

Week 2 - Friendship

Objective:

Proper behavior in society: Distinguishes between your friends and when you choose the good one. Don't involve yourself in relationships that may lead to destruction.

Memory Verse:

"He who loves purity of heart and has grace on his lips, the king will be his friend" (Proverbs 22:11).

References:

- The Proper Behavior in a mingled Society: (Bishop Athanasius)
- The Social Life from an Orthodox Perspective: (Bishop Bemin)
- Questions about mingling between the two sexes: (Mr. Ramsis Naguib)

Introduction:

Cisceron said. "Tell me about your friends, I tell you about personality." Man is unconsciously affected by his friends.

Lesson Outline

I. Who is my friend?

The concept of "friendship" varies according to the type of people and their aims. To the people of the world, "Friendship" means that I choose a friend who has approximately the same attitudes I have, is of nearly the same age, social rank, and behaves similarly.

But to the Spiritual man: My friend is the person whose aim is salvation and for this end the two friends encourage and support each other. Although David and Jonathan were different in education and social rank, they accompanied each other on the way of salvation.

II. Two types of friendship

A. The good friend

Joshua son of Sirach says, "The good friend is more precious than any other living thing in the world and his goodness is matchless". He is a treasure and a supporter in times of psychological, social and financial crises. He is a model and a mirror for his friend. A friend usually encourages his friend to develop spiritually and academically.

B. The bad friend

Paul the apostle says, "*Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits*" (1 Corinthians 15:33). The bad friend may cause his friend to indulge in bad habits such as smoking, drinking, going to places of immoral entertainment, gambling and sometime committing crimes as St. Augustine's friends once did.

III. How to choose your friends

- ⌚ You have to like them and be on good terms with them taking David and Jonathan as example "The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul".
- ⌚ Their behavior should be characterized by the spirit of holiness in talks, meetings, and short excursions and in play.
- ⌚ They should be characterized by Christian attributes such as honesty "*The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice*" (Psalm 37:30) "*For my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips*" (Proverbs 8:7).
- ⌚ They should be characterized by self-control (eye - tongue - thought).
- ⌚ They should be of sound judgment and good reputation. They should not be gesturing or reckless.
- ⌚ They should sincerely love God and people. David lamented for Jonathan saying, "*Your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women*" (2 Samuel 1:26).
- ⌚ They should be assiduous in their work and studies.

- ⌚ They should have the same attributes.
- ⌚ There should be conformity between you in age, in academics, and in social and spiritual level.

IV. The Ideal Friend

Lord Jesus is the best friend “The Lord is at hand”, “The Lord is near”, “We love him because He first loved us”, “Let’s follow His example”.

V. How to Preserve Friendship

- ⌚ Friendship should be free from opportunism and selfishness so that it may be long lasting. It should be based on sacrifice and self-sacrifice.
- ⌚ There should be mutual respect, serious and frank talk without reproach or violence with gentle treatment aiming at all spiritual benefits.
- ⌚ Friendship should be created upon Christ and it should aim at salvation and spiritual growth.
- ⌚ Forgive your friends when they sin against you, “How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?”
- ⌚ Defend your friends in their absence and reveal them. Don’t give ear to slander. Contemplate how St. Peter spoke about St. Paul (2 Peter 3:5).
- ⌚ Give earnest advice to your friends and guide them to what is right. Contemplate the talk between Christ and the workers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20).
- ⌚ Do not impose your ideas on them and criticize them, only constructively.
- ⌚ Refrain from harmful jesting.
- ⌚ Sympathize with them in all circumstances “*Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep*” (Romans 12:15).

Application:

Take part in the spiritual fellowship through prayers, receiving Holy Communion, spiritual reading and attending meetings.

Other Resources

(See attached file: Self Image.doc)(See attached file: Friendship.doc)

Audio Sermon:

<http://www.orthodoxsermons.org/sermons/swim-a-salmon>

Bishop Angaelos:

<http://www.orthodoxsermons.org/sermons/social-and-peer-pressure>