

# Elder Ron Gannon talks about the sluggard, the fool and about picking friends.

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[ 0 : 00 ] It's good to see Marv here this morning. Marv has been out. He has strengthened me. It was good to see him at Bible study again Thursday morning.

He did talk there and we could tell that he's still having a little trouble talking. So we just wish Marv the best in his recovery. And we know that he'll continue to strengthen.

And we're looking forward when he comes back to the pulpit. So let's pray this morning. Father, we just thank you this morning, Father, for who and for what you are.

Father, we are just thankful for your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and what he did at the cross. We are thankful that we can come to you this morning, Father, knowing that we can come to you without sin in our life.

Because Father Christ died for that sin. He took it and he buried it. He threw it into the deepest sea. And all we have to do is to come to you through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 1 : 05 ] Come to the conclusion that we are sinners. We know that you love us. And we also know that Jesus Christ came and suffered on that cross to die for all sin.

And when he died for all sin, that made all men available for saving. And all we have to do is come to you.

We thank you for that. Lord Jesus, thank you for giving us a new life. Help us to live out that life, Father. Help us to be listeners of what Proverbs has to say this morning.

Help us to be learners. Help us not to be fools, Father. Father, we thank you for your love and for all things that you give to us.

Father, we lift up Marv this morning and just pray that you'll continue to strengthen him. And we thank you for what you're doing in his life. So, Father, we just thank you this morning. We praise you and we ask these things.

[ 2 : 07 ] In Christ's name. Amen. Well, this morning we're going to continue in our study of Proverbs. There seems to be a great deal of need for wisdom in our society today.

Lack of wisdom is destroying lives of many people. And even making fools out of some. Marriages are being destroyed. Friendships lost.

And souls doomed for lack of wisdom. God has told us to walk. The walk of the Christian is to be with wisdom as we go through life. And he gives us these structures.

Let's turn to Ephesians. Let's turn to Ephesians chapter 5. And we'll read. Well, we'll just start in verse 15.

Verse 15. And it says there, From whom every family in heaven.

[ 3 : 17 ] I got the wrong. I need to chapter 5. Hold on. Okay. Chapter 5, verse 15. Therefore. And whenever the word therefore, we need to pay attention.

Because what he's talking about, he's explaining further what he's already been talking about.

There in the book of Ephesians. As Paul's been teaching those in Ephesians. He says, Therefore, be careful how you walk.

Not as unwise men, but wise. Making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then, do not be foolish, but understand that the will, what the will of the Lord is.

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation. But be filled with the Spirit. Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord. Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. To God, even the Father.

[ 4 : 19 ] And be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Because time is fleeting and the days are evil, we must make the best use of our time.

Today, many are wasting their time, they're wasting their lives, and they're failing to exercise wisdom in their daily lives. Wisdom comes from three sources.

Number one is from us. Trial and error. One's own experiences can certainly be a source of wisdom, and we know that. But there are disadvantages to gaining wisdom this way.

And of course, the main disadvantage to that is when we say trial and error, a lot of times, we mean error. And a lot of times, the things we try out and the things we do always comes to ruin.

And so we have to be aware of that. Much of one's life can be wasted learning through trial and error. And also, one must pay the consequences of trial and error.

[ 5 : 23 ] Now, there's nothing wrong with trial and error. Matter of fact, that's probably one of the better things we can teach our children as you go through life. You know, things happen. So go out there and try and let things happen.

That's one way to teach them is to let things come into their life. So trial and error is not always bad. But sometimes it can be and sometimes we have to pay the consequences for that trial and error.

And some people, that's the only way they survive is through trial and error. Some people will not listen to any type of warning or anything from anybody else.

All they want to do is go out and do their own thing. And of course, that is trial and they live trial and error their whole life. So it's an up and down battle. The second is counsel from others.

And this is a great source of wisdom. This is a great chance for people to get information. And that's by listening to other people. This is only possible, though, if one is willing, willing to listen to other people.

[ 6 : 30 ] You have to have that willing ear to listen to what other people are saying. There are clear advantages to gaining wisdom this way. You avoid wasting your years through trial and error that we just talked about.

And your experience, we are gaining experience from other people's lives. Maybe from their trial and errors. Like mom and dad. You know, as we teach our children.

Most of the things we're teaching them is from trial and error. We tried this and this is what happened. So, counsel from other people is a very good way to gain wisdom.

The third source, and we see that in 2 Timothy. If you want to turn to that, 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 16 and 17. And what it says is, all scripture is inspired by God for profiting, for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

It's only natural to assume then that it provides us with sound advice concerning our living, doesn't it? Indeed it does. Especially the book of Proverbs.

[ 7 : 49 ] Instead of wasting our short time here on earth trying to discover wisdom through the process of trial and error, we can go straight to the book of Proverbs. And that's what I want to do this morning. Let's turn to the book of Proverbs.

