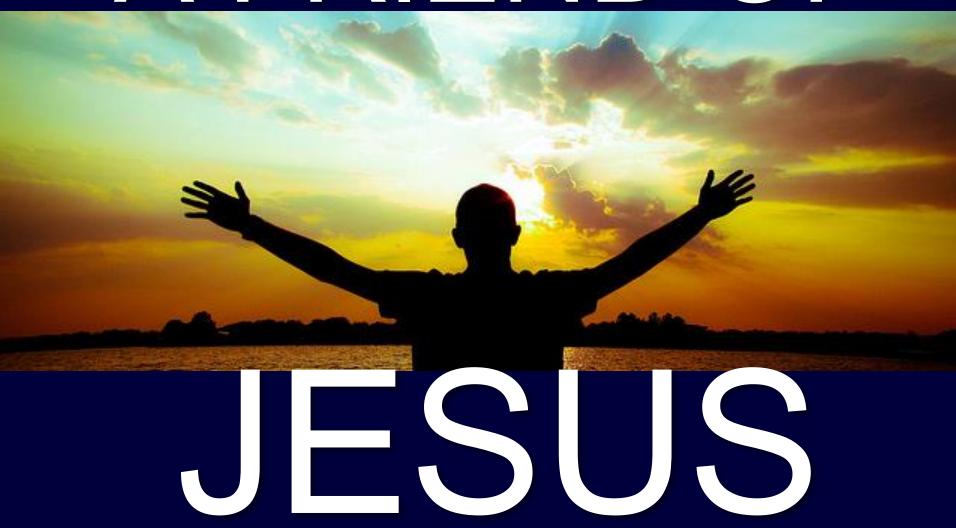
A FRIEND OF



"What a Friend We Have in Jesus" is a lovely hymn.



It is an endearing and inspiring hymn - a hymn that assures that we have a friend in Jesus.



What a friend we have in Jesus.

All our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry

Everything to God in prayer!



Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!



Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged —
Take it to the Lord in prayer.



Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.



Are we weak and heavy-laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.



Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?

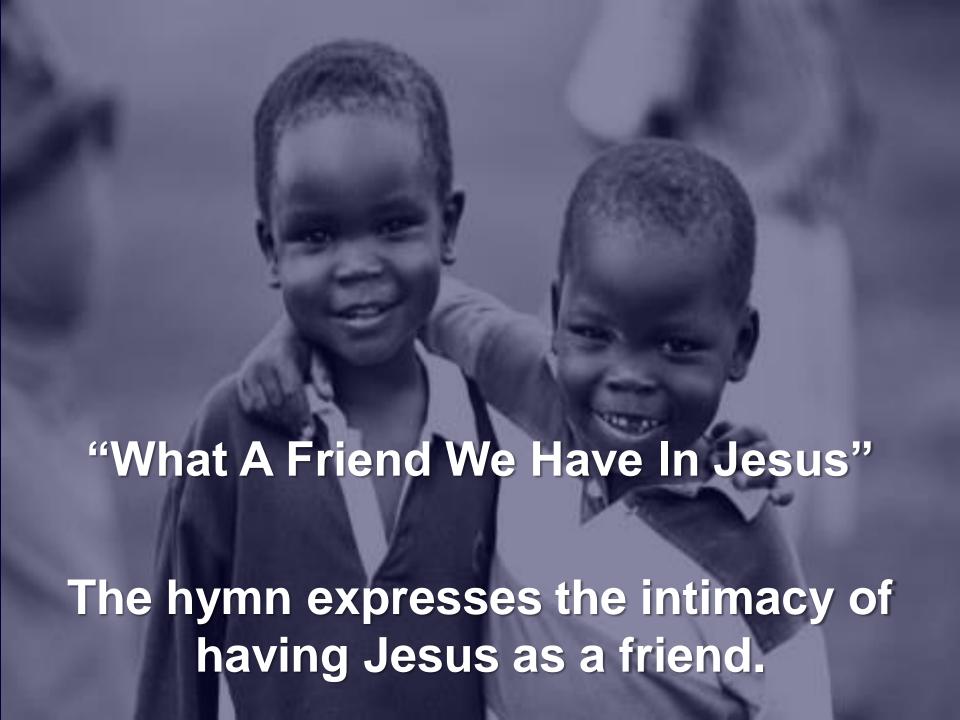
Take it to the Lord in prayer!

