

Choose Your Friends Carefully
John 19:12-16
September 27, 2026

Our chosen friends will shape us.

Why do all ‘non-conformists’ look alike?

Choose your friends carefully. (Proverbs 12:26, 22:24-25, 27:17; 1 Corinthians 15:33)

Your Chosen Friends Can Compromise Your Integrity v. 12

Pilate had a rough beginning to his rule in Judea. Strikes one and two.

Roman imperial standards in the Temple area?

Building an aqueduct with Temple money?

Pilate was Caesar’s friend.

‘Release Jesus and the charge of insurrection!’

Your Chosen Friends Define Your Enemies vv. 13-14

You must like what your friends like, and hate what they hate.

The Stone Pavement, or Gabbatha in Aramaic, was the official seat of judgment.

When was the preparation of the Passover? Timeline of Jesus’ final hours.

“Behold your King!!” The last-second chance?

Your Chosen Friends Can Cause You to Deny God vv. 15-16

“We have no king but Caesar.”

They were choosing to be friends with Caesar too!

Pilate, and the Jewish leaders, chose their friends poorly.

The one friend that they all rejected was Jesus.

Your chosen worldly friends, are not your friends.

What was Pilate’s third strike? Caesar is a very fickle friend.

Take Jesus as your friend.

Meditation

You Got a Friend?

Our culture is not one that provides great encouragement for the nurture and development of deep, long-lasting, satisfying friendships. Such friendships take time and sacrifice, and the busy world in the West of the early twenty-first century, as a rule, is far more interested in receiving and possessing than sacrificing and giving... The Bible regards friendship as a very important part of life. Sure enough, the Bible uses two consistent images in its representation of friendship.

The first is *the knitting of souls*. Deuteronomy provides the earliest mention of “a friend who is as your own soul” (Deuteronomy 13:6)—that is, a companion of one’s innermost thoughts and feelings, pointing to a concept of intimacy. This is well illustrated by Jonathan and David’s friendship (for example, see 1 Samuel 18:1, 3–4). Here we see ideas of strong emotional attachment and loyalty. Lazarus, Mary, Martha, and Jesus present a New Testament example of this kind of friendship in John 11 (see especially John 11:5, 11, 35–36). In fact, “friend” naturally becomes another name for believers or brothers in the Lord (see 3 John 15). The privileges and responsibilities of a biblical “soul mate,” then, involve intimacy, loyalty, and a strong emotional attachment. Thus, it’s only natural that Jesus would use the language of friendship to refer to our ultimate loyalties—and His (John 15:13–15)! Are we friends with the world, or God (James 2:23; 4:4)? Also note 1 Samuel 23:16–18.

The second image that the Bible uses to represent friendship is *the face-to-face encounter*. This is the image used for Moses’ relationship to God: in the tabernacle God spoke to Moses “face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (Exodus 33:11; see also Numbers 12:8). The face-to-face image implies a conversation, a sharing of confidences, and, consequently, a meeting of minds, goals, and direction. In the New Testament, the apostle John tells a church that he’s tired of writing, but hopes to visit and talk “face to face, so that our joy may be complete” (2 John 12). One of the benefits of face-to-face encounters between friends is the heightened insight that such encounters produce. A proverb that highlights this idea is the famous one in Proverbs 27:17: “Iron sharpens iron, and one friend sharpens another.”

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