



August 25, 2023

Relationships, Friendship, and God

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, 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.

Memories can be a good thing. My mind drifts back often with fond memories, of people, places, and relationships built. I've been blessed over the decades with some genuine friendships that I greatly appreciate. As time goes on I have also understood that some who claimed to be friends, really were not. The genuine ones though are a blessing from God.

With this in mind, I've pondered as well, what about my relationship with God?

When was the last time you stopped for a moment and examined that? I mean really asked yourself, is my relationship with Him real and genuine?

Our relationship with God has many facets and components. Our Heavenly Father relates to us as His children. Our Messiah instructed us to address His Father also as "*Our Father, who is in Heaven.*"

He resides in the third heaven (as it is called) and yet we are able to pray and connect to Him. His special Son will be the one who returns to the earth to administer the Kingdom of God as the King of kings. (Rev. 19:11, 15-16; Zech. 14:3-4, 9)

As I've been preparing and thinking about the upcoming Fall Feasts of the Lord, these things weigh on my mind.

We are described as sons of God. "*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*" (Rom. 8:14) The word "sons" is used generically and could also be rendered "children". I don't see it as gender specific.

We are expected to be loving and obedient sons and to follow His instructions. "*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*" (John 14:15)

The apostle Peter describes the faithful as "*obedient children.*" (1 Pet. 1:14) He also responded to his accusers with the assertion that the Holy Spirit is "*given to those who obey Him.*" (Acts 5:32) As a caring and conscientious Father, he at times corrects and reproveth His children because He loves them. (Heb. 12:6).

The word "disciple" is used many times to refer to those who followed Jesus. (Luke 6:1, 13; Acts 1:15; Acts 6:1)

The word disciple is translated from the Greek word *mathetes* and means a learner, pupil or student. Christ's disciples are learners and students for life. They are to grow in grace and knowledge. (2 Pet. 3:18)

Disciples are supposed to know the word of God, His word of truth, as skilled workmen. (2 Tim. 2:15) And, disciples need to learn from an instructor.

The original disciples learned directly from Jesus Christ. We as disciples learn from the words of Christ recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Christ sent the Holy Spirit to lead us to understand the truth and remember the truths we have learned. (John 14:26)

As we near God's fall Holy Days, these are things to reflect upon.

Another relationship that our wonderful God offers is that of being a friend of God.

Abraham was privileged to be a friend of God. (Ex. 33:11; 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23). I found it interesting how often this is stated! Our Savior related to His disciples as their friend. "*No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends . . .*" (John 15:15)

Friends can share things with one another. A friend is consistent and dependable and shows real love. "*A friend loves at all times.*" (Prov. 17:17) Christ expects His friends to be respectful and own His instructions. "*You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*" (John 15:14)

A friend demonstrates and shows his friendship in word and deed. (Prov. 18:24)

A friend receives correction from another friend with grace and humility. (Prov. 27:6; Prov. 27:17)

A friend is willing to be inconvenienced and come to the aid of another friend. (Luke 11:5-8)

Those that demonstrate integrity of character, a pure heart, and whose words are spoken with grace and respect will be noticed and appreciated by leaders who are of the same character. (Prov. 22:11)

Of course the ruler and King whose favor we are most blessed to have is the King of Kings, Jesus Christ. May we value this friend relationship with God, continue to be His faithful and dependable friend, and also to be friends with one another as fellow disciples...

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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