

What Do We Do When Friends Abandon Us?

By Joe R Wheeler

What is a friend? Someone in front of whom you can be yourself. A person you know well and regard with affection and trust.

Proverbs 17:17 *A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

Proverbs 18:24 *A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*

There are Four Basic Levels of Friendship In Life:

1.Contact Friends-people who cross your path as you go through life.

2.Casual Friends-people you say hello to on an occasional basis.

3.Close Friends-people with whom you share certain goals, activities, and mutual interests.

4.Committed Friends-people who will tell you when you are making mistakes, who care enough to stand by you when things get tough. Your mate should be one of these.

Committed Friends are a very rare commodity in life...Paul had many friends whom he made reference to in his letters.

In **2 Timothy**, Paul mentions several of these friends. These were supposed to have been committed to the same purpose that he was. He had befriended them as he had taught them the Gospel. Now, as Paul bares his heart and expresses his feelings of isolation, he talks about all of the friends he had that weren't there anymore.

1.Facing the Challenges of Disappointment-What can lead our friends to abandon us in our hour of need? Why would they walk away from us and leave us to suffer alone?

A.Difficulty-Paul was now in jail . Nero's persecution was in full swing. Paul, now isolated could do nothing for his friends and had to sit alone. Friends need contact in order to remain aware of our needs. Sometimes we lose friends from being removed from them. At other times, our situation is so desperate that they turn away because IT'S MORE THAN THEY CAN HANDLE. Either way, we face the DIFFICULTY of not being able to get them to pay attention to us anymore. When we need close personal contact, we find there are none there to give it.

B.Despair-Paul had often known imprisonment in the past, but now being associated with him was to risky for most who had earlier supported him. He was getting ready to face his greatest trial, and nobody was willing to stand beside him. He lacked the encouragement that a good friend can supply.

2 Tim 4:6-8 *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

Paul knew that his time was at hand. And yet, he knew he was not truly alone.

C.Desertion-sometimes it's not us, it's them. Paul tells how he had been abandoned by those who were his companions:

2Tim1:15 *This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.*

Almost all of Paul's friends had deserted or betrayed him in his time of need.

2 Tim4:10 *For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto*

Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

4:12 *And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.*

4:14 *Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:*

4:20 *Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.*

In verse 16, He states this desertion "*no man stood with me*", can you feel the sense of abandonment and loneliness in this statement?

In verse 11, he states "*only Luke is with me*".

When we go through the list of "**The Four Basic Levels of Friendship**" mentioned earlier, we see that Paul has already lost them all.

When you serve the Lord...you get what the Lord got. John 1:10-11 *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

When you grow closer to the Lord, you find fewer and fewer people around you

2.Finding Courage for Disappointment-Paul makes these requests:

A.Physical Encouragement- 2 Tim4:13 *The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments...*

21 *Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.*

Paul needed warmth for the cold he faced in prison. When someone needs help, we should give them more than prayer. Sometimes the basics of life are the most important thing they need. Remember James 2:14-17!

B.Personal Encouragement -2Tim4:9, 11, 21 *Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:*

11*Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.*

21 *Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.*

Notice Mark is now useful to him, even though he had abandoned him at an earlier time. Paul most of all wanted to be with Timothy again. He craved personal companionship.

C.Mental Encouragement -2Tim4:13 *The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.*

Paul wanted his books and parchments, he wanted to use his hours of isolation occupied with spiritual endeavor.

D.Spiritual Encouragement -2Tim4:17-18 *Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Conclusion: God is with us even when friends desert us...He is the one friend we truly need, and the one friend we will always find when all others are gone.