

*Finding Life's Very Best Friend*

Our Passages for this sermon are Genesis 2, Romans 5 and John 15

Today is FRIEND DAY! Our emphasis is on friendship. I would like for us to think about this important concept in life, and particularly how it relates to our relationship with God.

A quote I once heard goes like this, There are **big ships** and **small ships**. But the **best ship**, is **friendship**. Author Unknown. Source: <http://www.quoteagarden.com/best-friends.html> From our earliest days, friendship is a vital part of all of our lives.

I love to talk with **4 and 5 year old children** who just finished their **first week of school**. I always ask, “**did you make any new friends?**” Their eyes light up as they begin to tell me of the friends that they have made in just a few short days.

My **best friend** in High School was Darrell. We had a lot of fun together. Some of our most memorable times were our summers when we worked together as bakers at the Word of Life Ranch. Just a few weeks ago, I was reminiscing with Darrell about some of our antics in the bakery.

A new rotating oven was just installed. It would hold several racks filled with bread. My good friend was always up to something, so I should have suspected a trick in the works when he told me to “take a ride in the oven.” After assurances that he would not turn on the gas, I laid down on the rack as Darrell operated the controls. Yep, you guessed it. Just as the shelf approached the top of the oven, with mere inches between my nose and the gas burners, Darrell turned out the lights and left me stranded.

We laugh about it now, but I was definitely not happy then! I only recently found out that before he pulled the trick on me, he tested it out himself. I'm not sure if that was to insure for my safety, or to make his diabolical scheme all the more exciting!

**I'd like to share with you the most important friendship that anyone can have. It is FRIENDSHIP with GOD.**

This gospel presentation does not begin in the Gospels, or in one of the NT epistles. It begins in Genesis. **READ Genesis 2:15-25**

**Our Original Standing with God**

The Genesis account reveals several key aspects of Adam's relationship with God prior to sin.

## RESPONSIBILITY.

Gen 2:15-16

Adam was to “take care” of God’s garden

## BOUNDARIES

Gen 2:16-17

Adam was told “Do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” God gave him instructions and boundaries in His beautiful garden.

## PROVISION

Gen 2:18

God provided a beautiful wife and helper to meet Adam’s need for companionship and fellowship.

## TRUST

Gen 2:19-20

God entrusted Adam with naming all of the animals he created.

## FRIENDSHIP

Gen 3:8

This is the most intimate aspect of God’s relationship with Adam. Scripture reveals that God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden. It appears from the text that this was a daily or at least a frequent occurrence. God and man were in complete fellowship. There was no sin, no shame, no punishment, no fear. But sin would quickly change this dynamic.

### **Our Friendship with God was Ruined by Sin**

Many religious leaders promote a concept of God whereby everyone is accepted by God regardless of their beliefs or shortcomings. With the rare exception of the most heinous criminals, we are all one big happy family headed to the same destination and bound to enjoy all of the best things that God has in store. Most people accept this concept of God and struggle with the thought that God would judge anyone, or sentence anyone to hell. I suppose this concept soothes our minds and releases us from the thought of impending judgment. But such a concept of God is of human origin. The Bible clearly describes our relationship with God in quite different terms.

### **Our friendship with God was broken.**

The story of Adam and Eve’s sin is found in Genesis 3:8-13. Notice the impact of sin on the relationship between God and his newly created beings.

Adam HID FROM GOD

Adam was AFRAID of God

Adam was ASHAMED of his nakedness

There are two ways in which sin changed our relationship with God.

**Sin makes us God's enemy.** (Romans 5:9-11) *"Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."*

The first way in which sin changed our relationship with God is that we are estranged and separated from God because of our sin. When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, they sinned for all of us. They represented the entire human race. We are all their future offspring. We were in their bodies there in the garden, since they are our parents. They are our only parents and we bear their likeness and the result of their sinful choice. And don't be angry with them. The point is that every one of us would have made the same choice as the first man and woman. Every time we disobey God, we demonstrate same weakness that Adam and Eve demonstrated.

The second effect of sin on our relationship with God is that **Sin makes God our enemy.** In other words, we don't want to be friends with God. We are opposed to God. We reject him and view his law as an intrusion into our freedom. Notice (Colossians 1:21) *"Once you were alienated from God and were enemies **in your minds** because of your evil behavior."*

You and I can be friends regardless of your race, position, wealth, age. But you and God cannot be friends unless you accept his terms of peace.

### **For our Friendship with God to be Restored, we must be Reconciled to God**

The world reconciled means "to restore to friendship or harmony" (Websters Dictionary online ed.)

(Romans 5:10) *"For if, when we were God's enemies, we were **reconciled to him** through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"*

(Colossians 1:21-22) *"Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation"*

Notice that our separation from God works both ways. In Romans 5:10, we are God's enemies because of our sin. In Colossians 1:21-22, we are alienated from God. He is our enemy. Sin makes us hate God's law. Sin causes us to want our own way. Sin destroys

our ability to have any relationship with God. In fact, until sin is removed, the things we do in an attempt to have a relationship with God only serve to give us a false sense of peace. We are just as estranged from him as before.

For us to be reconciled to God, a peace is required. The terms of this treaty required the DEATH of JESUS to put it into effect.

### **How Can I become a Friend of God?**

(John 15:13-14) *"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you **do what I command.**"*

But what does it mean to "do what he commands?" Jesus himself explained this earlier in John's gospel when he answered the question of the Pharisees. (John 6:28-29) *"Then they asked him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?' Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.'"*

FRIENDSHIP with GOD cannot be restored through.....

Religion

Good works

Meditation

Reformation

Helping the poor

It required the DEATH of God's Son. Your acceptance of the terms of this sacrifice are required.

(Romans 5:10) *"For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"*

I invite you to accept the terms of God's offer of reconciliation. Because you are separated from him, you cannot dictate the terms yourself. You are reliant on his terms. They are simple, but the terms cost Jesus his very life. It is simple to trust him, but the ramifications will change your life! Knowing that someone saved you from eternal death impacts you in a profound way. Jesus will forgive your sin. By trusting in him, the price of reconciliation will be fully met. Trust him now.