This morning I'm going to start out with the sluggard. What is a sluggard? Well, open your Bible and we'll read Proverbs 26, to Proverbs chapter 26, verses 13 through 16.

And there are those verses that describe a sluggard. I'm having trouble getting to the right book this morning.

Proverbs 26. The sluggard says, there's a line in the road. A line is in the open square. As the door turns on its hinges, so does the sluggard on his bed.

The sluggard buries his head in the dish. He is worried of bringing it to his mouth again. The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can give a discreet answer.

[ 9 : 03 ] Do you desire to do better in school? Do you wish you could get promoted at work? Do you wish you could say something more intelligent when someone calls you up in class or at work?

Do you desire to get more done and accomplish more things during the day? Do you want to make better use of your time? Are you a person who usually waits until the last minute to finish a project? Write a paper or study for a test or prepare a briefing for work? Do you ever find yourself unwilling to act or work because you just don't feel like it?

Well, these could be signs of laziness coming on. God has a special message for the lazy or the sluggard. Since we all have this problem to some degree, we need to pay attention.

A sluggard is a lazy person. One who likes to take it easy or would rather do anything but work. The opposite of the sluggard, of course, would be the diligent, industrious, hard-working person.

[10:05] Another word that describes the sluggard is the word slothful. Have you ever seen the animal known as the sloth? This is a crazy looking animal. He loves to take it easy.

He's slow moving. He hangs on a tree and just hangs there all day long. The word slothful is used to describe a slow-moving person who just loves to take it easy. There's another animal and that animal God wants us to mimic.

Does anybody know what that animal is? That's the ant. And we see that in Proverbs chapter 6 where it talks about the ant and what he does. Have you ever sat on a picnic or have you ever just sat out on a bench or sat anywhere and watched an ant?

Have you ever seen an ant that just sat there and did nothing? Well, they're crawling up your arm. They're crawling around your feet. Those ants are busy all day long doing this and doing that. You never see an ant that's a sluggard. The ants are always out there preparing. They're working. And they're getting ready for whatever season is coming about. So the ant is always out there and they're busy.

[11:18] There's one group of ants. It's called the harvest ants. They actually gather up crops. When the seeds of many plants grow ripe and plump these ants gather them up and of course they store them up for the next season that's come along or for winter.

These ants eat some of the seeds right away but they also store seeds in the nest. This way they always have food and they can always fry fresh seeds to eat.

They work hard but it pays off. It always pays off. One thing that sluggard loves to do and we've already seen that in the scripture we read is to sleep.

A sluggard loves to sleep. Proverbs 6.9 I'm going to be throwing a lot of verses this morning so I'll try to slow down as I go but Proverbs 6.9 Proverbs 6.10 Proverbs 19.15 Proverbs 20.13 Love not sleep let thou come to poverty open your eyes and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

Proverbs 24.33 Yet a little sleep a little slumber a little folding the hands to sleep. Is sleep wrong? Well of course it's not.

[12:56] Do you need sleep? Yes we need sleep. We need eight hours of sleep a day don't we? The problem comes when a person sleeps we really should be doing something else. In Proverbs 10.5 What should the sleeper have been doing?

He who gathers in the summer is a son who acts wisely. But he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully. There's a time to sleep and there's a time to work.

The sluggard sleeps during work time. Do any of you have these alarm clocks that have the snooze button on it? Well they're great greasers aren't they?

We had one at one time and I was still working at that point and we used to use it we used to have it on our headboard when our beds had headboards on them. And we tried that for a while and of course the alarm would ring and we'd just go over and hit that button back to sleep.

Well after a while I found out that I was getting up late and couldn't get to work on time. So eventually I had to take that alarm clock and set it on the other side of the room so that when that alarm went off I didn't hit the snooze button.

[14:07] So the snooze button is a great thing. The alarm rings and then you can press the snooze button and the alarm will stop. But ten minutes later you can get back up and all that happens you hit it again another ten minutes.

Hit it again another ten minutes. So it allows you to sleep just a little bit longer but then that little bit longer usually turns into a longer period and before long you're late and you're not getting done the things that you should be getting done.

So ten minutes snooze period adds up and much time is lost when you hit that snooze button. So am I saying throw away your alarm clock? No. Just use it wisely I guess.

Did the Lord Jesus Christ love to sleep and did he sleep in the wrong way or was he diligent to make good use of the time that he had? If you turn to Mark 1.35 and what it says there is that in the early morning while it was still dark he arose and departed to a lonely place and he prayed.

So we see Jesus was using his time and he's using it wisely. Proverbs 10.26 says Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eye so is a lazy one to those who send him.

[15:27] Vinegar is hurtful to the teeth. If you've ever tasted vinegar it sets you on edge it's just kind of a liquid that does that to you. We also know that smoke when smoke gets in your eyes it

causes them to blur it causes them to water so it dims the light.

These things are annoying and disturbing to you and also people react the same way when we send a lazy person on a task and we know that it's not going to get done.

