

Learning To Avoid Unnecessary Suffering In Life (part 5)

by Ronnie Scherffius

CHOICE OF FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Avoiding suffering by prudently choosing good companions is emphasized from the opening of the book of Proverbs (cf. 1:10-18). The ancient Latin term for companion was “companionem,” literally “bread fellow.” (Online Etymology Dictionary) The word denotes a close relationship between two; so close they share bread.

Proverbs 13:20 and 27:17 each underscore the importance of choosing friends and, in truth, stand in compliment with each other.

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

Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend (Proverbs 27:17).

The friend that “sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” to wisdom is to be chosen over the friend that “sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” to folly. The association of ungodly companions not only leads to foolishness but is also a workshop of unnecessary suffering.

To teach wisdom, Solomon instructed, “Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul” (Proverbs 22:24, 25). Consider also this sage guidance for avoiding unnecessary suffering:

An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire. A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends. A violent man enticeth his neighbour,

and leadeth him into the way that is not good (Proverbs 16:27-29).

A man whose companions are ungodly, perverse, and violent will find himself “sharing a meal” with needless and avoidable suffering.

LISTEN TO WISE COUNSEL AND INSTRUCTION

The most poetic of the proverbs that emphasize the prudence of listening to wise counsel paint a picture of the ear, bending to hear: “My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding” (Proverbs 5:1; cf. 22:17). Perhaps James had these proverbs in mind when he penned, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear” (James 1:19).

The book of Proverbs is abundant with the admonitions to hear and attain to wise counsel:

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels (Proverbs 1:5).

My son, hear the instruction of thy father (Proverbs 1:8a).

The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall (Proverbs 10:8).

The blessings of given heed to wise counsel are also consistently noted: “He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth (Proverbs 10:17).

The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death" (Proverbs 13:14).

Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge (Proverbs 19:27).

UNEXPECTEDLY CONQUERED (Joshua 7:1-15)

By: Neal Pollard

Can you imagine the elation that Israel felt, whose fathers felt like grasshoppers but who now, owing to Jehovah's power, shouted down the city wall of mighty Jericho? They are still riding that burst of confidence when Joshua sends spies over to Ai, east of Bethel. The spies' report is incredibly optimistic. There are at least 12,000 inhabitants of Ai (8:25). Israel has over 600,000 men who could serve in battle (Num. 26:51). The two and a half trans-Jordan tribes alone had 40,000 soldiers (4:13). But, the spies recommend a force of two or three thousand (3). Joshua sends the larger number, but they flee from Ai (4) and suffer 36 casualties in the battle (5).

The tables have turned. Now, it is Israel whose hearts melt and become as water (6; cf. 2:11). Joshua is devastated and falls before the Lord, pleading with and petitioning Him in horror over his army's unexpected loss (7-9). He asks God, "Why?" (7). "What can I say?" (8). "What will you do?" (9). God's answer was a jolt to Joshua. God tells him to get up and pull himself together (10). This happened for a reason. The need of the moment was not mourning, but reckoning. Why was Israel conquered by such an inferior foe? God explains that Israel was unfaithful (1), sinful (11), transgressors (11), accursed and abandoned (12). All of this was because one man, Achan, "took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the Lord burned against the sons of Israel" (1).

Because of the sin of one man, the nation was held accountable. God uses the word "they" as He describes the sin problem (12). Have you ever heard it said, "You reap what you sow. You reap more than you sow. You reap longer than you sow. You reap what others sow"? The principle is borne out in passages like Proverbs 22:8, Hosea 8:7, and Galatians 6:7-8. Achan did the crime, but all Israel was doing the time.

God lays out the remedy for this calamity: Rise up, consecrate yourselves, and identify the source of the problem (13-15). This was not a hopeless cause, but passivity and inaction were not the solution. They had to deal with the issue if they were to achieve victory and future success. The consequences must be swift and severe (15). The holiness and purity of God's people were at stake.

It is a helpful reminder to us to revisit this account in Joshua 7. It reminds us of how seriously God takes sin. It shows us that the sin of one can and often does impact so many others. It reveals that God expects His people to decisively deal with the sin of a brother or sister, not ignore, excuse, or even glorify it (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1ff). Otherwise, we cannot expect God's aid and assistance in the great battle in which we find ourselves (2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10ff). How many times have the people of God been overcome by the "lesser enemy" because of "sin in the camp"?



Picture of Jericho—courtesy of Bible Land Passages

Upcoming Events

Sept .5—Monthly Potluck luncheon after the morning sermon. There will also be a 1pm service in lieu of the 5pm.

Sept. 12—Monthly Youth Devo after evening wor-ship at the Cammock home.

Sept. 24—Family Game night at 6:30p.m.

Save the Date: Oct. 17-20 Midtown will be host-ing our Fall Gospel meeting with Mike Bonner. Please make plans to attend and bring a friend.

Area Events

Oct. 9, 2021-Mathis church of Christ Ladies’ Day. Speakers include Emily Cammock and Athena Scherffius. More information is on the bulletin board in the hallway.

Prayer List

Prayer Requests

Sandy Malone, who had a fall and is currently at Twin Pines North.
James Hicks, who had an allergic reaction to some material that he was working with.
Veronica Serenil who is recovering from surgery.

Members

Jeff Cannady, Les Dalttry, Scott DeDear, Ken and Sandra Marie, Mike McVey, Ann Pantel, Veroni-ca Serenil, Clark Withers, Dee Gilpatrick, Faye Henderson, Charlie Mabe, Sandy Malone.

New Class Quarter

A new class quarter will begin Wednesday, Sept. 1st.

Service Roster

Week of August 29, 2021

Sunday Morning

Announcements..... Bryant Siegel
Scripture Reading..... Will Burleson
Song Leader Rick Bass

Opening PrayerMike Atkinson
Closing Prayer..... Mark FitzSimmons

Lord’s Supper & Offering

Bread..... Ron White
Cup..... Ronnie Scherffius
Offering..... Mark FitzSimmons
Assist.....James Cammock
Assist..... Lupe Escojido
Assist..... Bryant Siegel

Sunday Evening

Announcements..... Bryant Siegel
Song Leader Doug Jobes

Opening PrayerJames Cammock
Closing Prayer..... Ron White

Lord’s Supper & Offering..... .. Ron White & Lupe Escojido

Wednesday Evening

Adult Class..... Ronnie Scherffius
Song LeaderKevin Sheeran
Devotional Steve Randle

Other

Usher.....Allen Clifton
Prepare Communion Randles

Congregational News

Birthdays

Yvonne Smith Aug. 29
Barbara WithersAug. 31

Anniversaries

Clark & Barbara Withers Aug. 31

If you have any prayer requests or upcoming events to be announced, please contact our secretary, Nina Siegel, at (361) 573-0030.

Our Elders

Mark FitzSimmons
Ronnie Scherffius
Ron White

Our Deacons

James Cammock—Evangelism
Lupe Escojido— Benevolence
Bryant Siegel—Education and Finance

Our Preacher

Ronnie Scherffius

Weekly Reading

“Praise the Lord; for the Lord is good.” Psalm
135:3

Service Times

Sunday Morning Bible Class.....9:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship.....10:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship.....5:00 P.M.
Wednesday Bible Class.....7:00 P.M.

Attendance Records

Week of August 22, 2021

A.M. Bible Class.....60
A.M. Worship.....81
P.M. Worship.....54
Wednesday Bible Class.....52
Offering week of August 22, 2021.....\$ 2,858

Supported Works

Mani Pagidipalli *India*
John & Carla Moore *Bible Land Passages*
Anthony Scherffius *Southwest School of Bible Studies*



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