

JOHN BEVERE

The
Awe
of
God

A 6-WEEK SERMON SERIES

Lesson 5: Intimacy with God

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Outline:

1. Friendship with the Lord
2. Are You Clueless?
3. You Are My Friends, If...
4. Close

Friendship with the Lord

Is it possible to be a member of God's Kingdom but still have missed the opportunity to be intimate with Him?

The quick answer is 'yes.'

Let's dive deeper into this:

Psalm 25:14 | NKJV

The *secret* of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.

The Hebrew word for '*secret*' is defined as: '**Counsel.**'

- The Greek dictionary also states that, '**Confidentiality is at the heart of this term.**'
- The Psalmist isn't talking about *one secret*, but rather God's *secret counsel*, or for our purposes, we will simply call it *secrets* (plural).
- The scripture could read, "**God shares His secrets with those who fear Him.**"

Who do you share your secrets with: *acquaintances* or *close friends*?

- I'm certain you answered, *close friends*. God is no different, He shares His secrets with intimate close friends, and His close friends are those who embrace holy fear.
- ESV: "The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him."

God is not everyone's friend. (Take a moment to sit with this)

- *God is not a friend to everyone who is in the church.*

In the Old Testament, there are two men identified as 'God's friend:' Abraham and Moses.

- **Are there others?** Absolutely yes,

Abraham.

- Why is he called God's friend?

Things to note:

- God promised him a child when he was seventy-five years old (the desire of his heart).
- He waited 25 more years before Sarah, his wife, miraculously gave birth to Isaac.
- Because of the wait, Isaac was a lot more special to Abraham.

But then one day, with no advanced warning whatsoever, God says to Abraham in prayer,

Genesis 22:2 | NKJV

“Take your son, your only son – yes, Isaac, whom you love so much – and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you.”

What?! Kill the most important person or thing in your life, just because God said to do it and didn't give you a reason?

- Create the intensity over this command given to Abraham...
- Abraham didn't know this was a test...
- It would've been easier for Abraham to kill himself than to kill Isaac...

I love Abraham's response to God's extremely difficult command.

Genesis 22:3 | NKJV

“The next morning Abraham got up early.”

Early the next morning...

- He got right to it! He didn't mull it over for a few days or weeks, he didn't call his friends to get their opinion. He didn't ignore or resist God's command.
- He, Isaac and two servants got up early the next morning, packed up, and started on their way.

Two and a half days later...

- No word from God...
- What was going through his mind?
- There was no reason to do this except for the fact that God told him to do so...
- Capture the emotions, the pain, the heart wrench...

The critical moment arrived, could he actually do it? In great anguish he ties up Isaac, lifts the knife and is ready to thrust it into his son's heart; all because God asked, and didn't give a reason.

Suddenly, an angel of God appears and cries out:

Genesis 22:12 | NKJV

“Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for *now I know that you fear God*, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

How did the angel know that Abraham feared God?

- Because he obeyed *instantly*, when it *didn't make sense*, when he *didn't see a benefit*, when it *hurt* and he did it to *completion*.

Abraham then put down the knife, untied Isaac, lifted up his eyes and saw a ram caught in a bush.

- Out of his mouth came these words, “Jehovah-Jireh,” which means, “The-Lord-Will-Provide” (Gen. 22:14).

What just happened?

- In that moment, God revealed a facet of His character to Abraham that no one else had known before.
- That day, Abraham became a close friend of God.

Let's continue to look at the relational dynamic between God and Abraham, it's amazing. On a certain day God said:

Genesis 18:17 | NLT

“Should I hide My plan from Abraham?”

Paraphrase the situation...

- God wants to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.
- God and Abraham converse back-and-forth, God wanting to hear his thoughts on the matter...
- Abraham thinks of his nephew Lot and his family and intercedes on their behalf...

Genesis 18:23-25

“Will you sweep away both the righteous and the wicked? Suppose you find fifty righteous people living there in the city—will you still sweep it away and not spare it for their sakes? Surely you wouldn't do such a thing, destroying the righteous along with the wicked. Why, you would be treating the righteous and the wicked exactly the same! Surely you wouldn't do that! Should not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?”

Continue to paraphrase...

- God was pleased with Abraham's response...
- But Abraham was concerned that maybe there wasn't 50 righteous, so he kept bargaining with God until they reached an agreement for 10 righteous...

