

The Correspondent



SUNDAY

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM & 1:30 PM

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study (Adult) 1:30 PM
Bible Study (All Ages) 7:00 PM
www.collinsville-troycoc.org
(618) 667-6708

For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place. (1 Thessalonians 1:8)

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Friends of God

-Renn Ferguson

One of the most well-known men in biblical history is Abraham. We often talk about the example that he was and still is for us today. In fact, there is something said about Abraham in Isaiah 41:8, and James 2:23. Isaiah 41:8 reads, “But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend”. James 2:23 states, “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.” Do you see the commonality of these two passages? Both state that Abraham was the friend of God. That is a tremendous testament of who Abraham was! Yet, what exactly does it mean to be the friend of God?

If we stay in James 2:23 Abraham received this title because of his belief. Now, this is not speaking specifically of his belief in the existence of God but his belief that God would fulfill His promise. Notice verse 21 of the same chapter, “was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?” This son was of course the one God promised to Abraham (Genesis 15-18). Yet when God commanded him to sacrifice Isaac, he was going to do it (Genesis 22). Abraham did this because he knew that even if Isaac died God would be able to raise him up and fulfill the promise (Hebrews 11:17-19). Being the friend of God means believing in Him and trusting in His promises (Hebrews 11:6).

However, there is more to being the friend of God than simply belief and trust. The overall context of James 2:23 makes the point that faith without works is dead (v.17, 20, 26). In other words we may believe and trust but do we obey? If not, that belief will profit us nothing. How does this play into being friends of God? Notice what Jesus taught in John 15:14, “you are my friends if you do what I command you.” This can likewise be very clearly seen in the life of Abraham. He most certainly believed and trusted in the promises made to him by God and it was because of that belief he obeyed. Being the friend of God means that we are obedient to His commands.

There is one last aspect of being the friend of God that we will notice. This likewise is found in the book of James. Consider James 4:4, “you adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” If we desire to be the friend of God we can no longer have association with sin. As Christians we are to be living a new life (Romans 6:4). If we join once again in the sinful practices of the world we have left the friendship of God and have become His enemy. Being a friend of God means leaving the sins of this world behind and living in complete submission to Him.

We often hold Abraham in such high esteem because of his life, and we most certainly should. However, we can all be considered the friend of God if we follow in Abraham’s footsteps. Believe and trust in God, keep His commands, and keep ourselves from sin. Then, we too will be the friend of God.