



GOOD AND BAD COMPANY 13:20; 14:7; 24:1-2; 28:7; 29:3

These **proverbs** deal with the virtue of good companionship and the danger and hazard of evil and sinful associations. They speak of the extreme importance of avoiding bad company and choosing good company. **PEOPLE GENERALLY ARE AND BECOME SUCH AS THE COMPANY THEY KEEP!** Friendship and companionship are a powerful influence in forming both character and behavior. This is so, because of the general desire to be agreeable in our companionships, and the power of influence. **INFLUENCE IS A POWERFUL FORCE, WHETHER IT BE FOR GOOD OR BAD!** The question is not, whether there shall be outside influence, but rather, what that influence shall be. The Word of God gives examples of **evil** influence [**I Kings 11:4; 21:25; II Chronicles 21:6; Jeremiah 23:15; Mark 15:11; Acts 13:8**], and examples of **good** influence [**II Corinthians 9:2; I Thessalonians 1:8; II Thessalonians 3:9; I Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7; James 5:10**].

God created humans as social beings [**Genesis 2:18**], as individuals who need personal interaction. God did not create man to be an isolationist, nor did He intend him to be such. God created us to need **people, companionship, and interaction** in our lives, and because of these needs, and because there are people that are good for us, and people that are bad for us, there is a great need to properly evaluate and discern who is good for us, and who isn't.

“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed” [13:20].

This proverb contains an **encouragement**-*“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise”* and a **warning**-*“but a companion of fools shall be destroyed”* The powerful force of influence is seen in both the **encouragement** and the **warning!**

There is the **encouragement** to *“walk with wise men”* To *“walk”* speaks of a **habit**, a **routine**, and a **pattern** of life, a **matter of course**. To *“walk with”* implies **agreement** [**Amos 3:3**], and **fellowship, compatibility, like-mindedness**, and even **endorsement**. So to *“walk with wise men”* is to make it our routine and matter of course to be in agreement and fellowship with the *“wise”* to be under the influence of their **example!** The *“wise”* are those who **revere the Lord** [**Proverbs 1:7**], those who **have their priorities in order**, those who **hear and obey the Word of the Lord** [**Matthew 7:24**], those who **walk by faith**, and are **full of spiritual fruits**, those who are **able to discern between right and wrong**, those who **desire to do right**, those who **draw us closer to being the people that God has called us to be!** To *“walk with wise men”* is to **love, seek, and choose** their company, It is to make them our close friends, and to fall in with them. Those who make it their **routine** and matter of **course** to be *“with wise men shall be wise”* Therefore God's people ought to always desire to be with such [**Psalms 119:63**], as *Elisha* desired to be with *Elijah* [**II Kings 2:4**].

There is the **warning-**"*but*" (in contrast to those who walk with wise men), *a companion of fools shall be destroyed*" The word "*companion*" like the phrase "*walk with*" conveys the idea of **agreement, fellowship, compatibility, like-mindedness, and endorsement.** The word "*fools*" has reference to those who **do not reverence the Lord, those who seek the ways of the world, those who neglect to hear the Word of God, and live in disobedience to Him.** As children of God living in this world, we come into contact with the "*foolish*" BUT THE CHILD OF GOD IS NOT TO CHOOSE THEIR COMPANY OVER THE COMPANY OF THE WISE! There is ample warning concerning evil associations [Exodus 23:2; 34:12; Psalm 1:1; I Corinthians 15:33; II Corinthians 6:14-16]. The result of being "*a companion of fools*" is found in the words "*shall be destroyed*" Companionship with the ungodly leads to **misery** [Numbers 33:55], **apostasy** [I Kings 11:2], and the **wrath** of God [II Chronicles 19:2].

"Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge" [14:7].

Since man is a social being, he must have some discernment concerning the character of others, and when he perceives (by way of the foolish man's speech) that he is in "*the presence of a foolish man*" he is to withdraw, taking caution not to get caught up in their ways [Isaiah 52:11; II Corinthians 6:17; Ephesians 5:11; II Thessalonians 3:6].

"Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them. For (because) their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief" [24:1-2].

In this **proverb** there is a twofold **exhortation**, followed by a twofold **reason** for the exhortation. The exhortation is "*Be not thou envious against evil men*" This same exhortation is given in **Psalm 37:1** and stresses the point that a child of God should not be desirous of the manner and ways of "*evil men*" The second part of the exhortation is "*neither desire to be with them*" and is the result of obeying "*Be not thou envious against evil men*" They are to be **avoided** [Romans 16:17-18]. The reason they are to be kept away from is because of the condition of their heart-"*their heart studieth destruction*" that is, "*they attempt to find ways to bring others down to their level*" and because of their speech-"*and their lips talk of mischief*"

"Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion (an associate, a partner, a friend) of riotous (unrestrained revelry, and disorder) men shameth his father" [28:7].

Those that are companions of **unruly, disorderly, and undisciplined** individuals, that choose such for their companions, and delight in them will be drawn away from keeping the law of God [Psalm 119:115], and will bring great **disgrace** and **humiliation** to their own lives, and to the lives of their family.

“Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance” [29:3].

In this **proverb** there is a contrast drawn between the one who *“loveth wisdom”* and *“he that keepeth company with harlots”* THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO KEEP COMPANY WITH THE UNGODLY! The one who does choose to keep company with the wicked and ungodly is on a path of a waste!

In this world there are people who are **detrimental**, **unsafe** and **toxic** to the spirituality of God’s people, and there are people that are spiritually **helpful** and **beneficial!** IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ONE BE ABLE TO DISCERN THE DIFFERENCE! The spiritually wise individual will choose the company of those who are spiritually beneficial to them, and avoid those who pull them down spiritually.