Only a friend can talk this way to a king who has the power to execute judgment. Coming from a servant or subject, such a petition would be disrespectful.

Genesis 18:33

"When the Lord had finished his conversation with Abraham, he went on his way, and Abraham returned to his tent."

Are You Clueless?

Sobering reality...

- Sodom and Gomorrah were prospering, and life was good. But they were clueless to the fact that they were 24-hours away from being obliterated!
- EVEN MORE SOBERING.... Lot (a righteous man) was also clueless!

Here we have two *righteous* men...two saved, born again, Christian men (Abraham & Lot)

- One *righteous* man **knows what God is going to do before He does it**, and helps God decide how He's going to do it.
- The other *righteous* man is as **clueless** to the impending judgment as the wicked.

Why?

- Because the first righteous man fears God, therefore, he's a friend of God, and in turn knows the secrets of God.
- The second righteous man does not fear God, therefore, he's not the friend of God, and in turn does not know the secrets of God.

Lot's life serves as a WARNING to each of us.

- Lot was called 'righteous' by the Scripture, but he was worldly.
- He represents the believer who when forced in the corner seeks first to serve his or her own best interests, like the Corinthian church, similar to many in our Western Church.
- There were terrible consequences for his worldliness: ungodly offspring, wife was attached to Sodom, she loved the "world" more than God.

- Jesus warns us, to “remember what happened to Lot’s wife!” (Luke 17:32).

Moses

Psalm 103:7

He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.

Jesus

Did Jesus open up a relationship of friendship to all who believe in Him?

- The quick answer is ‘no.’

Let’s take a look:

John 2:23—24

Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to *trust* in him. But **Jesus didn’t trust them** because he knew all about people.

The word **trust** is an interesting Greek word which is defined:

- "to believe to the extent of complete trust and reliance — ‘to have confidence in, to have faith in.’”

NOTICE: **this trust is not reciprocated by Jesus.**

- Even though people believed to the extent of complete trust and reliance on Him, He didn’t *trust* them.
- He loved them, served them, but did not hold them at the level of friendship. The trust that God attributed to Moses was not extended by Jesus (God manifested in the flesh) to those who believed in Him.

Let’s move forward to the Last Supper.

- In the previous three years of ministry most who believed in Him were not reliable, many followed secretly, others from a distance or only when they benefited; many disciples left Him, and Judas betrayed Him.

Does this give more insight as to why Jesus didn’t reciprocate the trust?

Jesus is now sitting with those closest to Him. With gratitude and affection, He says,

John 22:28 | ESV

““You are those who have stayed with me in my trials.””

Those at the table had been reliable. (Judas had already left to betray him and Peter would deny him, but Jesus knew what would happen later.)

To the remaining eleven, Jesus states:

John 15:15 | NKJV

““No longer do I call you servants.””

The fact that Jesus says, ‘No longer’ means that these men were at one time looked at, and merely regarded as ‘servants.

Galatians 4:1 | TPT

As long as an heir is a minor, he’s not really much different than a servant.

We must ask, why does God keep us at the level of a servant, when we are heirs of His kingdom?

- To protect us!

The Lord in essence says to us,

“Until you are very established in Who I am in your life and very established in who you are with Me – the fear of the Lord. I need to keep you at a servant level even though you are an heir – son or daughter, of My kingdom. This is to protect you, so you don’t experience similar judgment of Ananias and Sapphira.”

Jesus says to these men:

John 15:15 | NKJV

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.

Jesus is in essence saying,

- “Up to now I have not given you the inside scoop – My plans, secret counsel, or intimate areas of My heart. But now I can *trust* you as I did with Moses and Abraham.”

You are My friends, if . . .

This is why Jesus states to all of us:

John 15:14a | NKJV

“You are My friends *if*...”

The word ‘if’ is a condition.

- it’s not automatic, even if we ‘believe’ in Him.

What is the condition of friendship?

John 15:14 | NKJV

“You are My friends *if you do whatever I command you.*”

There it is: *the fear of the Lord* – trembling at His word!

- Obeying instantly and to completion, even if it doesn’t make sense, you don’t see the benefit, or it is painful.
- Even as it was with Abraham and Moses, it is no different with us in the New Testament.
- Over 500 commands in the NT. These are not commands required for salvation.

Close

We don’t gain Jesus’s trust by just believing in Him. Friendship with the Lord is reserved for those who fear Him.

The greatest benefit of holy fear is to be welcomed into a friendship relationship with Jesus.