

The Friend of God

James 2:23: "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."

Exodus 33:11: "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend."

Statements about friends:

1. Great friends are hard to find, difficult to leave and impossible to forget.
2. True friends say good things behind your back and tell you the truth to your face.
3. Being honest may not get you a lot of friends, but it will always get you the right ones.
4. Good friends are like stars – you don't always see them, but you know they're always there!
5. True friendship is like a tree, not measured by how tall it has grown, but by how deep the roots have gone. I might tweak this by adding the strength of the Giant Redwoods (the "Mount Everests" of all living things) is the interconnection of their root system.

An English publication offered a prize for the best definition of a friend. They received these statements. "A friend is one who multiplies joy and divides grief." "A friend is one who understands my silence." "A friend is a volume of sympathy bound in flesh." And this is the one that won the prize: "A friend is one who comes in when everybody else has gone out."

Happy is the person who has a friend.

Happier is the person who is a friend.

Happiest is the person who is and has a friend.

One of life's rewards is to have friends. Yet, the greatest reward in this life is to have God as your friend. Let's examine a few Scriptures about friendship in the Bible and see how that may relate to our friendship with God.

I. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD IS AN ETERNAL FRIENDSHIP.

II Chronicles 20:7: "Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?" I often refer to my friends as "my forever friends."

Romans 8:38, 39: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

II. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD IS NOT EARNED.

Prov. 17:17: "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." Deuteronomy 7:7: "The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people." Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have

done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

III. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD ADVANCES WHEN WE ARE FRIENDLY WITH GOD.

Proverbs 18:24: “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” Malachi 1:6a, 13: “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you....Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.” Jeremiah 2:32b: “...my people have forgotten Me days without number.”

A great friendship involves going out of the way to be together. It is not forced or coerced. It is not “put on” or merely made to happen. The fellowship flows out a heart of love.

IV. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD IS TESTED WHEN GOD REBUKES US.

Proverbs 27:6: “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” James 4:4: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” John 15:14: “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” Proverbs 3:12: “For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.” Hebrews 12:6: “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

V. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD ENHANCES OUR ENVIRONMENT.

Proverbs 27:9: “Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel.”

Several years ago, I came to one of the older hospitals in the medical center in downtown Houston to visit one of my church members only to find out they were going through a treatment and I would have to wait for an hour. I didn't mind because they had the most wonderful rose garden on the grounds and since the roses were in bloom, I would spend a delightful hour in meditation there. When my hour was up, I entered the elevators with one of the doctors and began to ascend to one of the upper floors. Soon after the doors shut the doctor said, "Did you enjoy the rose garden?" I said, "Yes, how did you know?" He replied, "I smelled the roses on you when you walked into the elevator." Oh that we might be so one with The Rose of Sharon that we would take that fragrance everywhere we go!

I love this poem I received from John Moore from Scotland many years ago:

One day a wanderer found a lump of clay,
So redolent of sweet perfume,
Its odors scented all the room.

'What are thou? was his quick demand,
'Art thou some gem from Samarkand,
Or spikenard in this rude disguise,
Or other costly merchandise?'
'Nay: I am but a lump of clay.'
"Then whence this wondrous perfume - say!
'Friend, if the secret I disclose,
I have been dwelling with the rose.'
Sweet parable! and will not those
'Who love to dwell with Sharon's rose,
Distil sweet odors all around,
Though low and mean themselves are found?
Dear Lord, abide with us that we
May draw our perfume fresh from Thee."

Oh to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art. "All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad" (Psalm 45:8).

VI. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD MAKES YOU A BETTER PERSON.

Proverbs 27:17: "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

VII. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD IS OFFERED TO ALL CHRISTIANS.

John 15:15: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

The friendship secured with Christ was costly. I Peter 1:18,19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

-Pastor Pope-