

Testing for True Friends

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Galatians 4:8-20

1. Friends can be a wonderful blessing - Prov. 17:17, 27:9
2. But it is not always easy to know who your true friends are
 - a. Sometimes a true friend tells us what we don't want to hear
 - b. Sometimes a false friend tells us what we do want to hear

B. In Galatians, Paul found it necessary to remind them of that truth

I. TRUE FRIENDS SAY WHAT WE NEED TO HEAR

A. They will tell us the truth

1. Even if it makes them our enemy - Gal. 4:16
2. Even when their tone of voice hurts - Gal. 4:20
3. Paul had been a true friend to the Galatians

B. Illustration: Doctor tells me what I want to hear: "You have supercalifragilisticxpealidociousitus."

1. Wow! I have some rare and strange illness that makes me over weight against my will.
2. "You are overweight from eating too much and exercising too little."
3. I'm changing doctors. That guy is a quack. He doesn't know anything about my unique problems.

C. Reality: Many Christians, weighed down by weakness and sin, do not like to be told what they do not want to hear.

1. "You are in rare circumstances; you cannot help but be unfaithful in your service to God."
2. I like that person; he really understands.
3. "You need to strive harder against sin and stop making excuses."
4. I'm changing churches; that preacher is unloving; he doesn't know the unique problems I have to deal with.

D. Paul in Galatia

1. Paul loved them - Gal. 4:13, 19, 5:12
2. They loved Paul - Gal. 4:12-15
3. Why were they treating Paul as an enemy? Because he told them they were falling away from Christ.

E. We need true friends

1. When hearing the gospel of Christ
 - a. Who will tell us the full gospel as preached by Christ and His apostles - Mark 16:15-16
 - b. Not just what is popularly believed, or what may appeal to our sensitivities - Gal. 1:8-9
2. When growing in the Lord
 - a. Who will tell us of the need to grow and the danger of apostasy - 2Peter 3:17-18
 - b. Not just tickling ears with things we enjoy hearing - 2Tim. 4:3-4

- 3. When drifting from God - Gal. 4:19-20, 6:1
 - a. True friends are under obligation to be honest with us - 2Tim. 4:1; Ez. 33:7-9
 - b. Do we appreciate the value of having friends like this?
- F. In the wisdom of David and Solomon
 - 1. Psalm 141:5; Prov. 13:18, 15:31-32, 25:12

II. FALSE FRIENDS SAY WHAT YOU WANT TO HEAR

- A. When it puts us on their side - Gal. 4:17
 - 1. When we have something they want - Gal. 6:12-13
- B. We need to beware of false friends
 - 1. When we are being courted with zeal
 - a. Their motives may be wrong - Gal. 4:17; Rom. 16:17-18
 - b. Their knowledge may be in error - Rom. 10:1-2
 - 2. When we are being manipulated - Gal. 4:17
 - a. A tactic first used by Satan, and since by many others 2Cor. 11:3, 13-15; 2Peter 2:3
 - 3. When we are pursued only in their presence
 - a. Paul sought their devotion even in his absence - Gal. 4:18; Phil. 1:27, 2:12
 - b. False friends often forget about us when they are not with us
 - c. Do we appreciate the danger of the wrong kind of friends?
- C. In the wisdom of Solomon
 - 1. Prov. 26:23-26; 27:5-6

Conclusion:

- A. Many people have been led astray by the wrong kind of friends - 1Cor. 15:33
 - 1. Immature Christians have been tossed around by cunning and deceitful teachers - Eph. 4:14
 - 2. True friends say what we need to hear; false friends say what we want to hear
- B. Jesus is our best, truest friend - John 15:13-14