

THEME: Family - Choosing the right friends for our children

I am continually amazed at seemingly conservative, sincere Bible-believing parents who feel they have the power to override the Word of God. In the area of child raising this seems most prevalent in two areas...

First, even though the Bible clearly states in Ephesians 6:1, "**Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right**", I regularly meet parents in my Family Discipleship Seminars and at church who feel they have the personal authority as to when to require obedience or when to excuse disobedience. I know few mother's who do not feel they have the authority to excuse disobedience based on their own subjective evaluation of the situation.

Second, even though the Bible clearly states in 1 Corinthians 15:33 "**Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals.'**" I regularly meet parents in my Family Discipleship Seminars and at church who feel they will be able to "beat" this verse. It is their unbiblical conviction that good overcomes evil. That their child will be the influence not the influenced, or at least their child will come away unscathed. It is their unbiblical conviction that their children will be the influence over the non-Christian or carnal Christian child and not vice versa.

It is the parent's responsibility in general and the father's in particular to ensure that the spiritual atmosphere of the family is one that honors God. This extends not only to the friends of your children but to the friends you have in your home. Unfortunately, I find many ministers and missionaries equally at fault in this area. In far too many cases children, family and home are viewed as resources to expand the ministry of the adult minister. Our family is not given to us as a tool to expand our evangelism ministry but we are stewards of our family's spiritual upbringing. This is true irrespective our child's age. From pre-school through the teens years we must be actively aware and involved in the friendships of our children. It only takes a minute of reflection to understand the validity of what God is saying to us as parents in 1 Corinthians 15:33 when He gives us the stern warning, "**Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals.'**"

Our children are taught to be kind to each other, especially in speech.
Their friends are allowed to say hateful words and even swear.
Which child will be more influenced?

Our children are taught to share their toys and be gentle to their brothers and sisters.
Their friends, when in their home, fight, hit and shout at each other.
Which child will be more influenced?

Our children have Christian videos, books and music in our home.
Their friends have sexually explicit videos, TV stations and magazines in their home.
Which child will be more influenced?

Our children have healthy food in our home.
Their friends have access to alcohol and tobacco in their home.
Which child will be more influenced?

God's Word is clear. We are not to be "deceived". We are not to be deceived by satan, nor by our own vanity. We must choose wisely with whom our children associate so that in later years they may choose wisely with whom they associate. Unfortunately, many parents do not model good friendships for their children. Unfortunately, many mothers are more concerned that their daughters are popular than they are about the moral make-up of the crowd they run in. Unfortunately, many fathers are more concerned that their son be associated with the popular athletes at school than about the moral make-up of these young men. Unfortunately many parents are as concerned about their children's social standing (and later dating) than they are about their involvement in church children's and later youth programs.

The days are long gone when, in evaluating our children's friendships, we can simply rely upon the fact that they go to our church, they come from a good family or they make good grades at school. We must be careful, thoughtful and proactive in the area of our children's friends. We must not be deceived, we must believe the Word of God, when it comes to informal, casual relationships, "**bad company corrupts good morals**" and that includes our children.

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: I Corinthians 15:33

How does this passage relate to the theme?

How does this passage apply to my child and the type of friends he/she may have?

How will I apply this passage to my life and that of my family when it comes to the company we keep? (What changes if any need to be made?)

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Exodus 23: 31 – 33

How does this passage relate to the theme?

How does this passage apply to my child and the type of friends he/she may have?

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Deuteronomy 7:1 – 6; 20:18

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: I Kings 11:1 – 4

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Nehemiah 13:25 & 26

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Psalm 1:1

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Psalm 16:1 – 4

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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How will I apply this passage to my life and that of my family when it comes to the company we keep? (What changes if any need to be made?)

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Psalm 26:1 – 7

How does this passage relate to the theme?

How does this passage apply to my child and the type of friends he/she may have?

How will I apply this passage to my life and that of my family when it comes to the company we keep? (What changes if any need to be made?)

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Psalm 141:1 – 4

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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How will I apply this passage to my life and that of my family when it comes to the company we keep? (What changes if any need to be made?)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Proverbs 13:20

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Proverbs 14:7

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Proverbs 22:24

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: I Corinthians 5:6, 9 – 11

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: II Corinthians 6:14 – 18

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Ephesians 5:1 – 7, 11,12

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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How will I apply this passage to my life and that of my family when it comes to the company we keep? (What changes if any need to be made?)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Hebrews 12:15

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: II Timothy 2:21 – 23

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: I Corinthians 15:33

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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