

GOD: A Short Autobiography

How to be GOD's Friend Genesis 18:1-8

Pastor Jason Dennett's Teaching Notes

NKJV - "Then the Lord appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, 3 and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. 4 Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said." 6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes." 7 And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. 8 So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate."

The English language is a funny thing, because there are certain humorous words, which we call "**oxymorons**". These words are clear contradictions to each other, but are often very amusing. Here are some famous examples of "**oxymorons**":

- "Dry-Ice"
- "jumbo shrimp"
- "legally drunk"
- "exact estimate"
- "act naturally"
- "found missing"
- "genuine imitation"
- "airline food"
- "government organization"
- "military intelligence"
- "alone together"
- "small crowd"
- "plastic glasses"
- "terribly pleased"
- "tight slacks"
- "pretty ugly"
- "rap music"
- "working vacation"
- "Microsoft Works"
- **GOD'S FRIEND?!?!**

Amazingly, in John 15:15 Jesus lovingly called us His friends when He said, "I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends" (NLT)

But there is only 1 person in all of scripture that is given the title "the friend of God" and he's the person we'll be studying this morning: ABRAHAM. No less than 3 times in the Bible, this honorable title is given to Abraham, and to him alone.

- II Chron 20:7 - King Jehoshaphat prays to the Lord and mentions "Abraham Your friend."
- James 2:23 - James calls Abraham the "friend of God"
- Isaiah 41:8 - "You Israel are my servant, you are descendants of Abraham my friend."
- **NOTE:** *But something you ought to know about biblical friendships, is that a "friend" in the Bible is a whole simply a buddy you just hang out with. It's much deeper, and more meaningful than that. Biblically, a "friend" speaks of a close and trusted companion, and valued and intimate relationship.*

I. GOD'S Friend should be FLEXIBLE. (v.1)

II. GOD'S Friend should be WORSHIPFUL. (v.2)

III. GOD'S Friend should be SACRIFICIAL. (v.3-8)

I. GOD'S Friend should be FLEXIBLE. - "Then the Lord appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day."

- Throughout my 20 years living in PR, I've had good friends that would just show up at my door anytime they felt like it, drop by anytime they needed something, or even if they were simply bored and were looking for something to do.
 - 15 years ago, I used to live in a small 2 bedroom apartment with 6 other single Christian guys...
 - I also used to be that friend who would simply drop by my future in-laws house, whenever I needed some food, was bored.... or wanted to say hi to Gina!
- Jesus even used the FLEXIBILITY between friends, an illustration for prayer...
 - Luke 11:5-6 NLT - "Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this story: "Suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, 'A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.'"

- As His close friend, you have to understand, that GOD will regularly, consistently, and lovingly interrupt your life plans...and it demands flexibility on your part to keep growing!
 - **The First Law of Motion (Isaac Newton):** *"Everything continues in a state of rest unless it's **compelled to change** by forces impressed upon it." Some would say that this could also be called the 1st Law of Friendship with God..as He regularly "interrupts" our day, and compels us to change and grow according to His Spirit.*
 - *"God speaks to us, through the regularity, with which He disappoints our plans."*
 - *"Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not break!"*
- The opposite of "flexible" would be what?? -----> ***"inflexible, rigid, stiff, set in our ways."*** *Doesn't that describe a lot of Christians that you know..??*
 - - *There was a man down in Nashville who bought a radio, took it home, took it out of the box, plugged it on, put it on his refrigerator, tuned it to his favorite country music station... and then he pulled all the knobs off the radio and threw them away!!*
- **QUESTION:** Are ***you*** flexible in your relationship with GOD? Seeking to be close to Christ as His friend, do you allow Him to "interrupt" your schedule, to "modify" your day, or to "restructure" your daily agenda??

II. **GOD's Friend should be WORSHIPFUL.** - ***"So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground.."***

- This word "***bowed***" is a most interesting word in the Hebrew language, and actually in the entire Bible. It is the Hebrew word used for "***worship***" and appears here in Genesis 18 for the first time in all of the scriptures.
 - This is the ancient Hebrew word "***שָׁחָה***" or "***shachah***" (used 172x in the OT) meaning ***"to bow low to the ground, to fall down flat, to prostrate oneself on the ground before a king or royalty."***
- Is this how ***YOU*** are in your heart before the Lord at church?? At home?? At the office?? He desires that we would ***BOW DOWN*** in worship in every area of our lives to His desires.
 - *"I believe a large majority of modern churchgoers, are merely unthinking slumbering 'worshippers' of an unknown God." - Charles Spurgeon*