In His arms He'll take and shield thee,

Thou wilt find a solace there.



It is such a wonderful and comforting thought to have the assurance that we have a friend in Christ, who is always at our side.



It is indeed a wonderful thing to have Jesus as a close intimate friend.

However, there is a difference between us considering Jesus as "our friend" and Jesus considering us as "His friend."

Many consider Jesus to be a friend, but Jesus may not consider them as His friend.

Isn't that sad?

There is an account in the Holy Bible which was written for our admonition, warning and learning. The account is in Matthew 7:13-23.

- 13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.
- 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.
- 15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

- 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?
- 17 Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.
- 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

- 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
- 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.
- 21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

- 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?'
- 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

Therefore, there is a huge difference between us considering Jesus as our friend, and Jesus considering us as His friend.

You may know Jesus, but JESUS MAY NOT KNOW YOU!





It is more important for Jesus Christ to know us and to consider us as His friends.

The Scripture says in Galatians 4:9: "now that you know God—or rather are known by God."

Jesus said He knows who are His – who belongs to Him – who His friends are.



In John 10:14-16, Jesus said He knows His sheep and the sheep knows Him and listen to His voice.

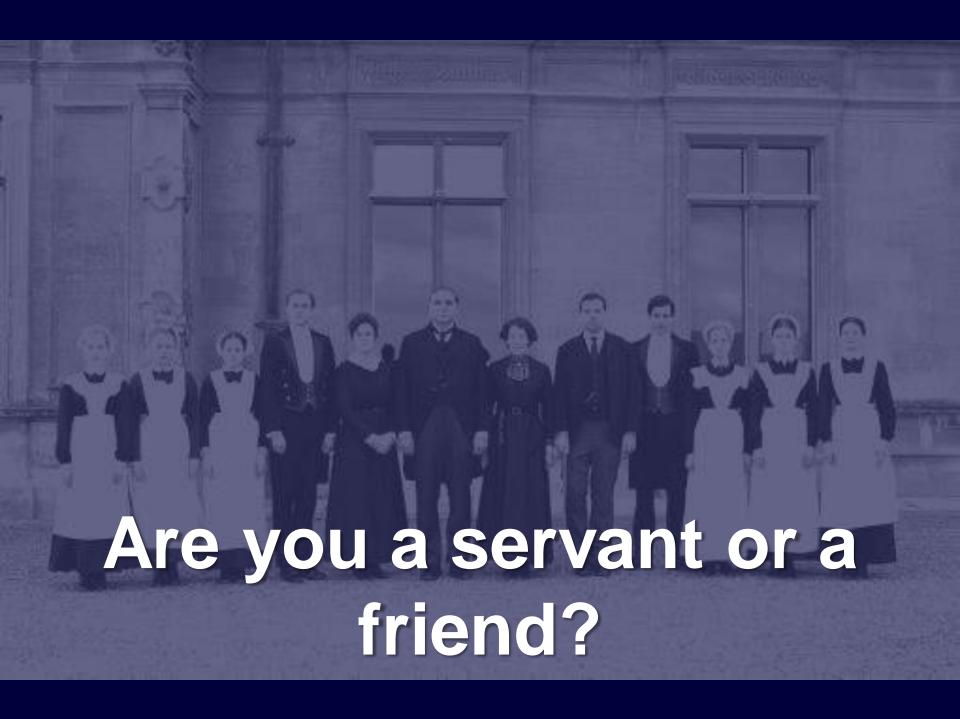


John 10:14-16

- 14"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—
- 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.
- 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

We may consider Jesus to be our friend, but what we should strive for is to be considered by Jesus as his friend...





