

A Good Friend

Onesiphorus, a citizen of Ephesus, visited Rome while Paul was a prisoner. He showed himself to be a good friend, and Paul said this of him in 2 Timothy 1:16-18: *"The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well."* Everyone is fortunate to have good friends, and we can learn this text that a good friend possesses three characteristics.

First, he was diligent (vs. 17). Just to find Paul, he had to search diligently. In order to be a good friend, he did not give up easily, and he was not ashamed to bear the stigma of being associated with a "criminal." Second, he was delightful (vss. 16, 18). He refreshed Paul, meeting Paul's needs in jail, and also ministered to him in Ephesus. A good friend is like when iron sharpens iron, making it better and more useful (Proverbs 27:17). Third, he was devoted (vs. 16). He did not do this once, but often. A true friend is devoted enough to stand by you and to tell you what you need to hear. *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful"* (Proverbs 27:6).

Would to God that we all had friends like Onesiphorus! Proverbs 27:9 says, *"Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel."* Show yourself to be this kind of friend (Proverbs 18:24), and you will cultivate friendships that will be a blessing to you all your life.

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