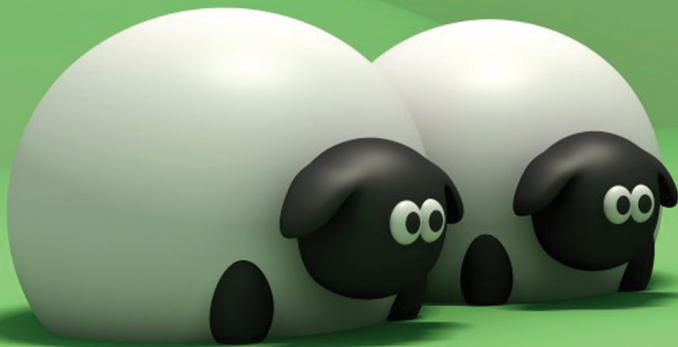


Choose Your Friends CAREFULLY

BY ANGUS BUCHAN



“You will never see an eagle flying with a flock of turkeys.”

Remember, we are always identified with the people with whom we keep company. God has told us to become witnesses for Him in this world but in order to do this, we are to live among its peoples yet not as unbelievers any more. Someone once said that we don't have to become like the world in order to win the people of the world over to God, we have only to be different.

I remember when I became a believer being very anxious about losing my old friends. I also remember some of the older Christians saying *“Don't worry you will not lose them, they will lose you.”* Simply, it's because as Christians we more with those who don't follow Jesus, just as oil has nothing to mix with water, nor darkness with light. Remember Matthew 12:30 (NKJV) says *“He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.”* We cannot be in two places.

When once becoming a Christian, I believe it is necessary to spend our time with fellow believers who also desire to love and serve the Lord Jesus, because if we continue to live as we were, but not really feeling good about it, we will in all likelihood become backslidden, yet not really accepted again by unbelievers as one of them.

And sitting on the fence with a foot in each camp is a bad place to be.

This morning I received a reading on my phone. The heading was *“Life is too short”* and this is what it read. *“Stop spending time with the wrong people. Stop spending time with the people who suck the happiness out of you. If someone wants you in their life they will make room for you. You should not have to fight for a spot. Never, ever stay with the person who continuously overlooks your worth. Remember, it is not the people who stand by your side when you are at your best, but rather the ones who stand beside you when you are at your worst.”* Those are your true friends.

Some years back, when many of our children at 'Beth' (our Children's home) were very small, I remember being called to come over to discipline and talk to the ones who were misbehaving. Over time I realized that I was spending more time with those children and not nearly as much time with the children who were obedient and trying to please. Here is perhaps a word for parents who might be reading this article. Be careful that your rebellious children do not take up all your time and the ones who cause you no trouble, get overlooked. It happens so easily.

We need to spend time with those who want to spend time with us.

I have a small piece of paper in my Bible which I have kept for many, many years. It is a letter from a very dear brother, and with the letter, some verses from Psalm 39:4-7 (NKJV), *“LORD, make me to know my end, And what is the measure of my days, That I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapour. Surely every man walks about like a shadow; Surely they busy themselves in vain; He heaps up riches, And does not know who will gather them.”* *“And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You.”*

Attached to these verses is a note *“My life is too short to spend it worrying about people who do not like me, or to spend it pursuing wealth. I choose to hope in God and to live to please Him alone.”* I treasure the truths in this letter.

We really need to spend our time more wisely and with the right people. If we want to grow in the Lord and be used by Him, we need to get alongside men and women who desire the same things in their lives as we do. Ultimately we need to spend time with Jesus because He is the One who will lead us home and help each one of us finish strong. As Paul, the apostle, wrote in his letter to the Philippians 4:13 (NKJV) *“I can do all things through Christ[a] who strengthens me.”* **■**