

Family TableTalk

Conversation 46

Who are my friends?

read

Proverbs 13:20

think

I'm sure you've watched the live news reports of the peaceful protests of the last week. I'm guessing you've also seen the horrifying images of herds of people moving quickly here and there through our nation's cities as they break windows, start fires, loot stores, and violently attack others. As the stories have unfolded, there's a pattern that's emerged: Like-minded people tend to congregate with other like-minded people. And as time goes on, they influence each other for better or for worse. Reporters have made the correct distinction between those groups that hold their members to a standard of non-violence, and those who incite each other to rioting.

All of us have been warned by those who truly love us to be careful about the company we keep. The reality is that those we choose to spend our time with exert a powerful influence on our beliefs and behaviors. A motivational speaker named Jim Rohn once uttered this now famous quote: "You're the average of the five people you spend the most time with." In many ways, Rohn's words echo what the writer of Proverbs said: "Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools suffers harm" (13:20).

This proverb offers two powerful truths that if we forget them, will get us in trouble. First, our friends influence our character. If I wisely choose wise friends, my relationship with them will influence my character and result in the growth of wisdom and good character. The opposite is also true. And second, our choice of friends will inevitably lead to outcomes when it comes to decision-making and the long-term fallout or harm from those decisions.

The Psalmist tells us that God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105). Choosing to live your life by the light of Proverbs 13:20 will protect you from harm and provide for your well-being.

apply

- What are the unique challenges you face as you seek to live by the light of Proverbs 13:20?
- Talk about a time when you chose your friends wisely, and a time when you chose your friends foolishly. What were the outcomes of each? Did you see the truth of Proverbs 13:20 in those outcomes?
- How can parents, teens, and children support and encourage each other in their choice of friends?
- Is there any wisdom here for choosing friends on social media?

pray

Lord, your Word tells us that in all areas of life our choices matter. Thank you for illuminating the path of my life with your wise words about who I choose as my closest friends. Help me to choose wisely, and allow me to be a positive influence on others. Help me to listen to the advice of those who love me through their warnings and their encouragement. Amen.

by **Walt Mueller**

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