

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS!

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John 15:12-15

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

Friends, *really?* With Jesus the Incarnate Word, the one to whom all authority in heaven and earth has been given, the Alpha and Omega, the Name above all names? Is it a supposed reverence that modestly suggests “friend” is too familiar, too accessible a term? Or has friendship been cheapened in our experience and in our age? Is it resistance to self-disclosure, a heart with divided loyalty? Befriended One, let all these shadows be dispelled in the light of Jesus, who willingly laid down his life for you!

Our union with Christ is such a weighty, beautiful, incomprehensible reality God uses the imagery of deep, intimate human relationships to flesh out the mystery. We’re adopted as children, a royal priesthood, co-heirs with Christ, the Bride of Christ, and we’re called friends! Friends operating in the identity and full disclosure of the Father and Son, not merely servants operating out of ignorant compliance. It’s no longer just “because I said so,” but, “Here’s what my Father is up to.”

John 14:21

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

Psalms 25:14

The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.

To see the beauty of Christ and desire intimacy is already manifest grace, a sign of God drawing us. To see his holiness and glory is to be humbled and broken before Him, and we see in the Scriptures above how obedience and love are intertwined. We are simultaneously drawn in and exposed, undone in His presence like the prophet Isaiah. He draws us close in the holy fire of love not to consume us but to consume all in us that is not love. His love is holy and jealous, and He would have all of our affection, devotion, and allegiance.

The new covenant of love is sealed in Jesus' blood and proven eternal in his resurrection. To come to Him on our terms for a type of friendship without godly fear is self-deception, for we cannot have him as friend while our allegiance and identity are found elsewhere. He is who He is; to have Him is to have all of Him. Yet worldly, false fear would find us running away in a vain attempt at self-preservation, resisting self-disclosure, deceived in partial obedience and with a divided heart. But perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18) and godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation (2 Corinthians 7:10). We can come into the light, broken, with holy fear, and find the truest Friend – He who loved us and reconciled us to himself *when we were still his enemies* (Romans 5:10).

Lord Jesus, give me an undivided heart, that I might fear your name! I renounce friendship with the world; I don't crave their fickle and hollow affection, approval, or affirmation, but I rest in the security of Your love and jealous, holy friendship. Thank You for giving your life to ransom me! Thank you for saving me not just for a dutiful servitude, but for obedience born of love and resulting in true friendship and abiding knowledge of You. Teach me to lay down my life for my brothers and sisters. Let my heart be ever more in tune to You, that I may be in step with Your Spirit, always saying "yes" to You and Your Word.