

Beyond Servanthood: Friends

“No longer do I call you servants... but I have called you friends.” –John 15:15.

One of the foundations of our relationship with God is that we must learn to submit to Christ as our Master and Lord. However, this scripture tells us that those who know God as their Lord (or, Master) can later go on to know God as their friend. This is a deeper, more intimate relationship with the Lord!

A. SERVANTS OF GOD:

- 1) To become a servant is important. Jesus Christ came as a servant, Mk. 10:43-45.
 - Jesus taught that He was a servant, and that we also need to learn how to become servants.
- 2) However, a good servant of God can mature into having a more intimate relationship with God. He can become a friend! *“No longer do I call you servants... but I have called you friends, Jn.15:15.*

B. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A SERVANT AND A FRIEND:

- 1) The goal of a servant is faithfulness, Mt.25:21. Martha & Mary: Martha served, Lk.10:40. The goal of a friend is relationship, Ex.33:11. Martha & Mary: Mary sat at Jesus’ feet, Lk.10:39 & 42.
- 2) A servant responds to the *law* of his master, Lk.5:5. A friend responds to the *grace* of his friend, Prov.27:9.
- 3) The servant obeys God’s commands but is not told *what* or *why*, Jn.15:15. The friend knows *what* God is doing & *why*: In Is.41:8 God calls Abraham “My friend.” God showed this relationship with Abraham in Gen.18:17-21: God said [to Himself], *“Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing? For I have known him ...”* Then God shared His heart and purposes with Abraham!
- 4) A servant moves the *hand* of God. Jn.11:21-22, Martha had faith! A friend moves the *heart* of God. Jn.11:32-35, Mary had love- she was weeping, and Jesus wept!

C. HOW TO DEVELOP A FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD:

- 1) First, become a faithful servant of God, Jn.15:14. Those who do not learn how to be faithful servants disqualify will themselves from going on with God.
 - We must be diligent, fruitful servants, Mt. 25:24-30.
 - We must be kind to the rest of God’s servants, and live righteously, Luke 12:42-47.
 - Some try to serve God, but enjoy sin more than drawing near to God, Mt.7:22-23.
- 2) Spend time with the Lord, Ex.33:11 Joshua did this because he wanted to be close to God, like Moses.
- 3) Get to know God’s heart & ways- as you become close to someone, you know them, Ps.103:7.
- 4) Enter into the deepest fellowship, the “fellowship of His sufferings,” Phil.3:10, Isaiah 53:3-4, Jn.15:13.

D. DEEPER LEVELS OF FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD:

- 1) Become a Friend of the King: by seeking purity of heart and speech, Prov. 22:11. The “Friend of the King” was a title given to a few high officials who were close to a king, 1 Chron.27:33, 2 Sam.16:16-20, Gen.26:26. They were his trusted counselors.
 - Abraham, God’s friend (Is.41:8), counseled God when he interceded for Sodom, Gen.18:23-33.
 - Moses, who talked with God as a friend, counseled God when he pleaded for Israel, Ex.32:10-14.
- 2) Become a “Friend of the Bridegroom,” like John the Baptist, Jn.3:29. This title was given to the one who prepared for the wedding in behalf of the bridegroom. He was the “Best Man” and much more!
 - As the bridegroom’s trusted representative, he asks for the hand of the bride in marriage.
 - He served the bride until the time of the wedding.
 - The Friend of the Bridegroom must keep himself from gaining the affection of the bride. (Samson’s “Friend of the Bridegroom” did not do that, he married Samson’s bride, Jud.14:20)
 - He stepped aside, his duties accomplished, when the Bridegroom arrived, Jn.3:29-30.
 - John the Baptist prepared the faithful of Israel to be joined with Christ when He came. Now God is looking for many “Friends of the Bridegroom” who will prepare the way for Christ’s second coming and for His wedding with His bride! Who will He trust? Who will be His “Best Man” today?