

Spiritual Practices for Thriving Life

Thrive with us by following on Instagram and YouTube
@FlagNazChurch, @FlagNazYouth and FlagNaz.org



Choose Good Companions

What do you specifically need in a partner to help you be your most Christlike?

What does someone close to you need from you to be their best?

What is one thing you can do differently this week to help a specific person be more like Jesus?

Genesis 2:18-22 – ¹⁸Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” ¹⁹So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. ²¹So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

I) It's a Big Job...

We have all experienced big jobs. Some take talent beyond our own. Others need many hands. There are also hard jobs we can do if we receive enough encouragement. Each of us must live our own life. Yet we need help. We need others to challenge and support us, model for us, test us. God intended life as both private and communal. We each have a private inner life. Living that well takes expressing it to others, being shaped by the experience. Life is a big job—we need good companions.

◆ **I'll do it myself**: There are plenty of jobs one can do alone. Many of us have them. We get our assignment and go about our work.

August 20th, 2023

Interaction with others is incidental—or worse, people **are** the work. Some of us have learned it is easier to do something ourselves than to teach others how to help us until the job is impossible alone. Tilling and keeping the garden is the type of work one can do alone. There is something to be learned from God saying, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner (Gen 2:18).” There is an aspect of life for which we need help. We need to know what that is.

♦**Can I get a hand?** We go as far as we can alone because it is simpler. One day, we accept that the job cannot be done without help. The problem is, it takes time and effort to recruit and train help. Now that we are unable to do the job ourselves, we cannot take the time to properly find help. Many of us have made the mistake of accepting the first willing person instead of seeking the right partner. “So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man...(v19).” Thankfully, God was not thrusting an inappropriate partner on the man. He was letting us determine whether they were qualified for the job.

II) Job Qualifications...

Every job takes some amount of ability. Strength, intelligence, wisdom, diligence. Technical ability in a domain. Innate talent. It is important to know the nature of the job to determine the qualifications of success before finding help. It is **really** important to maintain the integrity of those qualifications rather than settling for someone. God did not waver from the requirements when helping man find his partner. He knows the job has specific characteristics. It’s important enough to wait for the right candidate.

♦**Beast of burden:** Sometimes the help we need is hard to define. There is a set of tasks—a job—that we need someone to do. But there is more need for a partner. Someone to talk with, dream with, receive wisdom from. We should take seriously the question of what is going to require help. Maybe it is an enormous garden, too big for one man to keep and till. “The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field (v20).” If the job is hard labor, certainly some “animal of the field” would be the right helper for the task. God did not make us to plow the earth. He made us to be His living image, to love all creation and relate to it perfectly. Something was missing.

♦**Tell me what you think:** We are uncomfortable giving job descriptions that are not task-based. Often, we need an advisor. A

trusted person who shares our devotion to a common mission. One we know will give all of themselves in service of our shared goal. Someone willing to say the truth even when it opposes us. After seeing all creatures, “for the man there was not found a helper as his partner (v20).” There is something distinctive in God’s plan for humanity. There is some aspect to His purpose that cannot be helped by another. We need others just like us to bring out our best.

III) Partnership...

Partners are bound to one another. They share in success. They share in failure. A consequence to one is a consequence to the other. As God identifies our condition as one needing “a helper as his partner,” He informs us we cannot fulfill our purpose alone nor succeed while the other fails. As humans, we are in this life together. This is why the animals of the field are unqualified to be our helper and partner. Our fates are not completely bound. We care and tend creation. It sustains us in some ways but is apart from us in others. We need to both see and reveal the image of God in our true partners.

♦**In this together:** The classic image of American business is the *...and Sons* moniker. The shop owner and his family eat or starve on the success of the business. Father and sons reflect each other’s values, bring out the best in each other, and ensure the business thrives. Any impropriety by father or sons brings the whole enterprise down. “And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman (v22).” We are of one another. This is one reason it is so hard to be different than the world—it is instinctual to be like each other. In an essential way we are one. We each are to reflect God’s image to the other. Getting this right, we draw out our best—wrong, we lead each other astray.

♦**A perfect introduction:** Some are great networkers. They seem to know everyone and connect people with common interests. They are credited with putting together perfect partnerships with their wise introductions. God “brought her to the man (v22).” His purpose for us is to be His image made visible. We worship Him in our relation to all creation. We experience His social nature in relationships with others with whom we are one. Our helper and partner is the one in whom we see God and for whom we are responsible to reflect God. The gift of companionship is the visible reminder of who we are called to be and someone who needs us to be our best. Each of us needs a partner and is responsible for being a great partner. Choose good companions.