



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

TROUBLED FRIENDSHIPS

KEY PASSAGE: Proverbs 16:28 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Proverbs 13:20; 20:19; 22:24-25; 24:21-22; 28:7; 29:3

► SUMMARY

“Make new friends but keep the old. One is silver and the other gold.”

This is a familiar saying that affirms the value of friendships. A friend is someone who loves you when you're unlovable, catches you if you fall, sees you at your worst, helps you become the best you can be, shares your deepest experiences, and stays by your side when others walk away. Such relationships are God's gift of mercy to us and are worth nurturing, and if necessary, repairing when damaged.

► SERMON POINTS

To avoid troubled relationships, we must be discerning about our associations. Scripture clearly tells us six kinds of friendships to avoid.

Unwise Friendships

- 1. The Gossip.** “One who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a gossip” (Prov. 20:19). One who slanders others will eventually gossip about you.
- 2. The Quick-tempered.** “Do not make friends with a person given to anger, or go with a hot-tempered person, or you will learn his ways and find a snare for yourself” (22:24-25).
- 3. The Disloyal and Discontent.** “My son, fear the LORD and the king; do not get involved with those of high rank, for their disaster will rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin that can come from both of them?” (24:21-22). Those who have a rebellious spirit, especially toward authority, are oftentimes unstable and prone to anger.
- 4. The Undisciplined.** “He who keeps the Law is a

discerning son, but he who is a companion of gluttons humiliates his father” (28:7). This refers not only to food but to any lust that is out of control.

- 5. The Immoral.** “A man who loves wisdom makes his father glad, but he who involves himself with prostitutes wastes his wealth” (29:3). An immoral person is a bad influence who drags us down into sin.
- 6. The Fool.** “One who walks with wise people will be wise, but a companion of fools will suffer harm” (13:20). A fool is someone who rejects God and spiritual matters.

Building Blocks for Genuine Friendships

If we want a relationship to develop and endure, we must use the proper building materials. When all these building blocks are put together, they convey love for our friend.

- **Time.** No relationships will flourish without the investment of our time in a friend's life.
- **Talk.** Every friendship is founded upon two-way communication.
- **Tears and laughter.** A genuinely open relationship requires sharing of both our joys and sorrows.
- **Triumphs.** We must be willing to share each other's accomplishments and victories as well as victories as well as all that the Lord is doing in our lives.
- **Trials and tragedies.** Difficulties, hurts, hardships, sorrows, and disappointments are part of life, and we need each other to share the burdens.
- **Thankfulness.** We need to express gratitude to our friend for their companionship and thank the Lord for blessing us with such a good relationship.
- **Thoughtfulness.** Being thoughtful requires thinking about how we can help the other person. Our love and care can be manifested in a variety of ways, depending on our friend's needs or circumstances.
- **Tolerance.** Being a genuine friend requires tolerance

of the other person. We need patience to overlook annoying habits or ugly attitudes.

- **Touch.** A godly touch is a wonderful way to convey our love, tenderness, and care for a friend.
- **Transparency.** To build an intimate friendship, we must be willing to be honest and open. Instead of trying to hide our weaknesses and faults, we should freely share our struggles with our friend.
- **Truthfulness.** Without a foundation of truth, we cannot build a relationship. We must be honest with ourselves and each other.

Behaviors That Damage Friendships

Beware of behaviors that damage our relationships.

- **Selfishness.** Always focusing on ourselves and our needs will eventually ruin a friendship.
- **Manipulation.** We should never use or try to control a friend for our own ends.
- **Jealousy.** Trying to jealously limit the other person's friendships will smother the relationship.
- **Criticism.** If we continually look for shortcomings and find fault with our friends, we'll drive them away. Plus, criticism causes us pain because we don't want to hurt our friend with the critique. Major issues should be addressed, but we can let minor ones pass.
- **Explosive temper.** Pent up anger that explodes in rage can do irreparable damage to a relationship.
- **Covetousness.** To envy what someone else has is the opposite of focusing on what's best for them.
- **Disloyalty.** Unfaithfulness is not only painful and disheartening, but it breaks apart relationships.
- **Dishonesty.** Lies destroy trust. If we've been dishonest in any way, we need to admit it and seek our friend's forgiveness.
- **Busyness.** If we are too busy to spend time with our friend, the relationship will wither.

Repairing Damaged Friendships

If you have a relationship that's in trouble but worth rescuing, you must be willing to take steps to make it right.

- **Address it.** Tell your friend you want to work on the friendship.
- **Determine what went wrong.** How did the relationship get off track?
- **Apologize.** Take responsibility for whatever you may have done to damage the friendship.
- **Refuse to blame and don't defend yourself.** The goal is to save the relationship, not to prove who's right.
- **Ask what you can do to repair the relationship.** This opens the door for suggestions from the other person.
- **Commit to change.** Promise to make the changes required to be faithful and carry out your commitment.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Am I projecting on my friend something that happened in my past?
- Am I afraid to have a close relationship with anybody?
- Do I have unrealistic expectations of this relationship?
- Are any feelings of rejection due to this person's actions or poor self-image?

Damaged friendships can be repaired if you're committed to making the necessary corrections. With the Lord's guidance, ask your friend how you are doing and what you can do to improve.

► RESPONSE

- Review the warnings God gives about the types of friends to avoid. Have you had friends who displayed these qualities? How did they affect your character and choices?
- To have an intimate and loyal friend, you need to become one to someone else. See the list of requirements for building a true friendship. Which ones are characteristic of you? Which ones do you need to develop or improve?
- Do you have any troubled friendships? What do you think has caused the strained relationship? What can you do to bring healing to that friendship?

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