- **1 of 5 essential things that the Lord actively SEARCHES FOR, according to Scripture:**
 - The LORD looks for the **LOST**...
 - The LORD looks for the **FAITH**...
 - The LORD looks for the **THANKFUL**...
 - The LORD looks for the **SERVANTS**...
 - The LORD for the **WORSHIPPERS!!!**

- *"When you recognize GOD as your Creator, you will admire Him. When you recognize Him in His wisdom, you will learn from Him. When you see His infinite strength, you will rely upon Him. But only when GOD saves you from sin, will you truly worship Him." - Max Lucado*

- *"Worship is a voluntary act of gratitude offered by the saved to the Savior, by the healed to the Healer, and by the rescued to the Rescuer." - Max Lucado*

- In his book '*The Cure for the Common Life*' Lucado declares that heartfelt daily worship is the vital component to a vibrant Christian life: *"Heavens's calendar has seven Sundays every week. GOD makes every day holy. He conducts his spiritual business at all hours and in all places. GOD changes everyday events into moments of worship, by transforming kitchen sinks into shrines, cafes into holy convents, and nine-to-five workdays into spiritual adventures!" - Max Lucado*

- What would be a good **DEFINITION** of this biblical concept of "worship"? Let me give you 4 elements that are necessary to having a solid understanding of biblical worship for your own life, as GOD's friend:
 - *"Biblical worship is the response to GOD's greatness, in an appropriate expression, from a loving heart, where GOD is placed above every thing and every one else."
(Money? Profession? Education? Family?)*

- **QUESTION**: Does that describe *you in your relationship to GOD*? In seeking to be GOD's friend, and intimate and meaningful relationship, do you bow down to Him, and put His desires above your own? Are you responding to GOD's greatness, in an appropriate way, from a heart of love, and placing GOD above your dreams, your profession, your income, and even your family when necessary? Is He your #1?

III. **GOD's Friend should be SACRIFICIAL**. - *"..and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. 4 Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your*

servant.” They said, “Do as you have said.” 6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes.” 7 And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. 8 So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.”

- Every Christian has ***SPIRITUAL GIFTS*** and ***NATURAL TALENTS*** that have been given to him/her by the Lord - 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12; Matthew 25
 - - *"You may not be involved in full-time ministry here at the church, but if you are truly a christian, your spiritual job description is the same as mine: Be empowered by the Holy Spirit, and lovingly pour yourself out to those around you, serve Christ diligently, and bring glory to GOD!" - Christian minister*
 - *"Serving GOD is about doing - and doing it with every fiber of your passion and commitment!" - Bruce Wilkinson*
 - *"Every SAINT should be a ***SERVANT*** & "Every MEMBER should be a ***MINISTER!***"
 - ***John 13:12-17 NLT*** - *"After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them."*
 - *"Biblical Ministry happens when ***Divine Resources*** flow thru ***loving channels***, to meet ***human needs***, to the ***glory of GOD.***" - Warren Wiersbe*
 - - *"Sometimes, offering yourself as a vessel, for the work of GOD can be costly." - John Ortberg*
 - *"Salvation is free...but serving Jesus in this world will cost you!" - Steve Campbell**
- One lesson that we clearly see here with Abraham is that Service = ***SACRIFICE!!***

- Abraham was ***99 years old*** at this time of his life!!
- His service was ***Emotionally strenuous!***
- His service was ***Physically demanding!***
- His service was ***Financially Expensive!***
- - - **2Sam 24:24** NLT - “No, I insist on buying it, for ***I will not present burnt offerings to the Lord my God that have cost me nothing.***” So David paid him fifty pieces of silver for the threshing floor and the oxen.”
 - **John 19:30** - “It is finished!”
 - - **Luke 9:23** - “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must ***give up your own way***, take up ***your cross daily***, and ***follow me***. 24 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.”
 - **Rom 12:1** NLT - “..I plead with you to ***give your bodies to God*** because of all he has done for you. Let them be ***a living and holy sacrifice***—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him.”
- **QUESTION**: Are ***you*** living sacrificially for Jesus today? In seeking to be a "friend of GOD" as Abraham was, are you ***actively serving*** the Lord with your spiritual gifts? Do you ***consistently*** take what the Lord has given to you (***Time, Talents, Treasure***) and ***invest it into expanding His Kingdom*** right now??