

=SEPARATION=

Lesson 5

Evil Companions

AIM: to teach my pupils to find their friends among good Christian people.

POINT OF CONTACT: The personality and traits of one person will be attracted to and will attract a certain personality and traits of another person. We could bring a magnet (or a picture or model of one) to class, along with some metal objects. The magnet could serve two purposes—it could first represent our lives. Are our lives magnetized with Christian qualities that will attract other good Christians to us? The magnet then could be others' lives—with what qualities are they magnetized? (If the lives of others contain Christian virtues, and if our lives are magnetized from God's Word and His leading, then we will find fellowship and companionship with them.) The objects could be labeled: GOES TO CHURCH, BEHAVES PROPERLY ON A DATE, DOES NOT DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, DOES NOT USE FILTHY LANGUAGE, OBEYS HIS PARENTS, etc. The magnet could be labeled: A GOOD CHRISTIAN LIFE.

INTRODUCTION: The friends that we have and the friends whom we choose are really mirrors of ourselves. Our affiliations with others show the world what we admire, what we would like to imitate and what gives us pleasure. For this reason we need to consider very carefully whether the friends that we have and those whom we would like to have, possess qualities that we would like to possess and qualities that we want others to think we possess. Look at the interesting story of good King Jehoshaphat's alliance with evil King Ahab in II Chronicles 18. After the battle was over and the relationship ended in the death of Ahab, God scolded Jehoshaphat very strongly. "*Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.*" Now read II Chronicles 19:2. (Teacher, this would be a good story to tell to children. King Jehoshaphat almost got killed through choosing an evil companion.)

I. DON'T HAVE EVIL COMPANIONS.1. What is an evil companion?

- 1) Evil is anything that is not of God. III John 11b, "*He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.*" The unregenerate, unsaved mind is in a war against God. It is hatred against Him. See Romans 8:7. From a man's beginning, his heart is naturally wicked. Read Genesis 6:5; 8:21.
- 2) A companion is a person whom we choose to call our friend—one with whom we enjoy being, talking, participating in recreation, etc. Does an evil companion necessarily have to be a civil law breaker, a "hippie," a dope addict, a drunkard, etc.? All of these types of people are evil companions, but some evil companions would not do any of these things. Anything that is not of God is against Him and against His principles.

2. Why should we refrain from having evil companions?

- 1) If we are Christians and the one whom we have chosen to be our friend is not a Christian, the Bible says this friendship is like being unequally yoked together. The Bible says that we are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. The Bible forbids unequal alliances. Notice II Corinthians 6:14-18.
- 2) We would be turning our backs upon God if we were to become close friends with the unsaved or worldly. James 4:4b says, "*...whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*" If we are seeking to live Christlike lives and have His mind, we will hate evil as He does. See Proverbs 8:13.
- 3) There is a solemn warning in Proverbs 1:10-16 against listening to the flattery of the sinner who would want us to choose him for a friend. We should say, "No, thank you," to the wrong companion whenever he asks us to come and spend time with him. The evil person will seek to "cut down to size" the Christian who is attempting to live the Christian life. With flattery, false friendship and mockery, the wrong kind of person will sometimes try to get us to join his group—to run with his crowd. We must be firm in our convictions and strong in the Lord to associate only with the right people.

- 4) We would be sinning if we were to make a mistake and choose the wrong type of companions. This is true not only because God has commanded that we not choose the wrong kind of companions, but also because there is not any excuse for making a mistake in our judgment of them. God has wisdom available for all of His children for choosing the right friends. Look at Proverbs 2:10-15. We will be punished if we choose wrongly. Read Proverbs 22:3.
- 5) We might think that we can keep the friendship of a wrong kind of person and that eventually everything will work out for good. Proverbs 3:5-7 warns us against using our own reasoning. We should follow God's advice and obey His rules.
- 6) It is so much better to be rejected by the wrong kind of people and to be accepted by God than it is to be rejected by God and accepted by the wrong kind of people. The darkness and the light never did have anything in common. Jesus said that if we would love God and follow His ways, then we would be hated by the world. Notice John 15:18, 19. If we would be loved by the world, then we would be rejected by God. It is so much better to be in the minority crowd at school and in the neighborhood and on the job—even if we are a minority of one—than it is to be left out of God's majority.
- 7) The evil companion will corrupt our own life and lead us away from fellowship with God. I Corinthians 15:33, "*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.*" Evil associations will ruin any good habits that we have started. To be in accord with evil friends, we have to like what they like, talk as they talk, think as they think. Wrong always corrupts right. No one can pick up a handful of dirt without getting a dirty hand.
- 8) We will become known by the bad associations that we might have. People judge upon appearances, and the testimony of the Christian can be ruined even if it just looks as if he might be doing wrong. I Thessalonians 5:22, "*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*" Our reputation can be ruined and our testimony destroyed by our associating with the wrong crowd.

II. DON'T MAKE FRIENDS OF CHRISTIANS WHO ARE LIVING IN DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD. If we remain faithful to church services, Sunday school, and principles of separation, and if our friends become backslidden, there will be a natural lack of interest because the number of things in common will have decreased. We need to pray for such friends and invite them from time to time to return to the services. We must be cautious, however, in seeking to help them. Read carefully Galatians 6:1. New friends as well as old friends who are disobedient to principles of separation as we see them could not be any help to our own Christian life and could not provide the sweet fellowship that we need.

III. DON'T BECOME DISCOURAGED ABOUT MAKING GOOD FRIENDS.

1. "Make" good friends.
 - 1) Are any of your present friends not Christians? Have an important part in making them a good friend—lead them to know Jesus. Christ in the life of any of your present friends, will, of course, change that person into the suitable kind for you to have.
 - 2) This should be done immediately. The longer you put off getting your friends saved, the more in jeopardy you place their eternity and the longer you are disobedient to God's command to have no fellowship with them.
2. Be a friend. Proverbs 18:24.
 - 1) Pray for that one whom you would like to have as a friend.
 - 2) Become interested in the activities and the opinions of that one whom you would have as a friend. Whenever there is an opportunity for conversation with that one, let him talk about himself, his interests and his opinions. Be a good listener.
 - 3) Be kind to that one. Do not be overbearing. Do not force your presence and affection upon that one.
 - 4) Wait for God to bring about the friendship. If the person whom you would like to have as a friend does not seem to know that you are around, perhaps God has other friends in mind for you. Perhaps God wants you to develop into the type of person who **is** a friend more than one who **needs** a friend. Let the Lord make of you what He would have you to be.

CONCLUSION: Ask the Lord to develop in you a strong mind and some firm convictions so that when the wrong group invites you to join them, you will be able to decline their invitation graciously. Be independent of bad influence, and be dependent upon God, knowing that some day you will be answerable to Him!