

“But Amnon Had A Friend”

Introduction. The story of Amnon has been preserved for us by inspiration and is an account in which one is hardly able to study without blushing. The expression in 2 Samuel 13:3, “But Amnon had a friend,” is an arresting statement; and if it had not been for that friend, Amnon might have been kept from committing a terrible sin.

It is true that Amnon had conceived a desire in his heart which he knew to be wicked, but there were formidable obstacles between him and the actual commission of the sin. There was his conscience, the appeal of frailty and innocence, the dread of his father’s anger and his brother’s revenge, and most of all, the fear of the judgment of God.

But Amnon had a friend! That sentence tells the story of many people who have disappointed their hopes, as well as those who loved them and dreamed for them. It tells the secret of the bitterness of people whose minds goes back to the fateful day when they met the wrong “friend.” Amnon made his own decision and answered for his wickedness, but his friend Jonadab could have done much to prevent his terrible sin.

I. *The Power Of The Social Principle*

- A. Someone has said that God divided man into men, so that they might enjoy the friendship of each other. All of nature, from man down to the creatures which crawl in the dust, bears witness to the social instinct which God planted in His creation.
- B. This social principle is even found in the Godhead; for there we see the threefold manifestation of divinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God, therefore, neither dwells nor works alone.
- C. When men first found Christ they immediately began to bring their relatives and friends to Him (John 1:41-42, 45-46); and all through the ages, when men worship God, there is always the social feature involved in their practice. They do not worship alone.
- D. This social principle, therefore, is the chief channel through which the forces of good and evil influence our lives.

II. *The Deadly Influence Of Wrong Friendships*

- A. Like all the greatest and the best of God’s blessings, the gift of friendship can be perverted and abused. When that happens, its power for evil is as great as its power for good. Friendship demands reciprocity; for friendship is, as the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle said, “a single soul dwelling in two bodies” (Proverbs 17:17; 1 Samuel 18:1-3).
- B. One does not have to go any further than the story of Amnon to find what the influence of the wrong kind of friendship can do for a person. One of the greatest perils that confront people is the consequences of

hasty-formed and ill-chosen friendships (Proverbs 25:19).

- C. Jonadab could have been horrified at the mention of this wickedness. He could have told Amnon how evil his plan was and how God was going to judge him if he committed this act (Proverbs 27:17). He could have subtly diverted Amnon from this sin by recommending someone else for him to marry (Deuteronomy 13:6-9; 1 Kings 11:4-10).
- D. When you appear before God in judgment, you will have to give an account for your character (2 Corinthians 5:10). But when we consider the fact that few things contribute more to character than our friendships, the subject becomes one of supreme importance.
- E. When a good person and a bad person are thrown together, more times than not the bad person exerts the greater influence. There is not a better application of this than godly Christians dating those who are not good for them.

III. ***Safeguards In Friendships***

- A. Every person should carefully test their friends and friendships. If you find that they lack fundamental virtue and basic principles of righteousness, you should be very careful not to give yourself over to them (Proverbs 18:24).
- B. In trying to find the kind of people who would be our friends, we should remember that character shows itself quickly and definitely, just as the fragrance of a flower tells you what it is without having to turn and see it.
- C. When we form the kind of friendships which brings no regrets, there are certain standards which must not be overlooked.
 - 1. Fixed principles.
 - a) The person who has not made up their mind as to what is right and wrong will be influenced by evil in their friendships.
 - b) When a person's mind is made up regarding their direction, they will do the influencing (Hebrews 11:24-27).
 - 2. The courage of loneliness and isolation.
 - a) The right kind of person can usually find the right kind of friends, if they will make the necessary effort.
 - b) However, if you cannot, you should then have the courage to choose solitude rather than those who will cause you to compromise (Matthew 5:29-30)!
 - 3. The determination to remain loyal to Christ.
 - a) Any person who tries to cause you to forsake this friend, or even to go contrary to His will, cannot possibly be the type of friend that will make your life happy.
 - b) Why would you want a friend like that (2 Corinthians 6:17-18)?

IV. ***What Real Friends Are For***

- A. Real friends are for sharing (Hebrews 13:16). Real friends are not going to take and take and take. They are going to help in time of need.
- B. Real friends are for encouragement (Hebrews 10:23-24). We greatly benefit from our friends who are willing to encourage and edify us.
- C. Real friends are for spiritual support (James 5:16). Real friends have no trouble approaching God's throne in behalf of a friend.
- D. Real friends are for serving (1 Thessalonians 2:6-8). The Thessalonians worked for each other's mutual benefit.

Conclusion. You had better be careful about the friends which you have and those with whom you associate. The scriptures give us wonderful examples of good friendships: Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan, and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Use these examples and find good friends who will help you get to heaven (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; John 15:14-15).