



Who Am I?

"I Am A Friend of God"

1 Samuel 18-20; John 15:11-17

Sunday | December 13th, 2015 | Pastor Patrick Bowler

CONSULT THE SCRIPTURES

1 Samuel 18:1-16, 19:1-10, 20:1-17, 41-42

John 15:11-17 "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another."

(See also 2 Sam. 1:26, Luke 22:19-20, 2 Cor. 12:15)

CONSULT THE SCHOLARS

[Neil Anderson] "In Christ you have the best friend you could ever have. Many may desert you during times of trouble, but Jesus invites you to draw near to him. In John 15:12-17, He says that you are no longer a servant doing only what is commanded, without understanding the purpose. Jesus takes His friends into His confidence. In John 15:15, He says, 'Everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.' He also said, 'But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide into all truth... All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you' (John 16:13, 15). Jesus discloses Himself to us...we know Him...He invites us to draw near...He is a friend who sticks closer than a brother, the One who stays with us through all adversity.

Another proof that Jesus is the ultimate friend is that He purposely gave Himself for us. He sacrificed Himself to meet our greatest need. This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us' (1 John 3:16). I have heard

many people express the sentiment, 'Oh, I wish Jesus was my friend.' That wish has already been granted. He is your friend because He chose to be your friend; He chose you...

How Can I Be a Friend to Christ?

The critical question then is, 'How can I reciprocate our relationship? How can I be His friend?' First of all, let's go back to what makes a friend. The most important thing you can do is disclose yourself to God, be totally honest with Him, walk in the light, and unburden yourself before Him, knowing that He loves you and has your best interests at heart.

Another dimension of friendship is to love a person sacrificially, to meet his or her needs. But you say, 'God doesn't have any needs.' In essence, that's true. But what does He deeply desire and require? Not only to love Him above all else, but also to love those around you. 'And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother' (1 John 4:21)."¹

DISCUSS

1. As a group, define what it means to be a good friend. Write out a brief definition (be creative).
2. How does your group's definition of a friend differ from our cultural experience (particularly as relates to social media; e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc...)?
3. Pastor Patrick said that by looking at our friendship with God we are able to see another facet of His love for us. Explain. What do we see of His love in His friendship with us that we don't necessarily see from a more familial perspective (i.e. as children of God)?
4. Which reality is easier for you to accept, that God loves you or that He likes you? How might this affect how we approach Him in relationship?
5. Patrick identified four characteristics of friendship (maybe you identified more): (1) Love is mutual, (2) love is covenantal, (3) love is sacrificial, and (4) love is trusting. Are your relationships marked by these characteristics? What about with God?
6. What immediate applications can be made in light of this text?

¹Neil Anderson, *Living Free In Christ* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1993), p. 32-34.