

“You are my friends if you do what I command.” John 15:14



ABRAHAM

The Man Who Was God’s Friend

James 2:23

What makes a real friend? There is a story told about the young artist Albrecht Durer. Both he and his brother wished to become artists. However, coming from a family of 18 children, neither could afford the cost for the education. So they drew straws and agreed that the winner would go on to study art while the losing brother would work in the mines to pay the cost of the other’s instruction. After one brother graduated and began selling his artwork, the other brother would begin his study. Albrecht won the toss and attended school for the next several years. At a family gathering after returning home, Albrecht proposed a toast to the brother who had labored in the mines for him. To everyone’s surprise, Albrecht’s brother could not raise his glass. His hands had become crippled from crushed fingers and arthritis that had overtaken him while working in the mines. He could no longer hold a pen for the fine etchings he once dreamed of crafting. One day Albrecht began sketching his brother’s hands and artistically designed an etched masterpiece he simply called *hands*. These were the scarred and broken hands of his brother and dearest friend. These were also the hands that were to become the most famous work Durer ever created.

What an example of true friendship! Albrecht Durer’s brother was the closest friend Albrecht could have wished for. Their friendship was remarkable.

The Bible includes some wonderful examples of true friendships. We read of David and Jonathan, “*Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself*” (1 Samuel 20:17). We also know of Ruth and Naomi, “*Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay*” (Ruth 1:16).

God's people find comfort in knowing that God is our Friend. But those words go in one direction, from us to God. Have you ever asked yourself if the Almighty God, the Creator of the universe, would call us his friend? That is exactly what God did when he spoke of Abraham (*"father of a multitude"*)!

James writes, *"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God's friend"* (James 2:23). Why would the all-powerful, sinless, and holy God call us his friends? What is it that makes friendships?

First, friends think alike. Our closest friends think like us, and that was indeed the case with Abraham. *"Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws"* (Genesis 26:5).

Second, friends are loyal and dependable. Those are the ones you can count on in every instance. Abraham proved his loyalty when God tested him in the slaying of his son Isaac.

Third, friends are able to confide in one another. They are the ones with whom we can share our deepest secrets and feelings. The Lord felt confident in sharing with Abraham his plans for Sodom and Gomorrah: *"The Lord said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?'"* (Genesis 18:17). Friends confide in one another. Just as God shares his intimate thoughts and plans for us in his Word, so we can pour out our hearts to him by telling him our needs and desires.

Abraham's relationship with God was remarkable, yet we share a similar relationship. What a blessing it is for God to call us his friends for with the help of the Spirit, we think alike, are loyal, and share our closest thoughts. That is why God called Abraham his friend. And God will call us his friends if we continue to believe in his saving power and walk on the path he has set before us.

We find comfort in these words of Jesus, spoken to his disciples: *"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends"* (John 15:15).

Prayer thought: Ask the Lord to give you a faith like Abraham.