

GOD'S FRIENDS

We all have many acquaintances but true friends are few. Friends are those we can trust through all circumstances of life, those we desire to spend time with and those that we are willing to share secrets with. Did you notice three key words just mentioned regarding true friends? They are **trust.....time.....secrets**. God has friends too and some are mentioned in the Bible.

Abraham was 'God's friend' because **he trusted God** enough to be willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac. - James 2:21-24. God intervened when he saw Abraham's obedience.

'Do not lay a hand on the boy. Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you **fear God**, because you have not withheld your son, your only son.'

-Genesis 22:12

Throughout the scriptures we see that God desires our obedience even more than our sacrifice. Some of you may remember that one of our first writings years ago was on the topic of obedience. **Psalm 119** is all about the Word of God and reveals three aspects of obedience that please God:

1) **Instant Obedience** 'I will **hasten** and not delay to obey your commands' 119:60

* delayed obedience is disobedience

2) **Joyful Obedience** "I **rejoice** in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.'

119:14

* 'murmuring obedience is imperfect obedience'

3) **Total Obedience** 'You have laid down precepts that are to be **fully** obeyed.' 119:4

* partial obedience is disobedience

To fear and reverence God is to quickly, joyfully and fully obey His commands.

Moses was God's friend. After spending 40 years around the royalty of Egypt. He spent 40 years in the desert looking at sheep, stars and sand, but it was also **time** getting to know God. One day God spoke to him out of a burning bush. God began to teach him about the fear of the Lord and also about faith. (see the message God Encounter in the Knowing God section) God called Moses to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt so that they could worship and serve only Him. After their deliverance, God took Moses to a mountain for 40 days and gave him the 10 commandments. The people below **trembled with fear** as they saw the thunder and lightning, the smoke on the mountain and heard the trumpet. Moses then told them:

'Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the **fear of God** will be with you to **keep you from sinning.**' - Exodus 20:20

There seem to be two types of fear just mentioned. One is an **unhealthy fear** that caused the people to shrink from God. The other is a **holy fear** that gives one a desire to draw closer to God in reverence because of His awesome presence, power, holiness and love.

‘Be holy, because I am holy. Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.’

1 Peter 1:16-17

‘Since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with **reverence and awe**, for our God is a **consuming fire**. Hebrews 12:28-29

The Lord **delights** in those who **fear Him**, who put their hope in His **unfailing love**. - Psalm 147:11

Satan’s deception is for us to run from God when we sin, but God wants us to run to Him as He is the one who will forgive us and get us back on the pathway of life. Moses ran away after he murdered an Egyptian, but God was waiting for Him in the desert. Later he would also shrink away from God’s assignment for him, but eventually he would discover the benefits of spending time with God and being obedient.

‘The Lord would speak to Moses face to face as a man speaks with his **friend**.’

- Exodus 33:11

‘ God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him’ - Hebrews 11:6b

Occasionally we hear of disputes over public presentations of the 10 commandments.

Regrettably, most of the displays of the 10 commandments today are incomplete, as they omit the first sentence about the One who gave them. ‘And spoke **all** these words.....

‘I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.’ - Exodus 20:1-2

You have heard the expression, it’s not what you know but who you know. In this case, God reminds his people of **who He is** before He gives them commands of what to do. He is a powerful, ever present, compassionate and faithful God.

These 10 commandments are moral laws that remind us of the **freedom** that God wants us to walk in because he loves us and wants the best for us. A violation of any of the 10 commandments reveals a lack of love and respect for God and others and all that belongs to them. When we break the commandments they bring brokenness into our lives. They are still relevant as each one is still mentioned in the New Testament. (we will explore this topic in another series). God’s commands are given for our ultimate **pleasure and protection**. Pharaoh brought slavery, bondage, misery and oppression, whereas God brings freedom and fulfillment as His commands are meant to cause us to look to Him, for they reflect His nature and character. Jesus is the perfect demonstration and fulfillment of God’s law. Through the Holy Spirit, God writes His **royal law of love** in our hearts which gives us the desire to walk in His ways. - Jeremiah 31:33, Hebrews 8:10, 10:16, James 2:8, Luke 19:17. Jesus summed up the commandments with: Love God with all your being and love your neighbor as yourself - Matthew 22:34-40 (We tend to put ourselves first, but I think Jesus is telling us to think about, care for and love others just as we do for ourselves - 1 Corinthians 10:24)

Love is the fulfillment of the law. - Romans 13:8-10

Lust seeks to benefit self at the expense of others.

Love seeks to benefit others at one's expense.

- Edwin Louis Cole

'The secret [of the sweet, satisfying companionship] of the Lord have they who fear (revere and worship) Him, and He will show them His covenant and reveal to them its [deep, inner] meaning.'

- Amplified Bible Classic Edition

God has **trusted** friends who enjoy spending **time** with Him and with whom he reveals insights and **secrets**. You can be one of them too, but it's your move. '**Draw near to God** and He will draw near to you.' - James 4:8

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