Have you ever worked with anybody that does this? You know you have somebody you give instructions to do and they just go off and you know where are they at? They should have been back. They're taking their time and this type thing will happen to you you get annoyed and it just rubs you the long way just like vinegar in the mouth.

So we all know how to react when somebody is lazy around this. Proverbs 12 27 A slothful man does not roast his prey.

Mike's not here this morning. That would have been a good one for Mike when Mike's out fishing. He catches all these fish. But does he clean them? That's the thing.

[16:43] And that's what this verse is talking about. A slothful man does not roast his prey. Did this man have enough energy to get out and to hunt or to fish? Yeah, he had the energy to do that.

He got out there and hunted and fished all day long and he enjoyed it. Did he have enough energy to cook or prepare the animal that he caught? No, this guy in Proverbs did not.

He went out, he hunted, he found, or he went out and fished and he caught fish. But what did he do? He just threw them aside and he let them rot. That's a slothful person.

That's a slothful person or that's a sluggard. It's very enjoyable to go hunting or fishing, but there is work to be done after catching the fish. And as a matter of fact, that's one of the good times that Mike and I have when we go fishing and we catch fishes just to be able to be together and clean those fish and get them ready to eat.

So, when you catch fish or when you do anything out there, God wants us to do the whole job. Do the whole job. You have to dress it and you have to prepare it and you have to make it ready to be cooked.

[17:53] That's what God wants us to go out and find animals. He wants us to do it in the right way. This verse tells us that lazy people start things but they do not follow through. Have you ever been in that situation?

We like to start things but it's very hard to finish them. How many projects and activities do you start and not finish? Often we have enough energy to get something started but we don't follow through and we don't finish the project that we have got started.

Does God follow through and finish his work that he starts? Philippians 1.6 And it says He does the work.

He finishes the work. Proverbs 14.23 In all labor there is profit but mere talk leads only to poverty. So what brings profit? Talking about doing something or actually doing it. It is hard work that brings reward and profit.

[19:07] Picture somebody out on a highway or somewhere in a driveway or whatever with a flat tire. You walk up in and you say this. You're welcome.

I saw you struggling with that flat tire so I thought about helping you. and then you turn away and you walk. Well what is that person going to be thinking?

What was that all about? You thought about doing it but you never did it. So you didn't help out at all did you? You didn't do anything.

There's always action that's got to be required and that's what God wants us to do. He wants us to take that action. So if you see somebody out there with a flat tire don't think about it. Go out and actually help them fix the flat tire.

Proverbs 20 verse 4 The sluggard will not plow by reason or of cold therefore shall he beg and harvest and have nothing.

[20:10] So what is God instructing us there? If you don't go out and do the work you're not going to get the benefits from it. So go out there and do the work. So it's usually true in life that whatever we put into it this is what we get out of it.

You know Proverbs is so simple isn't it? Very straightforward very easy answers to questions that we have and God just makes it so plain. A sluggard is a lazy person, one who likes to take it easy and would rather do anything but work.

May the Lord help us to work hard and to accomplish much for God's glory and for the good of other people. True happiness comes to the person who is diligently serving God and others.

And the next topic I'd like to talk about this morning is the fool. What does the Bible have to say about the fool? And do you like being called a fool? What is a fool? Who is a fool? How would you describe a fool? Certainly no one, not even a fool, wants to be called a fool, do they? A fool is someone who is figuratively stupid, silly, or foolish, used in scripture with respect to moral rather than intellectual deficiencies.

[ 21 : 32 ] A fool is someone who is senseless. He does not have the sense to follow God and his word and his instruction. That's what a fool is from a biblical standpoint.

Again, when God speaks of something often, it's usually very important and we probably should perk our ears up and listen.

And God has a lot to say about fools. If you read through just Proverbs alone, God uses the term fool over 40 times.

40 times he talks about the fool in Proverbs. So I think it's something important. I think it's God something that God wants us to think about. And we don't have to be a fool.

God can use us. Proverbs 14, 16. A wise man fears and departs from evil, but the fool rages and is confident. The thought is that the wise man, through fear of transgressing and offending God, hesitates and does not come near evil.

[ 22 : 36 ] But the fool and his ecotismism forget that word, we won't even use it. What I should be saying is self-confidence.

The fool in his self-confidence passes or he rages on. Or he falls into the snare of sin. That's what a fool does. Proverbs 15, 7.

The lips of wise spread knowledge, but the hearts of the fool are not so. The lips of the wise are to be used to sow spiritual truth, and they do it far and wide. Jesus taught several parables in his word of God that is like into seeds sown upon the ground.

It's a dishonor of man's lips when he does not use them for the high and lofty purpose that he's given them. So we need to use our lips in the right way. We talked a little bit about that last week when we were talking about the words that come from our mouth.

Proverbs 29, 9. When a wise man has a controversy either rages or laughs and there is no rest.

