

my life: parents, teachers, youth leaders, friends, room mates. Seeing the trouble I was heading for, they stubbornly stood in my way, doing their best to prevent me from making foolish choices.

Did I thank them? Not very often. I was too busy pouting because they had kept me from getting something I thought I couldn't live without.

Taking a stand between friends and their destructive choices will seldom make you a popular person, but it will make you a good person. Your friends may even call you a traitor, but God will call you His friend. Emotionally and socially, it's a difficult choice to make. But intellectually and spiritually, it's a no-brainer. --JAL

REFLECTION

- Do I have a friend who is heading for trouble? What am I going to do about it?
- How can I stand in the way without getting run over? How can I maintain a position of influence without going along with my friend's destructive choices?
- Who is standing between me and some bad choices I'm considering? Am I resentful or grateful?

A true friend blocks your path to trouble.



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Call Me Baalim's Donkey

The driver in the car behind me was not happy, and I was the reason. She made this clear by "hugging" my rear bumper (but not in the affectionate sense) and making impatient gestures (which I could see in my rearview mirror).

When this failed to achieve the desired result, she began tooting her horn (perhaps assuming that I had somehow remained oblivious to her).

I'm no fool. I knew what she wanted. She wanted me out of her way--right now! But I chose not to move.

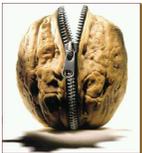
I could have sped up a bit, passed the car in the lane next to me, and moved out of her way. But I saw something she apparently didn't see. A parked patrol car just ahead of us. So I held my position, maintained the speed limit, and kept the wild woman from getting a speeding ticket--or worse.

Farther down the road the traffic thinned out, and the woman darted around me and disappeared over the horizon. Did she mouth the words "thank you" when she passed, acknowledging the favour I had done for her? Not exactly. She just sped away into the rest of her life, leaving me to ponder the lesson I had just learned about my role in the universe.

In a way, I had played the part of Baalim's donkey that day. Just like the animal in the biblical story, I had stood between a wayward person and potential trouble.

Over the years, a number of people have played that role in





Romans: Truth in a Nutshell

(unzipped for you)

New Testament Ethics III

Five factors emerge which determine how we choose to live:

1. What we love,
2. What we know,
3. What we think,
4. What we are,
5. What we have, [previous]

As a result there are three sets of sins we ought to find repulsive:

1. Sins of _____, 1:15-16, 18, 24, 28-30

(2 Timothy 3:16-17) "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

(Hebrews 5:12-14) "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. [13] For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. [14] But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

(2 Timothy 3:2-3) "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, [3] unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, ... **(James 3:2)** "... If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body."

(James 3:5-11) "Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! [6] And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. [7] For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. [8] But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. [9] With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. [10] Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. [11] Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?"

(Ephesians 4:30-32) "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. [31] Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. [32] And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you."

(Philippians 4:8) "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, ... noble, ... just, .. pure, ... lovely, ... of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these



things."

2. Sins of _____, 1:29-30

◆ **A** _____,
(Matthew 5:21-22) ""You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' [22] "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. ..."

(1 Timothy 1:9-10) "knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, [10] for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, / for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine,"

(Galatians 5:20-21) "idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, [21] envy, murders, / drunkenness, revelries, and the like..."

◆ **D** _____,

◆ **R** _____,

◆ **A** _____,

◆ **T** _____,

(Mark 7:21-22) ""For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22] "thefts, / covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness,"

(Ephesians 4:20) "But you have not so learned Christ,"

(Ephesians 4:22-25) "that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, [23] and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, [24] and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

[25] Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another."

(Ephesians 4:28) "Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need."

3. _____ sins, 1:29



(Galatians 5:16-17) "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. [17] For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."

(James 4:4-5) "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. [5] Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?"