The Bible says the prophets are servants of God. The list would include all the major prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the minor prophets like Micah, Joel, Jonah, Habakkuk, Malachi, etc. All these prophets are called servants of God, including Moses.

A servant is one who serves, a steward, a messenger. A servant is one who carries out, performs a task or an order assigned to him by the master.

The Scriptures speaks of David as a servant in 2 Samuel 3:18. Moses is a faithful servant in Joshua 1:1-3 and Hebrews 3:5.

2 Samuel 3:18

Now do it! For the LORD promised David, 'By my servant David I will rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.'"

Joshua 1:1-3

- 1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide:
- 2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites.
- 3 I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.

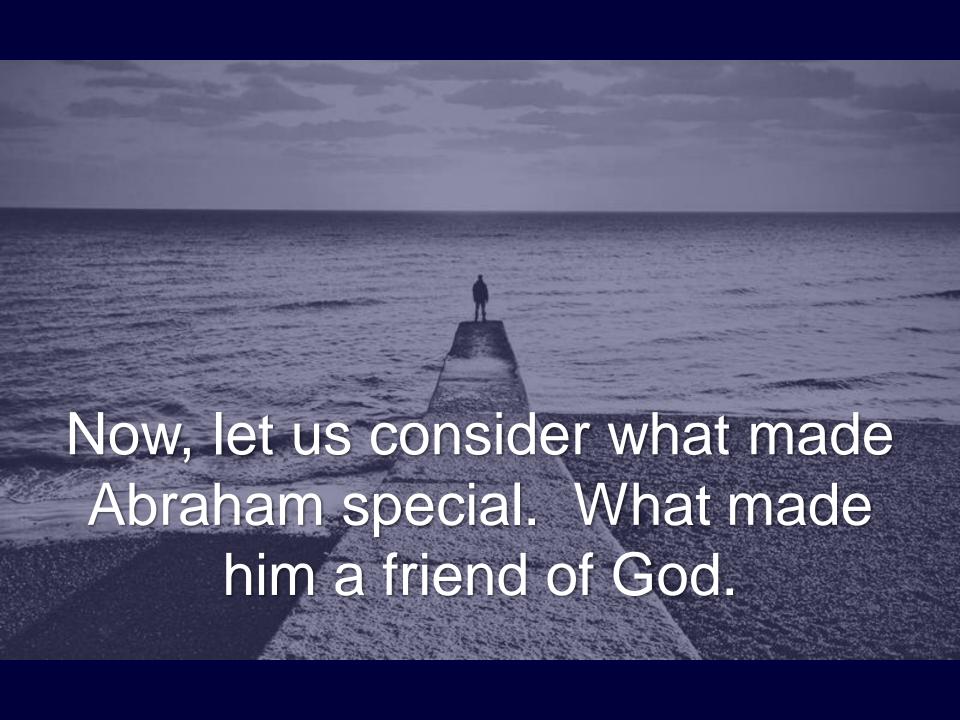
Hebrews 3:5

Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future.

It is nice to be a servant of God but our relationship with God can be better than that.

Take for example Abraham. God considered Him as a friend. Isaiah 41:8 "But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend."

And, again in James 2:23 "And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness'—and he was called a friend of God."



Who is a friend?

Three (3) types of friends, they are:
the true friends, convenient friends and fake friends.

#1 True Friends

We have an idiomatic saying: "a friend in need is a friend indeed." A true friend is a person who will help you when you really need help. He is a loyal friend whom you can trust.

#2 Convenient Friends

These are your fair weathered friends. They are friends as long as there is some advantage you can do for them. They quickly disappear as fast as they come when there is no more benefit to extract from the relationship. Realize that some people will only be your friend if you do something for them.

#3 Fake Friends

The following poem says it all.

Fake Friends

You're a fake you're just a pretend.
So it's a lie when you say we're friends.
How could I think that you would be true?
I guess you played me for the fool.

You think I didn't notice how you act? I knew pretty soon you would stab me in the back.

I tried to give you a chance to change. But it's a shame you stayed the same. You're a fake friend & you will always be. So you no longer have a bond with me. What you did was just so disrespectful. It's something that I could never let go.

