



March 3, 2023

Who is a “Friend of God”?

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

As I’ve been studying, reflecting, and analyzing the meanings of the soon upcoming days of Unleavened Bread, I’ve also continued to meditate and reflect about the members of the early church and how they relate to you and me today in 2023.

We have been reviewing the names or descriptors if you will of the members of the early church. We looked at the use of the terms “disciple”, “of the Way”, and “brethren.”

Another one of the terms that is applied to very few people is “*friend of God*.”

In Bible history one of my favorite recorded servants of God is the one man who is referred to by God Himself as His friend, Abraham. “*But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend.*” (Isa 41:8) Abraham being God's friend is also referred to in 2 Chronicles 20:7 and James 2:23. The Hebrew word translated friend above is *’ahab*. It can refer to human love for God and God's love toward man and/or also the act of being a genuine friend. (Online Bible Hebrew Lexicon).

There are a number of other Hebrew words also translated “friend”.

The Hebrew word *’ahab* is also often translated love or loves. The Greek word translated friend is *philos*. It can refer to a “friend, to be friendly to one, to wish him well.” (Online Bible Greek Lexicon). In most cases where the word friend is found in the Greek Scriptures it is *philos*.

Another recorded life within God's Word is that of Moses, who also was considered a friend of God. "*So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. . .*" (Exodus 33:11) Here the Hebrew word translated friend is *rea'* and can refer to a "friend, companion, fellow." Moses was faithful in His relationship with God and the tabernacle responsibilities. "*And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant . . .*" (Hebrews 3:5).

Jesus connected love with both being a friend, *and* demonstrating actions that actually supported that relationship. "*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*" (John 15:13)

Jesus told His disciples, "*You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*" (John 15:14) Now that adds an important element often missed by many people proclaiming to be "Christians". Jesus entrusted the disciples with what we might think as inside information and special knowledge. "*No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*" (John 15:15). So He made known things to them that was not made available to everybody. I can hear someone saying "why, that simply is not fair!" But that important element is available by obeying God and doing His will in our lives.

We also are considered friends of God when we love God as he instructs us as we saw above. We are given special insight and understanding including partial knowledge of the future, by the indwelling and influence of the Holy Spirit. (John 14:26; John 16:13)

God's Word tells us that Christ's true disciples will have a special relationship with Him based on love and an intimate close friendship. "*He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will reveal Myself to him.*" (John 14:21)

Abraham, known as the friend of God, demonstrated the actions God seeks of one who truly loves Him. "*because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My*

charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." (Genesis 26:5)

So to be God's friend, we can't ignore obedience to Him and His laws. There is a very big spiritual disconnect if we ignore obeying Him.

The historian Luke referred to the disciples as friends of the apostle Paul. "*And the next day we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him liberty to go to his friends and receive care.*" (Acts 27:3) Felix, governor of Judea, allowed the arrested apostle Paul the freedom to be visited by his friends. "*So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.*" (Acts 24:23).

The apostle John also refers to the disciples as friends. "*but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.*" (3 John 1:14).

In our weekly *Bible Basics* interactive web Bible study, we have been for months now covering "The Wisdom of the Proverbs". There is a proverb that describes the ones who the king considers friends. "*He who loves purity of heart and has grace on his lips, the king will be his friend.*" (Proverbs 22:11)

What a blessing that we can be a friend of the King of kings, Jesus Christ!

Let us also value our friendships with one another, and not take them for granted...and may they be genuine friendships, reflecting our being a friend of God.

Some thoughts to meditate on and consider as we near the end of another week, and look forward to God's Sabbath.

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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