

A Friend of God's

by Henry Blackaby

Henry Blackaby emphasizes the importance of obedience and a true heart in developing a friendship with God and participating in His mission for redemption.

Scripture: Romans 5:3, Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 7:10, Ephesians 2:10, Philippians 1:6, Philippians 2:12, Titus 3:5, James 1:3, 1 Peter 4:3

Topics: "Sanctification", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Greek Word Studies preaches about the importance of believers working out their salvation fully and thoroughly, bringing it to successful completion and Christlikeness. This involves continuous, sustained effort and participation in the results, not just relying on God's work alone. Believers are urged to strive for perfection in Christlikeness, growing daily in spiritual maturity and obedience, with the assurance that God will complete the good work He started. The command to work out salvation emphasizes the believer's responsibility to actively pursue holiness and godly virtues, not passively waiting for God to work.

Transcript

Can you imagine the possibility of a servant coming to his master, the master saying what he wants the servant to do, then the servant looking into the face of the master and saying, "I'm sorry, master. That is not where my gifts lie."

What does he mean? Like many of us disobeying God, he is disobeying his master because of what he perceives are his gifts. But the gift follows obedience. The gift always follows the assignment. When God gives an assignment and you obey Him, He equips you to do what He has assigned.

Jesus says in the Scripture that you are His friend if you do whatever He commands you. Yet, there are a lot of people who want to be a friend of God within a very narrow range of obedience. Are you ready to do whatever He tells you? Jesus says, "You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." John 15:14-15

God is the one who is on mission, and it is critical that you begin a relationship with God starting with an encounter that surrenders everything in your life to follow Him. That is the beginning. Then comes the process where He begins to develop your character to match your assignment. And He begins to take you through real life experiences. Your heart is true though your actions often are not. David was called the

man after God's own heart. And you may say, "Well, how is it possible to be a man after God's own heart when he committed such sin?" God knew that David's heart was absolutely true. Whenever David sinned, he immediately returned to God and never complained at anything that God did to him because of his sin. A friend is one whose heart is steadfast toward God. God entrusts to His friends the deepest treasure of the Kingdom.

What an awesome friendship with God has been entrusted to you! He is placing into your hands the keys of His Kingdom. The Master does not entrust such treasures to those who are not trustworthy. He reads your heart. Jesus said, "You didn't choose me, I chose you. And I'm waiting for your obedience. But, obedience will never follow unless you love me and know me. My Father has been working in your heart all this time to bring you to the most thorough understanding of me. I am the risen, triumphant, reigning Lord."

The way God prepares you is to deal with your heart, not your skills and activity. The key to serving God is not your knowledge of everything; it is your knowledge of Him. He can transcend anything, anywhere, at any time, as long as He has your heart. Because you obey Him, He will bring forth fruit. If you abide in the vine, which is Christ, you will produce much fruit. (See John 15:5)

When Jesus faced the most significant burden of His life, He called three friends to join Him. It began significantly on the Mount of Transfiguration, because He had just announced that He was going to the cross. God was now moving His life with His disciples to that moment that would change the course of eternity. There was no moment that equaled that. And the intensity of the Mount of Transfiguration is seen in the fact that not only the Father Himself was there, but He brought alongside the Lord Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. The intensity of carrying the load of a world was so heavy the Father brought His resources, but Jesus brought three of His disciples. There were three that He could take farther with Him than He could take some others. I wonder if today because of the burden of a broken world that is nearing the return of the Lord Jesus, the intensity of the heart of God is at such a point that He is looking for those that He could take aside with Him and be with Him while He carries the load of a broken world? Let me suggest to you there will never be a place that you ever go that He is not carrying the load of those people. He asks you simply to go with Him. You will never have the burden that equals His. But for each of us, there can be that intense moment when we realize Jesus is carrying the redemption of a world; that He is looking for those who have not been side tracked, whose hearts have developed where He can call them His friends. Those are the hearts that He takes just a little farther than the others.

Now, someone has said that at that intense moment on the Mount of Transfiguration, we look at the men. We focus on the fact that the three men fell asleep. We'll spend a whole sermon talking about the three that fell asleep, and we'll not talk about the intensity of that moment in world redemption. I wonder if it's possible that the Lord Jesus let them sleep, because they were not able to carry what they would have seen and heard. If they had overheard that conversation it may have been too much for them because there were times when Jesus said, as in John 16, "I have so much more to tell you, but you couldn't take it now. That's going to have to wait until after the cross and resurrection and the ascension and the Holy Spirit is going to have to open your understanding." And, so there at that moment when the burden of a world was being carried, He looked for three who would at least be there with Him.

Would He invite you? Well, let me ask it even more significantly. Has He already invited you? He is going to go into the world where the redemption of people is at stake. It is as if He is taking you to the Mount and there the Father and the law and the prophets are saying, "I'm about to redeem and set loose people

enslaved in sin. But I don't want to carry that load alone. Will you go with me?"

Do you believe God wants to bring revival to America? There is a picture in the Old and New Testaments that you need to be aware of. In both the Old and New it says until the birth of a child there is sorrow and pain, but afterwards there is rejoicing. Many of us want to live in the realm of rejoicing before the birth of revival. Are there not some who will carry the pain and the sorrow required to bring it to birth? Will we not go with Him when He carries the load of a broken nation on His heart? Could He trust us to stay with Him just a little while; to go just a little farther than the others will go; to hear what others don't hear; and to experience what others will not experience? He needs us there because that is the moment when He gives birth to the redemption of the people. Are you God's friend?

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