

# ***Guiding Young People in Their Choice of Friends***

by Becky Rush



Proverbs 2:1-6

*My son, if you will receive my words  
and treasure my commandments within you,*

*<sup>2</sup>Make your ear attentive to wisdom,  
Incline your heart to understanding;*

*<sup>3</sup>For if you cry for discernment,  
Lift your voice for understanding;*

*<sup>4</sup>If you seek her as silver  
and search for her as for hidden treasures;*

*<sup>5</sup>Then you will discern the fear of the LORD  
and discover the knowledge of God.*

*<sup>6</sup>For the LORD gives wisdom;  
From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

## 1. The Necessity of Friendships

a) We need others (Eccl. 4:9-10)

b) Others need us

1 Thess. 5:11 . . . . *encourage one another.*

Gal. 5:13. . . . *through love serve one another.*

Heb. 10:25 . . . *let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.*

1 Thess. 4:18 . . . *comfort one another.*

As a pious friend, [Jonathan] directed [David] to God, the foundation of his confidence and the fountain of his comfort: He *strengthened his hand in God*. David, though a strong believer, needed the help of his friends for the perfecting of what was lacking in his faith; and herein Jonathan was helpful to him, by reminding him of the promise of God.

~ Matthew Henry, Commentary on 1 Samuel 23:16

## 2. Guidance for Building Friendships

a) Biblical Instruction

➔ Friendships to Avoid

“A bad friend is a positive misfortune, a weight continually dragging us down and chaining us to earth” J.C. Ryle, *Thoughts for Young Men*, 59.

- Evil men Prov. 4:14-15; 24:1-2
- Angry men Prov. 22:24-25
- Fools Prov. 14:7; 13:20; 26:4
- Gossips Prov. 20:19; Eph. 4:29
- Immoral men Prov. 5:8; 7:25; 29:3

## ➔ Friendships to Pursue

“Good friends are among are greatest blessing: they may keep us back from much evil, quicken us in our course, speak a word in season, draw us upward, and draw us on.” J.C. Ryle, *Thoughts for Young Men*, 59

- Loyal friends 1 Sam. 19:4a; Prov. 17:17; 27:10a
- Honest friends Prov. 16:28; 27:6,9
- Friends who fear God Prov. 1:7; 13:30b;

*I am a companion of all those who fear You, and of those who keep Your precepts. Ps. 119:63*



### b) Parental Shepherding

- Be an example of a loyal, wise friend.
- Pray for wisdom in parenting or mentoring young people about friendships.

Phil. 4:6 . . . *but in everything by prayer . . .*

Jas. 1:5 *But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God . . .*

- Pray for your children's friends.
- Encourage your children to be friendly.
- Be alert and involved with their friendships.

Richard Baxter's *Christian Directory*: "The Duties of Parents for Their Children" Direction 15: Keep them as much as may be from ill company, especially of ungodly play-fellows. It is one of the greatest dangers for the undoing of children in the world."

- Have your children's friends in your home
- Ask your children questions about their friends (show interest)
- Be knowledgeable about their friends on social media
- Provide opportunities in a supervised environment for friendships with spiritually needy young people
- Seize opportunities in everyday life for giving instruction about friendship

"Do you ask me what kind of friends you shall choose: Choose friends who will benefit your soul, friends whom you can really respect, friends whom you would like to have near you on your deathbed, friends who love the Bible, and are not afraid to speak to you about it, friends such as you will not be ashamed of acknowledging at the coming of Christ, and the Day of Judgment."

~ J. C. Ryle, *Thoughts for Young Men*, 60