[ 23 : 44 ] Whether the wise man treat the fool with disdain or good nature the result will be the same. The fool will not cease from his strife or from his folly. He just will keep going the way he's always going.

The design of the Proverbs is to show that all labor to reclaim a fool from his lost folly is for not. They will not pay attention. There is no one so hard to move from his position as the one who constantly thinks that he knows everything.

And so he will not be corrected. Do you know of anybody like that in your life? I think we all do, don't we? Jesus' lengthy sermon on the mount concludes with a powerful illustration.

We build on a solid foundation by putting Jesus' words into practice. Let's turn to that. Let's turn to Matthew chapter 7 verse 24 through 27.

Again, it starts with the word therefore. Therefore, from what I've said before, what Jesus was talking about on the sermon on the mount. Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them may compare to a wise man who builds his house on the rock.

[ 25 : 07 ] And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and slammed against that house. And yet it did not fail or fall for it had been founded on the rock.

Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be likened to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. The rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and slammed against that house and it fell and great was its fall.

When Jesus had finished these words the crowds were amazed at his teaching. And that teaching goes just the same for today.

We need to act. We just need to act upon God's word. When God gives us his word we need to do something with it. And that's what Proverbs is all about.

Everyone that hears these words of mine and does them his house is built upon a rock. And those who do not hear and who do not do is just like being built upon the sand.

[ 26 : 12 ] What does both of these wise men or these the wise man and the foolish man have in common there when Jesus was talking? Well for one thing they both heard what Jesus was saying.

So if they heard they heard the same thing. So the fool's problem is not that he doesn't have information or he is ignorant. The fool is not lacking of information.

He's not ignorant. He heard the same thing that Jesus said to all of those that were standing there. So he has no excuse. According to these verses what makes a man a fool and what makes a man a wise man?

Well it's what we do with the words that we hear. The fool does not act upon the words of Jesus. He refuses to listen and does what he wants to do.

Jesus said in John 13 17 if you know these things you are blessed if you do what? If you do them. So we need to do the words of Jesus.

[ 27 : 20 ] James also talks about this. James chapter 1 verses 22 to 25 but be doers of the word not hearers only. Deluding your own selves.

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer he is like a man beholding his natural face in a mirror. For he beholds himself and goes away and is straightforward and forgets what manner of a man he was.

But he that looks into the perfect law and the law of liberty and so continues being not a hearer that forgets but doer that works then shall this man be blessed.

Hearing God's word and doing something about God's word. So someone is not a fool because he lacks mental powers but because he misuses the powers that he does have the information that he has.

so he is a fool because of his own disbelief and disobedience. A fool can be very intelligent he may have a very high IQ and may not be mentally handicapped at all.

[ 28 : 27 ] A fool might be blessed with the best kind of gray matter that there is. A person is a fool not because he fails to think or reason but again because he fails to do what's right in God's word.

The wise man is smart enough to listen to all the wise words that God has given us. Wisdom may be defined as using knowledge in the right way and putting knowledge to work.

Again getting the knowledge putting it to work. Think of Judas Acariot. What happened to him?

Again can you say that Judas Acariot didn't have the right information?

No. He was a disciple of Jesus Christ. He was there the same place the same time everything else that the twelve was there for. So what was his problem?

His problem was not a lack of information. It was just his desire not to do what God's word said. It was his desire to get something to gain something from what he had.

[ 29 : 31 ] That was his problem. So it wasn't that he didn't have the information. It's just that he lacked the capability or the will to do what he should be doing. The fool hates the very thing that he desperately needs like wisdom instruction and knowledge.

He hates those things. This is like the person who hates the medicine that will make him well when a doctor gives you a prescription. If you take that prescription home and just set it on the counter it's not going to do any good at all is it?

This is like the person who hates to eat nourishing food. This is like the student who dishonors or ignores all his studies and doesn't want to study.

The very thing that can help you is also the thing that can hurt you. What does a fool do when his father who is much older and much more experienced than living tries to instruct him in the way he should live?

How does that son react? Well, Proverbs 15.5 said that son reacts by rejecting his father's words. I think we discussed that last week. What does a fool do when others speak to him and give him wise advice?

[ 30 : 43 ] Again, the fool despises wise advice. He does not do it. Young people, how do you respond when your father gives you advice or counsel?

Do you have that listening ear? And are you open with a willing heart to listen to what your parents instruct you to do? Or do you display a know-it-all attitude?

You can't tell me anything attitude. And are you unwilling to follow any advice that other people give you? A fool is known by the way he lives.

A fool does what is right in whose eyes? His own eyes. A fool will always do what's right in his own eyes. Proverbs 12 15 He has rejected and disregarded God's standard of righteousness.

And he has established his own standard of righteousness. Instead of God's way, he has chosen his own way. Proverbs 28 6 says, He who trusts in his own heart, he who trusts in his own heart, is a fool.

