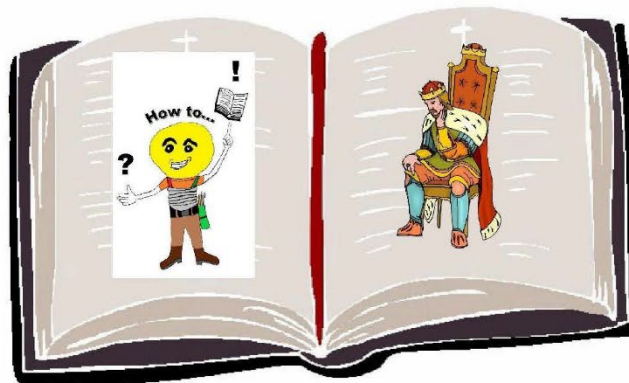


II Chronicles

Chapter 11

From the
Blessing of God
to the
JUDGEMENT OF GOD

A Commentary on
II Chronicles



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Lessons from the Reign of King Jehoshaphat

Making Friends

Friends are important. They will either make you successful in your walk with God, or they will hinder you and cause failure! While they are important, they are not always necessary. Sometimes God calls men to be “loners”. He has crafted some people in a way that they function better not being distracted by other people. However, most people need friends, not just any friends, but good friends!

I was told once that if you had 5 friends, you were really blessed. The man that told me this was not very friendly and had few

friends. I think he used his knowledge of friends as an excuse to not be friendly!

My experience has been different. Although friends are not necessary and I enjoy being alone with God, I also enjoy the company of friends. One of my greatest pleasures is investing my life, wisdom, talents, and time into the lives of others so that they get closer to God. I enjoy going to church, not just to meet God, but to meet and help others! I have more friends than I can count. Many are very close friends whom I love and trust! Some are closer to me than my own brothers and sisters.

The word “**friend**” appears 99 times in the Bible! God has a lot to say about friends. He is interested in you making the right friends and staying away from those that will harm you.

It is especially important for a leader to have good, honest, close friends to give him counsel, pray for him, and intervene if he is making mistakes!

Here are some admonitions from Scripture about finding good friends for the leader:

Proverbs 13:20 “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”

Notice the description of the friend here. He is someone that you walk with! He is going the same direction you are going. You both are headed the same way! This is important. A good friend will have your best interest at heart. He is not just interested in your temporary happiness or your attitude towards him. He wants you to be successful! Those that just want to please you are called “Yes Men”! They will just tell you what they think you want to hear and do. They try to avoid conflict and end up causing the leader to fail. Be very careful to **not** make them your best friends!

Also, according to Proverbs 13:20, the friend is a “wise” man! The way to get wisdom is not by just sitting and listening to wise men. It is by walking with them! It is going through things together. I

have a good friend that lives in another state now. He calls me sometime and we talk about some of the things we did together. He especially remembers when we went out on Friday nights to downtown Fort Smith and passed out gospel tracts and talked to the “*bar hoppers*” that congregated there. We would walk up and down the blocks and talk to each other and to other people who were just starting to get drunk. I had learned from my time as a drunk, that when a man takes a few drinks, before he gets really drunk, he gets confident and wants to talk and show how smart he is! We would deal with them, pose questions to them, and answer their questions. Through it all we developed a good friendship. Occasionally, someone would trust Christ as Savior. What excited me was that my friend would get to lead them to the Lord!

I noticed one time when I was reading about Abraham, that when he went to offer Isaac up as a sacrifice in *Genesis 22*, that he

took some young men with him! They couldn't go the whole way but walked with the wise man!

Genesis 22:3-5 “And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.”

In **Proverbs 13:20** we are given the results of walking with wise men. It is wisdom! The contrast of walking with wise men is the description of **“a companion of fools”**. It is destruction!

A companion is someone that you “*hang out with*”! Choose your friends wisely. The people you fellowship with will either make you or break you!

Please consider the mistake of King Rehoboam. He listened to the advice of his friends! Those that had been brought up with him!

II Chronicles 10:8 “But he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him, that stood before him.”

When we read about what happened we can see the foolish advice this was! The lesson to learn is that sometimes your friends aren’t really your friends. They are trying to use you to get something for themselves!

Proverbs 22:24 “Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:”

The problem with hanging around angry, furious men is that you will be drawn into arguments, fights, and battles that you have

no business fighting. Either with them, or those that they have offended. This was one of the big mistakes of several of the kings in *II Chronicles* that the good leader can learn from in choosing friends.

