



# Choosing the Right Power Company

Written by David Jeremiah

EL CAJON, Calif. (BP)--We are known by the company we keep. That's why it's so important to choose the right company. Whatever our age, our personalities are affected by our friends. Having the right friends is like surrounding ourselves with dozens of beautiful, beaming lamps. Good friends illumine our lives and empower us

to "walk in the light." But unwholesome friends are low voltage or burned-out bulbs that can leave us, sooner or later, in darkness.

As Proverbs 13:20 puts it: Whoever walks with the wise will become wise; whoever walks with fools will suffer harm (New Living Translation).

## Walking with the Wise

The art of selecting the right friends is one of life's greatest skills. Have you ever noticed the invaluable role friendships played in the lives of our favorite Bible characters?

Moses, despite 80 years of life experiences, felt he couldn't face Pharaoh without his friend and brother, Aaron, beside him. Naomi needed Ruth's friendship to rebuild her life following the deaths of her husband and sons. David may not have survived his early crises without the support of Jonathan.

When Daniel faced the execution of the wise men of Babylon, he gathered his three closest friends "that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven" (Daniel 2:18). The melancholy Jeremiah would have been hard-pressed to complete his ministry without the help of his associate, Baruch. Though our Lord Jesus Himself sometimes withdrew to solitary places, He also exhibited great capacity for fellowship (John 15:13-15). Paul's writings are filled with friendships. He sent greetings to his friends, remembered them by name, traveled with them, prayed with and for them, loved them, and drew strength from them.

## Walking with Fools

But Proverbs 13:20 also warns, "... the companion of fools will suffer harm" (NASB). Notice that both Psalms and Proverbs begin with a similar emphasis -- the danger of choosing unsuitable friends. In Psalm 1, David warns about those who "follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with scoffers" (Psalm 1:1, New Living Translation).

Years later, David's son Solomon began his Book of Proverbs on the same note: "My child, if sinners entice you, turn your back on them! They may say, "Come and join us.... Don't go along with them, my child! Stay far away from their paths (Proverbs 1:10-15, NLT).

Adults aren't immune to cultivating unwise friendships. Is a platonic friendship at the office with a member of the opposite sex growing too familiar? Are you telling him or her things you aren't telling your husband or wife? Do you dip into chat rooms on the Internet? Are you developing a cyber-relationship with someone whom your closest friends would counsel against? Have you been avoiding accountability group meetings because you feel a need to hide something?

I'm not telling you to have only Christian friends, for then we'd never be able to win others to Christ. But make sure your closest friends, the ones who influence you the most, are the kind who build you up rather than pull you down.

### **How to Develop Wise Friendships**

How do we develop empowering friendships? This may surprise you, but I'm going to suggest that's the wrong question. Don't say, "How can I find a good friend?" Ask instead, "How can I be a good friend?" Proverbs 18:24 says, "A man who has friends must himself be friendly."

Imitate the Lord Jesus who always takes the initiative in loving us. Spot needs in the lives of those around you, and seek to quietly meet those needs. Look for the lonely and love them. Ask God to give you a handful of people for whom to pray. Remember birthdays. Make calls. Send notes. Be there in difficult times. Laugh with those who laugh, and weep with those who weep. Find ways of serving in your church.

Be a friend, build good friendships, then keep those friendships in good repair—and you'll be the richest person on the block. For whoever walks with the wise will become wise; whoever walks with fools will suffer harm.

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