[ 31 : 47 ] We can't rely upon our heart. We have to have information. And that's what the fool is lacking, is the will or the desire to use that information.

A fool is one who is deaf to instruction. Fools despise wisdom and instruction. We see that in Proverbs 17, as Gary read that. Even the instruction from one's father, we've seen that. The fool dies from lack of wisdom. A fool cares only to tell others what he knows. He's more than willing to tell you everything he knows. Right up front.

For a fool thinks he knows everything. What fools know is soon known by all. So a fool is willing to sit there and talk about himself all day long. Their foolishness becomes apparent to all.

Therefore, we waste energy in trying to share wisdom with a fool. The fool, the self-confident, unavorable against God does not appreciate divine wisdom. And those who try to talk with him about it are generally despised and repulsed by him.

[ 32 : 55 ] They're not willing to listen to what you say to him. A fool is also one who cannot be disciplined. It's very hard to discipline a fool. Fools are destined for much punishment.

God said in Proverbs 19, 29, and 26, 3. Yet they are unlikely to learn from attempts to correct them. Such hatred of correction is the height of folly.

They're just not willing to listen or be corrected. Trying again to correct a fool is folly. You just cannot do it. A fool is one who is impulsive.

A fool is one who vents all his feelings. A fool is one who will just explode. And he'll let you know exactly what he's thinking. If it's not the proper time to let somebody know what you're thinking.

That's how a fool reacts. His wrath is known by all. Have you ever known anybody where they're just angry people and they just show it all the time? That's what God is talking about as a fool.

[ 34 : 04 ] A fool is one who commits evil. Evil is like a sport to a fool. He's always ready to go out and do evil. evil. They even make fun of sin. Have you ever had anybody do that?

Or heard anybody do that? They enjoy doing that. Thus it is difficult to get fools to depart from evil. A fool is one who is virtually unchangeable.

Despite the most extreme efforts to rehabilitate him, for us to do that is just about impossible. It takes something special. And of course that something special would be God to change his heart. Because he considers it an abomination to depart from evil, he enjoys evil. Truly a dog is like one who returns to his own vomit. He just wants to keep coming back, doing it over and over and over again.

That's what a fool wants to do. Fools can also be very dangerous. According to Proverbs 17. 12, it would be better and safer to meet a bear robbed of her young cubs.

[ 35 : 08 ] Wow. that's pretty powerful words there isn't it? Rather than to meet a bear that's been robbed of her young cubs, it's better than meeting a fool. Rather than a fool and his folly.

And we're going to turn to, well we won't turn there, but we'll talk about Samuel. And we're going to talk about is it safe to bury around a foolish king and that was Saul. Saul was a foolish king.

He had pride. He wanted to have done things his way. And, well let's turn back to 1 Samuel. 1 Samuel chapter 22. And let's read verses start at 22.16.

But the king said, you shall surely die above Melech, you and all your father's household. And the king said to the guards who were attending him, turn around and put the priest and the Lord to death, because their hand also is with David, and because they knew that he was fleeing and did not reveal it to me.

But the servants of the king were not willing to put forth their hands to attack the priest of the Lord. Then the king said to Diog, you turn around and attack the priest. And he turned around and attacked the priest and he killed that day 85 men who wore the priest's linen.

[ 36 : 48 ] And he struck Nob, the city of the priest, with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and infants, also oxen, dokeys and sheep. He struck them with the edge of the sword.

That's how King Saul was. He did not follow the instructions of the Lord. He wanted everything the way he wanted it. And if you read scripture, we can think that he would have been a foolish king compared to King David.

Not that King David didn't make mistakes. That's another study. King David made a lot of mistakes too. In summary, a fool is a person who just completely trusted himself, is deaf to instruction, he will not listen, he cannot be disciplined, he is impulsive, he commits evil in the worst ways, and is virtually unchangeable.

Hopefully such observations and warnings about the folly of the fool will encourage us to find alternate paths in our life. Especially when we consider the final contrast between the wise and the fools.

The wise shall inherit glory, but the shame shall be a legacy of fools. Titus 3 says we have all been fools.

[ 38 : 14 ] That God is good news for every fool. It is possible for a fool to become wise. There is hope for all of us. God's delights in taking a fool and making him wise.

And that's what the book of Proverbs is all about. The instruction that God gives us is very simple. All we need to do is take it and live it out in our lives. And if we're fools, we can become non-fools by just obeying God's word.

The greatest fool of all is the person who chooses to remain a fool forever. We don't have to remain there if we're there today. We can always become a new person that God wants us to be.

Next thing I want to talk about today would be friends and companions. What does the book of Proverbs have to say about friends and companions? He has a lot to say about it.

In our study of Proverbs, we've already seen that we need a companion. And most of what we see in Proverbs about the companion is wisdom. Wisdom should be our companion as we get down life's road.

[ 39 : 22 ] But there's also another companion that God wants us to have. And that's somebody that we can trust. Somebody we can have along as a friend. And that companion is what we're going to be talking about.

