

Biblical Friendship

What can we learn about wise (and unwise) friendships from the following Bible passages?

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him, so that Saul set him over the men of war. And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants." (1Sa 18:1-5 ESV)

And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" ...Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet." The king said to him, "Where is he?" ...And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, "Mephibosheth!" And he answered, "Behold, I am your servant." And David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always." (2Sa 9:1-7 ESV)

Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and comfort him. And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him. And they raised their voices and wept, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven. And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great. (Job 2:11-13 ESV)

Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. And as soon as Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it (for he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), then Jeroboam returned from Egypt. And they sent and called him, and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came and said to Rehoboam, "Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke on us, and we will serve you." He said to them, "Go away for three days, then come again to me." So the people went away. Then King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, who had stood before Solomon his father while he was yet alive, saying, "How do you advise me to answer this people?" And they said to him, "If you will be a servant to this people today and serve them, and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants forever." But he abandoned the counsel that the old men gave him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him. And he said to them, "What do you advise that we answer this people who have said to me, 'Lighten the yoke that your father put on us?'" And the young men who had grown up with him said to him, "Thus shall you speak to this people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you lighten it for us,' thus shall you say to them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's thighs. And now, whereas my father laid on you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.'" So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king said, "Come to me again the third day." And the king answered the people harshly, and forsaking the counsel that the old men had given him, he spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions." So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of affairs brought about by the LORD that he might fulfill his word, which the LORD spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. (1Ki 12:1-15 ESV)

I am a companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts. (Psa 119:63 ESV)

One who is righteous is a guide to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray. (Pro 12:26 ESV)

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. (Pro 13:20 ESV)

The poor is disliked even by his neighbor, but the rich has many friends. (Pro 14:20 ESV)

A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends. (Pro 16:28 ESV)

Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends. (Pro 17:9 ESV)

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. (Pro 17:17 ESV)

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Pro 18:24 ESV)

Wealth brings many new friends, but a poor man is deserted by his friend. (Pro 19:4 ESV)

Many seek the favor of a generous man, and everyone is a friend to a man who gives gifts. All a poor man's brothers hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him! He pursues them with words, but does not have them. (Pro 19:6-7 ESV)

He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend. (Pro 22:11 ESV)

Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare. (Pro 22:24-25 ESV)

Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags. (Pro 23:20-21 ESV)

Be not envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them, for their hearts devise violence, and their lips talk of trouble. (Pro 24:1-2 ESV)

My son, fear the LORD and the king, and do not join with those who do otherwise, for disaster will arise suddenly from them, and who knows the ruin that will come from them both? (Pro 24:21-22 ESV)

Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy. (Pro 27:5-6 ESV)

Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel. Do not forsake your friend and your father's friend, and do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity. Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away. (Pro 27:9-10 ESV)

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. (Pro 27:17 ESV)

The one who keeps the law is a son with understanding, but a companion of gluttons shames his father. (Pro 28:7 ESV)

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! (Ecc 4:9-10 ESV)

Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. (Dan 2:17-19 ESV)

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. (Jhn 15:12-15 ESV)