James 4:4 **“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”**

Now it is important to understand this about friends. It doesn't tell you not to make friends of lost people. A good way to win them over to God is by being friendly to them. What this verse is teaching is to not get too close to the world. A Christian's love and desire is to please and fellowship with God and let God be his influence. When a love and fellowship with worldly things develops, it severs a close friendship with God. Not only does it sever it, it causes the Christian to go against God. I remember when I first got saved. I started going to church and hanging out with church people. I didn't run my old

friends off, I just started making new ones. They eventually left me because they had no use for what I was experiencing!

A good example of a bad friend is given in *2 Samuel 13:3*.

2 Samuel 13:3 **“But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab was a very subtil man.”**

Amnon had a friend that gave him bad advice to sin against his sister Tamar. He was Amnon's cousin, Jonadab. This bad friendship with a smart, but crooked man, ended up in the death of Amnon! It also led to the rebellion of Absalom and eventually his defeat and death! Remember **“...but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”**

The problem with hanging around with bad friends is that they will influence you into sin and doing things against what God wants you to do. Your friendship is not a neutral proposition. Bad friends will lead you downhill away from God! Notice this admonition:

Proverbs 29:24 “Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not.”

Being a partner with a thief causes you to at first ignore the cursing, then occasionally cursing yourself. It will come out of your mouth, then before long you have a full- fledged, “potty mouth” vocabulary! It ends up destroying you! It shows the gradual, changing, and long-lasting effect that bad friends produce.

In the book of **Esther**, we are given another example of bad friendship and the results of it. Haman, the enemy of the Jews, had friends; bad ones, that advised him horribly. He not only got bad advice from them, but his wife was not a very good friend, either!

Esther 5:10 “Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife.”

Esther 5:14 “Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go

thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.”

Esther 6:14 “And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.”

His friends were not much help to him and led to his being hanged on his own gallows! They were “*Yes Men*” that just encouraged him to do what he wanted to do anyway. Same with his wife!

Most people are aware of the three friends of Job. (**Job 2:11, 16:20, 17:5, 19:14, 19:19, 19:21, 32:3, 42:7, 10**) They were not a lot of help to him either. But at least they showed up, even though they got the reason Job was suffering wrong! A good lesson to learn about friendship is to be there when your friend is going through

trouble. Be careful about blaming him and giving advice! It is important to not be a friend like Job's friends and not be a brother like Joseph's brothers (*Genesis 37:5*)!

This advice on friendship is very helpful to the leader. He needs to develop the right kind of friends that will be there and will be able to see things from a different perspective. Many times, a leader cannot see the long term results of his decisions. A friend can give him objective advice. As I read about the kings in *II Chronicles*, it always amazes me that they can't see the results of the mistakes they are making. Then I think about the mistakes I have made. It then becomes clear to me! Most of the mistakes I have made have been by making split, snap decisions. If I had a friend counsel me at the time, or had listened to them, I probably would have made better decisions!

Besides all the official government leaders that King David developed, he developed several men as friends. One of these was named Zabud.

1 Kings 4:5 “And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend:” (2 Samuel 15:37, 16:16, 17)

All we knew about him was that he was the prophet Nathan's son. Preacher's kids for the most part have a bad reputation! I don't know how many people blame their life of sin by being influenced by some boy. Many times, they would tell me, “...and he was the *preachers son or daughter!*” However, Zabud was a good one.

Hushai the Archite was also the friend of King David.

II Samuel 15:37 So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.”

II Samuel 16:16 “And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king.”

Hushai, by giving bad advice to Absalom was able to allow King David to escape and regroup. Having good faithful friends will help the leader in making decisions, especially in times of trouble!

Many of the examples revealed in **II Chronicles** about the mistakes of these Kings could have been prevented if the kings had just had good friends. Friends to advise them to do something or to refrain from acting. A lot of history is made based upon what friends the king made!

Rehoboam's mistake was to listen to “...**the young men that were brought up with him...**” See **II Chronicles 10:8, 10!** Sometimes your friends give bad advice!

Jehoshaphat was a good king, but he made the horrible mistake of making friends with God's enemies. He “...**joined**

affinity with Ahab.” II Chronicles 18:1 Joining affinity is more than being a casual acquaintance. It ended in the marriage of his son and Ahab’s daughter.

Please develop the right kind of friends. It is extremely important for the leader of men to know how to find and develop the right kind of friends. Being the wrong kind of friend will end up destroying you, or if it doesn’t get to you, it will show up in your descendants. God delivered Jehoshaphat but the results of his mistakes show up in his son! See what happens to the great King Jehoshaphat. Learn from the results that his bad friendship with King Ahab had that showed up in his son Jehoram!