We also need close friend and companion. There is a need to find someone who we can trust and spend time with, talk to, confide to, relax with, and just share about anything that's on our hearts with.

And this is the type of friend that we need or companion that we need. We want to talk about friends in the light of what God's word says. We also want to ask ourselves just what kind of a friend are we?

Because I think to have a good friend, we need to be a good friend, don't we? The choice of who are friends and companions should be a very important thing for us to consider. Most people give, or at least they should give, very careful thought to their companions that they're going to live with for their life, such as a husband and wife.

And that's what we should be doing. But sometimes we get very sloppy on choosing companions that we have friends with and that we want to share our life with other than our life mates.

[ 40 : 33 ] So we need to consider God's word when we start selecting friends. In his all-sufficient word, God has provided the wisdom that's necessary to make these friends. For developing good relationships with those around us and for avoiding the pitfalls that too often destroy good friendships.

The value of friends is a source of comfort. It's very comforting when you have somebody that you can count on to be a friend. In good times and in bad times, Proverbs 17 says, a friend loves at all times.

A friend loves at all times. This is important. In some cases, even better than that, provided by a brother. Proverbs 18.24 says, a genuine friend sticks closer than a brother.

So that's the type of friendship that we need. And, you know, we all have the sibling things. We have our brothers. We have our sisters. And a lot of times we have quarrels with them.

A lot of times when we get older, we separate from them. And so sometimes we don't feel that we can sit and talk to our siblings like we can a close friend.

[ 41 : 45 ] And it's good to have that close friend where we can just talk about anything. Because usually when a family type thing, when you talk about something, you're usually going to hurt somebody inside the family. So it's best to find a friend to talk to.

And this is the type of friend that we need. Somebody that we can talk to. And that they will listen to us and not judge us from what we're saying. The value of friend is also a source of good counsel.

Good friends can give us good counsel. We need to be aware of that. Counsel that can delight the heart. In the Proverbs it says, like oil and like perfume. That's what good friends are about.

That's the type of information they can give you. They give you counsel that's sweet to your ear.

The value of counsel is in general is seen in Proverbs 11, 14.

Where it talks about it gives us victory. It gives us victory instead of failure. When we listen to our friends. Sometimes the advice that we get from our friends is the most important thing that we can have.

[ 42 : 49 ] Because they look outside and see what's going on. And they can usually give us wise advice. A friend who offers comfort and can be trusted to provide good counsel is certainly the blessing.

We must choose our friends carefully. So therefore we need to consider these things when we're talking about selecting a friend. Here's some things that you don't want to have with a friend. Friends you do not want.

Gossips. Proverbs 20, 19. We talked about that last week. What a gossip is and how much they can destroy relationships and friendships. So you want to stay away from people who gossip.

Short tempered. We want to stay away from people who have short tempers. Wow. That can get you in a lot of trouble. Sometimes you can be with a friend and you can be somewhere where you don't want to end up at.

If a friend has that short temper. So we need to be very careful about that also. We also need to be thinking about those given to drunken, drinking and gluttony.

[ 43 : 55 ] How many times do we have friends that get us in trouble that way? And that's the great thing about being a Christian. God gives us a chance to start over.

To make things new. And in your old life, before we came to Jesus Christ, if you were with a drinking crowd or any type of crowd that did evil, that always rubbed off on you.

You know why? Because that was a natural thing for you to do. It's natural. If our buddies want to go out and drink, to go out and drink with our buddies. That's a natural thing to do. But when you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, he gives us new instruction.

And when we get into that instruction, we find out that, you know, he does not bless drinking. He doesn't tell us we can't drink. But he does, sure does have some ammunition about how we should drink and do the things with our friends.

And, of course, that's one of them. Drinking and gluttony. Those who give, those given to change, always wanting to do something different. Liars, those who are untrustworthy and those who are inconsiderate.

[ 44 : 58 ] Those are the type of people you want to stay away from. Proverbs 25. Those given to violence. And why is he saying all these things? Because they rub off.

If you associate with people like these, then these things have a good chance of rubbing off on you. And why is that? Because of temptation. Temptation that these people will give to you.

That you will fall into. And, again, God instructs us about temptation. And we all are tempted the same way. It's how we react to temptation that matters.

And usually what Jesus wants us to do when we get in a situation that's very questionable is to just book it and run. Book it and run. So these are the type of things we need to watch for.

Those that we don't want to associate with. Friends that you do want. Those who display wisdom themselves. Those that are good people to run with. Have you ever seen some people that just seem to have it all together?

[ 46 : 03 ] They know all the right answers. Their life is going good. And things just seem to be well with them. Associate with these type people. Find out what causes them to live this way.

And you'll probably find out that they also read God's word. And they've read the instructions of what God has taught them. So these are good people to be with. And they will help you.

