



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

A-MAZE-IN Life Series, Lesson 8

Lesson Title: Friends – Who Will You Choose?

Take Home Point: Let God guide your choices in friends.

Warm-Up:

A friend of mine has a daughter who is very strong-willed and defiant of authority. In spite of my friend's parental teaching and guidance, his daughter consistently wanders from God's way of living. As I have watched her grow, it is evident that her choice of friends and the influence they exert on her has a great deal to do with her poor decisions. I've spoken with her about this, and she is certain they need her as a friend so she can influence them in a positive way. But I have yet to see that result. She is not strong enough in her relationship with God to be the example I think she genuinely wants to be, so her desire to do good regularly caves in under the pressure of evil exerted by the ones she calls friends. How hard it is to watch her, with her many God-given gifts, continue down a self-destructive path led by those she mistakenly considers friends.

Read: John 15:12-17; 2 Corinthians 5:17

Observation (What happened?):

Who does Jesus consider to be his friends?

What are we when we enter into life with Jesus Christ?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What does it mean to you to be a friend to Jesus?

In light of Paul's words in 2 Corinthians, what should we look for in our friends?

Insight:

We all know that our friends will influence our own thinking, attitudes, and behavior in either positive or negative ways. This effect goes beyond more obvious examples of peer pressure. There may be no coercion or opinion applied one way or the other, yet genuine relationships will have an effect on our way of life. We find two excellent illustrations in the Bible, one constructive and one destructive. In 1 Kings 12, Israel's new king, Rehoboam, was offered the opportunity to set the tone for his rule. He rejected the counsel of his elders and listened instead to the harsh opinions of his friends. The result was that the kingdom of Israel was split in two. In this example, it is plain that Rehoboam was of the same mind as his friends long before he asked their advice. Later in Israel's history, we read of Daniel and his friends standing firm in living according to God's law in spite of the Babylonian king's edict. Because of their mutual support, they held to the right way of living. That's the kind of friendship God wants us to seek.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

How do you choose your friends? How are you being a positive influence on your friends?

Pray for the children in your small group to choose good friends.

Kingdom Quest Year 2 – Lesson 8