The way you turned your back on me. When I was in my time of need. I will remember this through life & till it ends.

knowing deep down inside, you were just a fake friend.

The Story of the Scorpion and the Frog

One day, a scorpion looked around at the mountain where he lived and decided that he wanted a change. So he set out on a journey through the forests and hills. He climbed over rocks and under vines and kept going until he reached a river.

The river was wide and swift, and the scorpion stopped to reconsider the situation. He couldn't see any way across. So he ran upriver and then checked downriver, all the while thinking that he might have to turn back.

Suddenly, he saw a frog sitting in the rushes by the bank of the stream on the other side of the river. He decided to ask the frog for help getting across the stream.

"Hello Mr. Frog!" called the scorpion across the water, "Would you be so kind as to give me a ride on your back across the river?"

"Well now, Mr. Scorpion! How do I know that if I try to help you, you won't try to kill me?" asked the frog hesitantly.

"Because," the scorpion replied, "If I try to kill you, then I would die too, for you see I cannot swim!"

Now this seemed to make sense to the frog. But he asked. "What about when I get close to the bank? You could still try to kill me and get back to the shore!"

"This is true," agreed the scorpion,
"But then I wouldn't be able to get
to the other side of the river!"

"Alright then...how do I know you won't just wait till we get to the other side and THEN kill me?" said the frog.

"Ahh...," crooned the scorpion, "Because you see, once you've taken me to the other side of this river, I will be so grateful for your help, that it would hardly be fair to reward you with death, now would it?!"

So the frog agreed to take the scorpion across the river. He swam over to the bank and settled himself near the mud to pick up his passenger. The scorpion crawled onto the frog's back, his sharp claws prickling into the frog's soft hide, and the frog slid into the river.

The muddy water swirled around them, but the frog stayed near the surface so the scorpion would not drown. He kicked strongly through the first half of the stream, his flippers paddling wildly against the current.

Halfway across the river, the frog suddenly felt a sharp sting in his back and, out of the corner of his eye, saw the scorpion remove his stinger from the frog's back. A deadening numbness began to creep into his limbs.

"You fool!" croaked the frog, "Now we shall both die! Why on earth did you do that?"

The scorpion shrugged, and did a little jig on the drowning frog's back.

"I could not help myself. It is my nature."

Then they both sank into the muddy waters of the swiftly flowing river.

Self destruction - "It's my Nature", said the Scorpion...

Sadly, we have seen too many friends like that. Friends only for a season, for a reason, for convenience and for benefit.

But, Abraham is special. He is unique. There are certain qualities that God saw in Abraham that made him a friend of God.

How do we emulate these qualities to become a true friend of God too?

We all have friends, right?



Some friends are closer than others.



Many of us have what we consider as "best friends."



Can you name a close friend, your best buddy? What are the values and qualities that draw you together?



What are the characteristics of a true friendship?



Best friends share a history of experiences, a commonality of interests and uphold similar values.



What do you think are some of the qualities of true friendship – qualities that make a person your best and closest friend?

Some of these qualities are having the same:

- 1. Personality
- 2. Hobbies
- 3. Likes and dislikes
- 4. Sports
- 5. Food preferences
- 6. Thoughts think alike
- 7. Ambitions and aspirations
- 8. Interest and passion
- 9. Vision, aspirations and hopes

A Friend of Jesus

How about our relationship with Christ? How do we become a friend of Jesus? Here is what Jesus said:

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. 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 15:13-15)

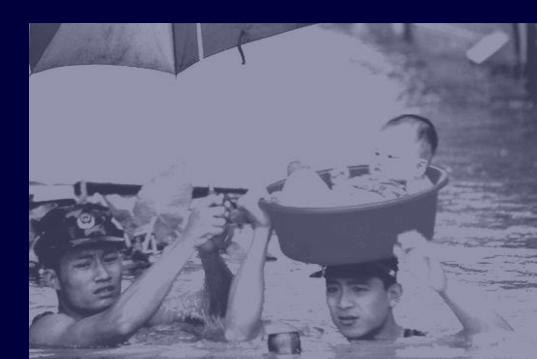
To become a friend of Jesus, there are four (4) key attributes or components:

- 1. A Bond of Loyalty
- 2. Keeping His Commandments
- 3. Share His Plans
- 4. Be Like-minded

#1 A Bond Of Loyalty



Jesus said: "Greater love has no one than this: "to lay down one's life for one's friends." What is it to die for a friend? True friendship is that you are willing to take care of your friend as much as yourself. Except for the apostle John, all the disciples died for Christ! That is the depth of true friendship.



Loyalty is a wonderful virtue. It is faithfulness and devotion towards a friend. There can never be true friendship without loyalty.



Loyalty brings the virtues of sincerity, honestly, reliance and trust into the relationship



None of us would welcome a disloyal person to be a friend. Therefore, loyalty is the most important quality that we should look for in a friend.



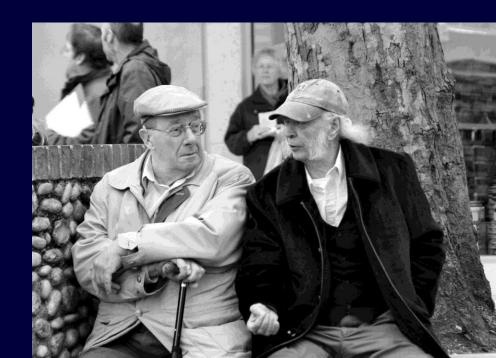
True friends stick together for better or for worse, in good times and bad times, and through thick and thin situations.



True friends are loyal to each other even unto death. It is in our most challenging times and darkest moments that we need a true friend.



Loyalty is the virtue that holds the friendship together. Loyalty is the mark of true friendship.



Abraham was loyal to God. In spite of his advanced age and being childless, Abraham remained loyal to his God. Romans 4:18-24.



Romans 4:18-24

- 18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
- 19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.
- 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope

Romans 4:18-24

- 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.
- 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

Romans 4:18-24

- 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.
- 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?

Therefore, to be Jesus' friend, you have to be loyal to Him. Yes, unto death – your last breath.



#2 Keep His Commandments



"You are my friends if you do what I command."



This statement of Jesus is very interesting!

What are these commands of Jesus?

Many would immediately refer this to the two greatest commandment, the command to love God and the command to love one another.

Matthew 22:36-40:

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

The first and greatest commandment is not a new command. In fact, Jesus quoted the Jewish Shema written in Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

It is the summation of the first 4 of the Ten Commandments.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Deuteronomy 6:8-9

Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

And, the second is like it. The second command is a quote from Leviticus 19:18, which is a summation of the last 6 of the Ten Commandments

Leviticus 19:18

Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

In short, the greatest commandments in the law is to keep the entirety of the Ten Commandments

Jesus said in John 14:15

"If you love me, you will obey what I command."

1 John 5:3

"In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome."

Commandment keeping is important in friendship with Jesus because intimate friends share the same values, moral standard and principles.

These commonalities of shared commitment make friends consistent and dependable.



A true friend is one who is dependable at all times. It is an assurance that friends will always do the right thing for the benefit and best interest of everyone. Abraham is a principled man. He is consistent in his actions.

In God's eyes Abraham is dependable. You can expect him to do the right thing before God at all times.

This is how Abraham was commended in James 2:18-24.

James 2:18-24

- 18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.
- 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

James 2:18-24

- 20 You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?
- 21 Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?
- 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

James 2:18-24

- 23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.
- 24 You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

To be a friend of Jesus, you have to share the same values and moral principles as Christ – keep the commandments!