They'll help you in the right way. The wrong kind of friends can be a corrupting influence. But a friend who is good and wise is one who wants to hold on to. And we see that in 1 Corinthians.

Paul tells the Corinthians about their friends that they're keeping. We need to keep the right type of friends before we become corrupted from the bad ones. To avoid losing good friends, here's some wisdom on what we should do.

Or that we should not do. We should do or we shouldn't do. These things will disrupt friendships. Repeating everything that you hear. Again, that's probably the gossip.

[ 47 : 09 ] We talked about this last week. Getting into senseless arguments. There's nothing worse than a friendship than continually arguing with somebody. It just never pays off. Overstaying your welcome.

Okay? We're friends. But sometimes we can overstay our welcome too, can't we? So be careful the time you spend with people. Meddling in affairs not known of your own.

Okay? Okay? Difficult to meddle in somebody else's affairs. If we want to give advice, wait until somebody asks you for that advice. That's probably the best thing.

Sometimes we need just to butt in and give advice. But we've got to be careful because whenever you do that, now you're treading on very dangerous water. But just be careful how you talk to people about the problems that they're having.

Being a tailbearer. Again, we talked about that last week. Talking behind somebody's back. Doing these type things. Being contentious. Okay?

[ 48 : 12 ] That's being arguable or always being grouchy. Touchy. These can turn off friendships very easily. And engaging in insincere flattery that we talked about last week.

You know, it's better just to tell somebody straightforward what you're thinking. Don't try to flatter them. Tell them what you think. Just do it in the right way. When we do some of these things, we are likely to offend our friends.

But sometimes when we do this, and if we do offend our friends, it's very difficult to get it back. It's very difficult to get a good friendship back.

I know through life that you have friendships in high school. Sometimes we keep those friendships for life. And I also know of times where we've had friends from high school, and all of a sudden it just breaks because of something that they said or something that we said.

And it can be just so simple of a thing that we say that can just blow up in our face. So we need to be careful how we treat our friends. Relationships are so important. God has just blessed us with a relationship, and he wants us to have that relationship with everybody that we talk to, and especially our good friends.

[ 49 : 25 ] How do we keep relationships? And the relationships are important. Good friendships are important. We've got a friend here today from Chicago that we've been friends with for 30 years.

No, longer than that, 40 years. And it's such a blessing to be able to have somebody, even when you're far, far away, because they live in Chicago.

We're here in Springfield. We've never lived close to each other. But it's a relationship that was built many years ago that we could talk to each other, and we knew that we could count on each other.

And it's just a blessing when you can have friendships like that. And then we have our close friendships, like here at home. They're such a blessing, too. And our church friendships that we have in our relationships with all you folks here at church.

They're so important. And it's so important that we pay attention to what Proverbs is saying, and that we get our act together, and that we treat people.

[ 50 : 25 ] How should we treat people? The way we want them to treat us. That's the golden rule, right? God said, all these commandments I give to you, there's 600 and some of them. Hey, break it down to two.

Love thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul, and love thy neighbor. And he goes one step further. One commandment. Love thy neighbor as thou thyself.

And that's what we need to do in these relationships that we have problems with. If we do have problems with our friends, solving problems with our friends, how can we correct that?

Make sure that you're at peace with the Lord. We need to be that. We have to have that first. It'd be awful hard not to have peace with the Lord and to be able to go out and correct that friendship. We need peace with the Lord.

Be slow to anger. We talked about that last week. In James, it talks about the anger problem and how we can correct that. And we can correct that by listening instead of talking.

[ 51 : 23 ] That's how we need to keep our relationship going. It's so easy to talk instead of listen. Be slow to respond. Again, there's a listening thing. Let somebody, let your friend talk.

Let them get it out before we start giving advice. They may not even be asking for advice. They just may want to get it off their chest. Let them get it off their chest. Avoid quarreling.

Of all things, you need to do that. Speak gently, not harshly. Speak briefly. Be quick to show love. Do that most of all.

But if necessary, rebuke when it's required. And that's a very tricky one. It's a very serious one. If we're going to rebuke our friends, we need to know exactly what we're talking about.

And don't do it from rumors. Don't do it from anything except I know what's going on. And I think that you need to change and be up front with them. And usually, if you're up front with somebody, they will take it the right way.

[ 52 : 29 ] If you're not up front, then usually you're going to lose a friendship. So we need to be very careful how we do that. Avoiding certain people as friends does not mean that we are to be unfriendly or unconcerned towards everybody else.

God is love and he's concerned for each and every person. And that's the same way that we should be also. And again, if we go to Romans and to Paul's epistles, he talks about the love that we should be showing to our neighbor.

Both talking of our neighbor and how we ought to outreach and show love to every person we come in contact with. So love is important. Choosing the right companions.

Actually, choosing the right kind of person as your friend is not all that difficult. Because who do you want to react with? Usually somebody just like yourself.

