** flee lusts, pursue. . . , with those who call. . . – Christians
- - **1 Cor. 15:33** bad company corrupts good morals
  - **if immoral person**, can be an acquaintance, but not companion nor best friend
  - **work to have Christian friends** – individually, parents for children
  - **closer relationship with spouse** if they’re a Christian
- - **Lk. 21:16-17** some people won’t desire to be a good friend because we’re Christians
  - **illus.: some people want to be an acquaintance, but not best friend** – converted, obey gospel
  
- 4 - **PP - illus.: friends are categorized based on their relationship with God**
  - **in one way, all Christians are friends, but** not best friends – “bosom buddies” as was David and Jonathan
  - **you may look at a little differently**, not hard and fast rules, general application
  
- **Summary / Inv.**
  - “picking the right friends” is about “putting people in the right category”
    - **over time**, you’ll move some people from one category to another, often based on their relationship with God
  - **the most important friend to have is God**
    - Are you God’s friend? Are your closest friends, God’s friends?
  - **inv.**