#3 Share His Goals and Plans

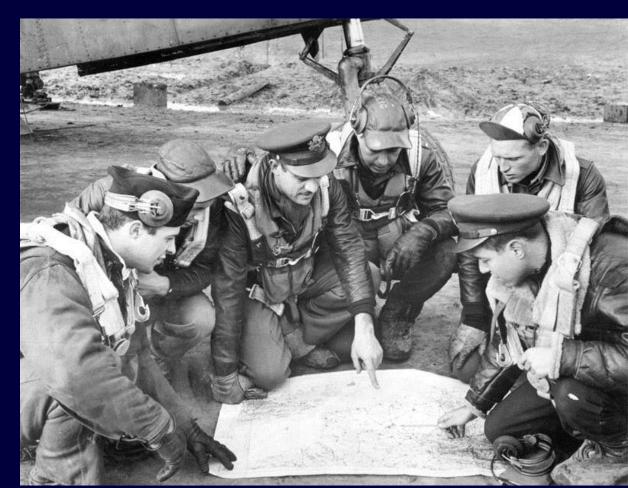


"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business." Friends share secrets, but a best friend knows your plans.



If you are setting wedding plans, the first to know are your closest friends. You are only too excited to let them know. That is friendship.

Good friends feel comfortable sharing the most important things in their lives with friends, because they find understanding and support for each other's vision. You are a friend of Jesus if you know and share His plan, hope, purpose and mission for you.



Do you know God's plan for you? You ought to, if you are a friend of Jesus. Jesus reveals His plan to His friends.



This is what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16:

- We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.
- 7 No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

- 8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.
- 9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"—
- 10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

- 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.
- 12 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.
- 13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

- 14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.
- 15 The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:
- 16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Hebrews 11:8-10

Abraham knew God's plan for him.

- 8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.
- 9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.
- 10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Hebrews 10:13-16

- 13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.
- 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own.

Hebrews 10:13-16

- 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return.
- 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

#4 Be Like-minded



"I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." As they say: birds of the same feather flock together. Best friends can finish each other's sentences, share inside jokes, and communicate with just a look.

Close friends think alike. It is this likemindedness that forms the foundation for deep friendship that continues throughout one's lifetime.



The Scripture says we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18).



Philippians 2:5

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus

This mind can be yours through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:15-21

- 15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command.
- 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—
- 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

John 14:15-21

- 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.
- 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

John 14:15-21

- 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.
- 21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

John 14:23-26

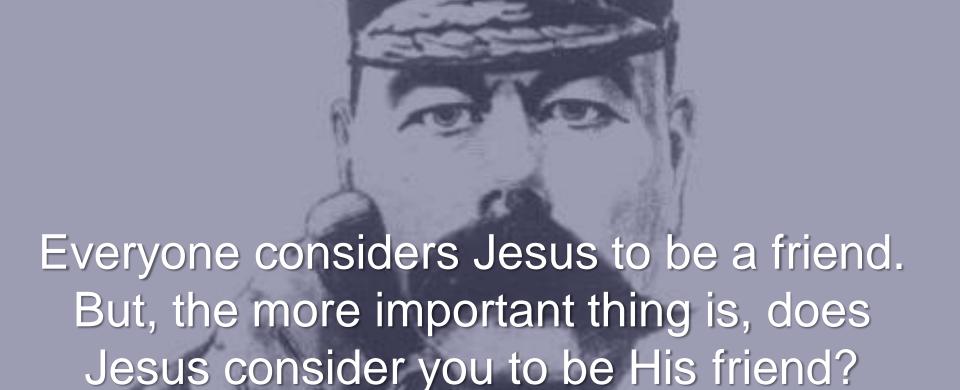
- 23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.
- 24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

John 14:23-26

- 25. "All this I have spoken while still with you.
- 26. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.







Build these four (4) attributes to have true friendship with Christ:

- 1. A Bond of Loyalty
- 2. Keep His Commandments
- 3. Share His Goals and Plans
- 4. Be Like-minded



These are the key characteristics of a close and intimate friend of Christ.

We want Jesus to look at us and to consider us as His friend and eventually, His brother.

We want Jesus to say these very same words He spoke to His disciples:

"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business." John 15:15.

Next month, we want you to know God's master plan and the reason behind our

Creation, please come for the

Bible Study entitled

"God's Plan For You."

SEE
Y'ALL
NEXT
MONTH



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