Okay? It's very easy to get rid of the wrong kind of friends. All I need to do is concentrate on being the right kind of person that God wants me to be. And if there's a fool out there that I'm associated with, and if I show myself walking in God's ways, it's not going to be long until they just kind of drift off.

[ 53 : 48 ] And I know that's true because when I became a Christian over 40 years ago, I had a crowd that I ran around with. And that crowd soon shed away and disappeared.

And I did some of that on myself. I didn't want to be around those people anymore. And they also did not want to be around me. Because the things that we used to do, I no longer was comfortable with.

And they said, why? What are you doing? If you're not going to go do this, then they took off. And before long, you know, those friends are no longer there. And now you can have a chance to get new relationships, new friends.

And that's exactly what happens over the years. So choosing a friend and the right companion is pretty much based on how you react to other people. They're going to react the same way to you. And if there's a fool or somebody doesn't like what you're doing, they don't want to be fools or want to be with you. So when it comes to forming friendships, fools attract fools. Wise men attract wise men.

[ 54 : 50 ] Evil men attract evil men. It just goes on down the line. You know, who do you depend? Who do you spend time with is usually going to be somebody that has the same things in mind that you do.

So what is a true friend, a real friend? What kind of a person has many friends? Proverbs 19.6 says, some may be friends with a generous man.

Many are willing to become his friend because they expect to receive benefits from this friendship. What would happen to this friend if all of a sudden he became poor?

That's the quality of friendships. What reason do you have this friendship? If you had a wealthy man that you're friendships with, if he became poor, would you still be his friend?

In Proverbs 14.20 we read, the poor is hated even by his neighbor, but those who love the rich are many. And we can tell that today in this society, don't we? We have the poor and we have the rich.

[ 55 : 52 ] Matter of fact, it's getting to where we don't have the middle class anymore. It's the haves and the have-nots. And a lot of the people initiate friendships because of that.

We also see in Proverbs 19.4, wealth adds many friends, but the poor man is separated from his friends. Is it possible to buy friends? Yep, it's possible to buy friends.

We see that all the time, don't we? Especially in the political arena. The things that we see happening there today. But again, what happens when the money runs out?

Or what happens when that person is no longer elected? What happens when something happens? Is that friendship still there? What we're talking about is relationship with somebody that just lasts and lasts forever.

So we need to choose our friends and we do it in a very careful way. A true friend loves at all times. Again, that love at all times. Proverbs 17.17 Here is a faithful friend that you can count on at all times.

[ 56 : 57 ] He is a friend who does not change or who does not withdraw his love even through the circumstances that might come about. Through any change that might come about. This friend is

going to be your friend.

Most people are fair weather friends. As long as things are going well, then that relationship will thrive and continue. But a true friend is going to be with you when things go wrong.

When you're at your lowest peak. Or maybe when they're at their lowest peak. A true friend will be there. At all times.

Let's think about the whole Bible and some of the friendships that we see in the Bible. Who was David close to? And we get it if we talk about King David in 1 Samuel.

Jonathan. Saul's son. That relationship was pure and true. Paul was a friend and a close friend with Timothy.

[ 58 : 01 ] He took him under his wing. In his ministry. That friendship was true friendship. Shadrach was a close friend of Bishak and Abednego.

We see that in Daniel. We talked a little bit about that this morning. Moses was a close friend of Joshua. In Deuteronomy. Eliza was a close friend of Elijah.

In 2 Kings. Who is the greatest, best, most loving, and most faithful friend of all? Jesus the Christ. We sing the hymn, what a friend we have in Jesus.

He was even a friend to Saul of Tarsus. A man who was his bitter enemy. He was known as the friend of sinners. We see that in Matthew 15. Or Matthew.

About how he ate with sinners. Again, with Brother Paul. Because he ministered to Paul. In those years that he took him. And ministered to him.

[ 59 : 03 ] And gave him the gospel of the ministry. The ministry of the gospel. Of the church. A true friend loves at all times. Just like our Lord Jesus Christ loves at all times.

But it is in adversity. Especially that he becomes a brother. Or a true friend. That's the type of friends we need. Someone has wisely said that a friend is someone who knows all about you. And still loves you. He knows what a scoundrel you are all. But he still loves you. That's a true friend. Adversity is a test which proves who your real friends are.

False friends will not want to get involved when it costs or there's an effort involved. True friends will want to get involved and help you out. If someone is your best friend.

Do you love to spend time with him? Or her? Do you love to talk with him and her? Do you share common interests? Do you enjoy their company? And presence? Of course we do.

[ 60 : 07 ] Do you try to please your friends? Of course we do. How do these things apply to your relationship with Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ instructed.

He did these things to his friends. All those people that he loved. And all this love that he shows to us. We are doing the same. All we have to do is reciprocate the love that Jesus has given to us.

And give that back to all those who are our friends. That is what I have this morning. I thank you for your attention. Any questions before we close? Okay.

Bless you. And we'll see you next week. You are dismissed. You are dismissed.