

BIBLE CLASS 15.02.2024 PROVERBS 18:24

A man that has friends must show himself friendly:
and there is a friend *that* sticks closer than a brother. (Pro 18:24)

This proverb is not easy to translate from the Hebrew into English and there are different suggestions :-

Some "friends" pretend to be friends, but a true friend sticks closer than a brother. (Pro 18:24 CJB)

A man's many companions are hurtful to him; but there is many a friend that cleaves closer than a brother. (Pro 18:24 LEE)

There are friends who bring ruin, but there are true friends more loyal than a brother. (Pro 18:24 NAB)

A man of *many* friends *comes* to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Pro 18:24 NAS)

A person who has friends may be harmed by them, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Pro 18:24 NET)

Even a man who has many companions can be destroyed. But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Pro 18:24 NIRV)

A man having [many] friends, shall come to ruin, but there is a loving one, who sticks closer than a brother. (Pro 18:24 ROT)

There are friends who pretend to be friends, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Pro 18:24 RSV)

It will be noted that there are two stanzas in each of the translations, but all but two agree that there is only one friend that 'sticks' or 'cleaves' closer than a brother. The LEE and NAB translations suggests that there are many friends which the Hebrew texts do not warrant this.

There are difficulties with translation, for instance it has been pointed out that "a man" in the Hebrew can also be rendered "there are" so the translation could be, "There are friends to ones undoing" or "friends that will cause "ones" undoing; or "to be broken in pieces" Jeremiah warned King Zedekiah of this, "Your close friends

have misled and overpowered you” Jer. 38:22 NASB or KJV “Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee: thy feet are sunk in the mire, *and* they are turned away back”.

Bullinger a Bible student of some reputation in his section on Figures of speech gives the translation as, “There are friends that break us and there is a friend that makes us.

Examples of true friends that make us that come to mind includes Ruth and Naomi ¹⁶ And Ruth said, “Entreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for where you go, I will go; and where you lodge, I will lodge: your people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me. ¹⁸ When she saw that she was **steadfastly minded** to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.⁹ So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. (Rut 1:16-19)

¹¹ And Boaz answered and said unto her, It has fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of your husband: and *how* you have left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knew not heretofore. The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust. (Rut 2:11-12)

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. (Pro 17:17 KJV) But in our frailty we fail to follow continually the example of the friend that loves us at all times, even our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as the apostle John reminds us, “Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us: and **we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren**. But whoso has this world's good, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how does the love of God dwell in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed (i.e. in practice) and in truth. (1Jo 3:16-18)

We understand categorically, the Lord Jesus is the only friend that loves as all time. Yes we do fail but the lord Jesus will never fail

and he has promised that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1Jo 1:9)

We are reminded of the prodigal son who wasted his father's living on harlots who were only friendly while he had money for them. When it ran out there was no more and he was reduced to eating the food given to pigs, as in fact he had behaved like one. But he came to realise his folly and the only answer was to return to his Father. He repented and received forgiveness from his father.

The Lord Jesus explained to the apostles that, As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: you continue in my love. If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you. (Joh 15:9-14) This is the love that generates true unalloyed friendship that sticks closer than a brother. The fact is that being brought up in the world, brothers do not naturally love one another for all manner of reasons, sometimes because of jealousy, sometimes because they are competitive and aspire to get to the top and do not suffer their siblings to do the same. But it must not be so when a person submits to the service the Lord Jesus lays upon him.

Paul in his letter to the Hebrews explains how “both he that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to **call them brethren**, (Heb 2:11) He continues, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the diabolos;

And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it became him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to

God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to support those that are tempted. (Heb. 2:14-18) The true friend that sticks with us more than any brother. Brothers can fail but Christ Jesus never did and never will.

DHH