

On Purpose, 4

Best Friends Forever

Chapters 11-14; June 22, 2008

NO LONGER SERVANTS

This week's reading was all about friendship with God. Adam and Eve lived in God's continual presence, but after the fall, fear of God became more common than friendship with God. But then God's Son came and changed all that.

Our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son ... - *Romans 5:10 NLT*

When Jesus died, the veil in the temple (which symbolized our separation from God), was torn in two, split from top to bottom. And shortly before the cross, Jesus said to His disciples ...

I no longer call you servants, because a master doesn't confide in his servants. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. -
John 15:14-16 NIV

The word "friends" isn't referring to a casual acquaintance; it means a close, intimate, and trusted friendship.



He has: "told [us] everything". He didn't just share the requirements. He shared His heart (His longings, His desires), and He made Himself vulnerable to rejection on a *personal* level. The goal is to grow from servant to friend. He wants *relationship* to surpass *duty*. So, we have to be careful that we don't do the right things *without* the right heart.

And in order to nourish and sustain this kind of intimate friendship with God, we have to practice the "Three C's".



1. Conversation

It's not much of a friendship if I don't talk to Him.

And I'm talking about a lot more than just a "daily devotional". He has to be more than just an appointment on my schedule. Do you know what He really wants? Are you ready for this?!

Pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. - *1 Thes. 5:17b-18 NIV*

This is what God *really, really* wants from you:

- A. Constant communication: “pray continually”
- B. Complete confidence: “give thanks in all circumstances”

He wants to be included in *every* activity, *every* conversation, *every* problem, and even *every* thought, in *every* waking moment!

There’s this common misconception that “spending time” with God means “being alone” with God. In the Garden of Eden, Adam’s communication with God wasn’t an *event*; it was simply an ongoing reality of daily life. We *do* need to regularly disconnect from our daily routine (and focus our attention *completely* on the Lord). But, we can’t leave Him behind when we reconnect to our daily routine.



- I must practice conversing *throughout* the day.

I’m not wired for long prayers. My mind wanders. I get antsy. I feel guilty. Someone will be praying a sincere but lengthy prayer and I’m thinking, “Get to it, man! Say Amen; let me go!” I prefer short conversational thoughts and prayers offered throughout the day. But it’s not either/or, it needs to be both.



2. Contemplation

It’s not much of a friendship if I don’t think about Him.

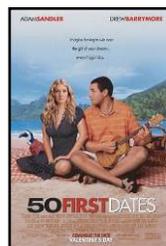
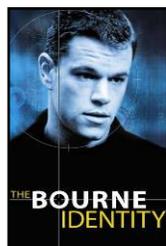


And it’s much easier to keep Him in our thoughts during the day, if we open His Word when we open our day. One day it might be a verse, one day a chapter, another day a book. God isn’t looking for a marathon, just a chance to speak. I speak with prayer; He speaks with His Word.

Once I’ve read from His Word, I contemplate on what He has said to me. This is what it means to *mediate* on His Word. We think about it and apply it throughout the day.

I love amnesia movies:

- *Borne Identity*
- *50 First Dates*
- *Memento*
- Dory from *Finding Nemo*



Q: What percent of your average day consists of “God-amnesia”? (50%? 80%? 90%? That can be a sobering self-examination.)

In “50 First Dates” and “Memento” the main characters had short term memory loss; so they had to devise *reminders* to help them.

How do *you* bring God to mind once He’s “off the radar”? What prompts you to remember Jesus throughout your day? Do you wait until some random happening resurfaces Him? Or, do you intentionally make Him part of your routine?

Let’s say I’ve read my Bible with my morning coffee, or if I was in a hurry, I glanced at a devotional in the bathroom, and I read Matthew 5:7: “God blesses those who are merciful.” What can I do with *that*? What tactics can I strategically, deliberately employ?

- A. I could recite it a few times on my way to work; just to make sure that I’ve got it locked in my memory.
- B. I could personalize it. Instead of “God blesses *those* who are merciful.” I’d say: “You bless *me* when I’m merciful.”
- C. Then, I could recall it every time I get frustrated *or* the minute hand hits twelve ... whichever comes first!



I must practice an awareness of His companionship.

Something as simple as that would, no doubt, cause a lot of conversation between you and the Lord during the day.



So, there’s “conversation”, “contemplation”, and finally ...

3. Consideration

It’s not much of a friendship if I don’t respect Him.



Unlike our earthly relations, friendship with God does *not* mean equal partnership with God. I would hesitate to refer to God as my “buddy” or my “pal”, because to me it feels flippant; the intimacy expressed comes at the expense of my respect for Him as King and Lord and Savior. The King is my friend, but He’s still the King.

In royal courts, the king’s inner-circle enjoyed close contact, direct access, and confidential information while maintaining due respect.

Friendship with God is reserved for those who reverence him. With them alone he shares the secrets of his promises. - *Psalms 25:14 TLB*



Pastor John has even “ruined” me for using the phrase, “Partnering with God”. We are not equal partners ... at most I’m a *junior* partner! I can’t allow familiarity to supersede authority. That’s just a form of disrespect for His sovereignty in my life.

One of the biggest ways that we demonstrate and express our respect to God is through praise and worship and reverence. But it has to be heart-felt.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. - *Mark 12:30 NIV*



When He says to love God with all our "heart" and "soul", He's talking about passion and enthusiasm and delight. If worship is mechanical it's meaningless.

It's not a matter of just saying the right words; God looks past my words, to the attitude of my heart. He gave me emotions so I could worship Him with deep feelings.



Sometimes when we worship, I think about all this other stuff; and all of a sudden I realize that my mouth is singing, but my heart is far from Him!

Inattention is insulting to a friend.

Don't you hate it when you're in mid-sentence, talking to someone, and their cell phone rings, and they just immediately look away, answer it, and act as though you don't exist?! Like any good friend, God wants us fully engaged and attentive.

My mind can be like this little distracted child that keeps wandering off, and I have to bring him back and refocus him.

Jesus says to engage my "mind" as well as my *heart* and *soul*. It's not all about *feelings*. It's also about understanding, comprehending, and concentrating on what I'm doing. Usually it's not disobedience or rebelliousness; it's just evidence of our natural inclination and tendencies, and further proof that we need to be more "mindful".

And when Jesus says to love God with all of our "strength" He's simply acknowledging that "constant communication" and "complete confidence" requires a lot of effort.

So, if we're going to live life "on purpose" we must understand:

- God wants to be my best friend

Do *you* desire that level of intimacy above all else?

- God wants continuous conversation

How can you prompt yourself to recall Him more often?

- God wants my full attention

Is your worship deeply felt and fully engaged?