

Testing for True Friends

Galatians 4:8-20

Testing for True Friends

- Friends can be a wonderful blessing
 - Prov. 17:17 - “A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.”
 - Prov. 27:9 - “Ointment and perfume delight the heart, And the sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel.”

True Friends Say What We Need To Hear

- Even if it makes them our enemy
 - Gal. 4:16 - “Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?”
- Even when their tone of voice hurts
 - Gal. 4:20 - “I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.”

True Friends Say What We Need To Hear

- Paul loved the Galatians
 - Gal. 4:13, 19 - “You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first... 19 My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you”
 - Gal. 5:12 - “I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!”

True Friends Say What We Need To Hear

- The Galatians loved Paul
 - Gal. 4:12-15 - “Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all. 13 You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. 14 And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. 15 What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.”

We Need True Friends

- When hearing the gospel of Christ
 - Mark 16:15-16 - “And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”
 - Gal. 1:8-9 - “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

We Need True Friends

- When growing in the Lord
 - 2Peter 3:17-18 - “You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.”
 - 2Tim. 4:3-4 - “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

We Need True Friends

- When drifting from God
 - Gal. 4:19-20 - “My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, 20 I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.”
 - Gal. 6:1 - “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”

We Need True Friends

- True friends are under obligation to be honest with us
 - 2Tim. 4:1-2 - “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”
 - Ez. 33:7-9 - “So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me. 8 When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 9 Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.”

We Need True Friends

- Psalm 141:5 - “Let the righteous strike me; It shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; It shall be as excellent oil; Let my head not refuse it. For still my prayer is against the deeds of the wicked.”
- Prov. 13:18 - “Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, But he who regards a rebuke will be honored.”
- Prov. 15:31-32 - “The ear that hears the rebukes of life Will abide among the wise. 32 He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding.”
- Prov. 25:12 - “Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold Is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear.”

False Friends Say What We Want To Hear

- When it puts us on their side
 - Gal. 4:17 - “They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them.”
- When we have something they want
 - Gal. 6:12-13 - “As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.”

We Need To Beware Of False Friends

- When we are being courted with zeal
 - Their motives may be evil
 - Rom. 16:17-18 - “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”

We Need To Beware Of False Friends

- When we are being courted with zeal
 - Their knowledge may be in error
 - Rom. 10:1-2 - “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.”

We Need To Beware Of False Friends

- When we are being manipulated
 - 2Cor. 11:3, 13-15 - “But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ...
13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”

We Need To Beware Of False Friends

- When we are being manipulated
 - 2Peter 2:3 - “By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.”

We Need To Beware Of False Friends

- When we are pursued only in their presence
 - Gal. 4:18 - “But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you.”
 - Phil. 1:27 - “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel”
 - Phil. 2:12 - “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”

We Need To Beware Of False Friends

- Prov. 26:23-26 - “Fervent lips with a wicked heart
Are like earthenware covered with silver dross. 24
He who hates, disguises it with his lips, And lays
up deceit within himself; 25 When he speaks
kindly, do not believe him, For there are seven
abominations in his heart; 26 Though his hatred is
covered by deceit, His wickedness will be revealed
before the assembly.”
- Prov. 27:5-6 - “Open rebuke is better Than love
carefully concealed. 6 Faithful are the wounds of a
friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”

Testing for True Friends

- Many people have been led astray by the wrong kind of friends
 - 1Cor. 15:33 - “Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits.”
- Immature Christians have been tossed around by cunning and deceitful teachers
 - Eph. 4:14 - “That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting”
- True friends say what we need to hear; false friends say what we want to hear

Testing for True Friends

- Jesus is our truest friend
 - John 15:13-14 - “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.”