Although it is not emphasized much, God is a friendly God! One of the most important attributes of God for the Christian, is his desire to be friendly! The reason he created man is for fellowship. I am not sure what He gets out of it, but I know that I get a lot out of having God as my friend!

When God placed Adam in the garden of Eden, He showed up to fellowship with him!

Genesis 3:8,9 “And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?”

It is instructive to learn that sin separates us from God and his fellowship! It is expanded upon in **Isaiah**:

Isaiah 59:1-3 “Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

or your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.”

Salvation and forsaking of sin will bring us back into fellowship with Him.

As Jesus trained the disciples by walking with them, He developed a friendship with them. Right before He went to the cross, He let them know of this special relationship that he wants with us!

***John 15:15* “Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”**

This concept of God being a friend to sinners and saints is not known much outside of the Bible. Most religions don't portray or understand the friendship of God. In fact, many Christians never get

this fellowship aspect of God. Christianity is not a religion. It is a relationship, and the relationship is like friend to friend!

Choose your friends wisely, God does! Notice the following verses:

Exodus 33:11 “And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.”

II Chronicles 20:7 “Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?”

Friendship Dos and Don'ts

There are some “dos” and “don'ts” about friendship that will help you make the right kind of friends. Apply these in your search for friends!

Friendship Dos

Do this to make the right kind of friends:

Speak friendly

Ruth 2:13 “Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.”

Friendships are developed by talking. If you want to make good friends, the way to do it is to talk to people. My favorite time at church, in fact the main thing I get out of going to church is talking to people. I do this by talking to them. I seek people out, say hello to them, then give them plenty of opportunity to talk! I am interested in

their walk with God. I think of ways to counsel them and help them.

Please review the leadership concept of “Communication” for further information and ideas!

Be friendly

Proverbs 18:24 “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

How do you “...shew himself friendly...?” By being genuinely interested in them! The rest of the verse tells you how! “...sticketh closer...”; The way to be genuinely interested is to stick to them! Hang around them and help them. Move in close, be closer than a brother!

Give friendly

1 Samuel 30:26 “And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD;”

The way to make good friends is by giving to them. It is not by trying to buy or bribe them. Real giving comes out of an abundant heart that seeks the best for that person! Notice the often misapplied teaching of Jesus about using your money to make friends in **Luke 16:9!**

Luke 16:9 “And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.”

It is important to know that you can't use money to buy or bribe friends! Friends that are influenced by gifts are not real friends. What this teaches is the practice of generous giving! It is not the communistic practice of “*spreading the wealth*” because government mandates it! It is not the Robin Hood practice of taking

from the rich to give to the poor! It is doing it the way king David did. He let others enjoy the success that he achieved by voluntarily giving to them. One of the marks of friendship is noticed by what you do with your money. Do you spend it on yourself or do you use it to help your friends! Notice again the mark of friendship. When one fails, his friends help him to get back up on his feet again.

This is reinforced in *Proverbs 19*. Notice the following:

Proverbs 19:4 and *6* **“Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour.”**

“Many will intreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts.”

The lesson to learn here is two-fold. Learn that the kind of friend's money can buy are not worth the investment! Also, don't be a friend that is just looking for what he can get out of it. Buying friends is not profitable and being a friend for a profit is not the way to go!

Love friendly

***Proverbs 17:17* “A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”**

***Philippians 2:4* “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”**

One of the great characteristics of true friendship is that friends really love one another. This is expressed in one of the Greek words for friendship: phileo. While the Greek language is inadequate to express the real love between friends, the English words charity and brotherly kindness express the experience better. Charity is the type of love that has you putting the friend’s success above your own. And brotherly kindness expresses the type of love between physical siblings. I always liken it to knowing all the faults and errors a sibling has, but still caring about them. That is what is meant by a friend loving at all times! True friendship shines during adversity! When you are at your lowest, like Job was, you need your friends to be there for you! Job’s friends were not! They were there physically, but were not with him, but were against him!

1. Don't do this if you are trying to make the right kind of friends:

Friendship Don'ts

Entice to Serve Other gods

Deuteronomy 13:6 “If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers;”

Enticement is not a way to treat a friend, especially enticement to do something wrong! Notice the closeness of this friend:

“...which is as thine own soul,” You should use your influence to get your friends in church and closer to God, not away from Him.

Mark 5:19 “Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.”+

Use Friends for your Own Pleasure

Friends are not to be used, they are to be cherished. If you use friends for your own desires, they will end up taking the precious things away from you by using you! Notice Samson’s mistake:

Judges 14:20 “But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend.”

These ideas on friendship will not only help you be the right kind of friend but will also help you to find the right kind of friends that will not only make you a successful leader but a good Christian and church member!

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