

*Being a True
Friend of God*

By

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One of the most prized things in our lives are our family and friendships. We spend our lives cultivating them. Often, upon the death of someone we love, we find ourselves rather distraught and psychologists have determined that divorce causes the emotional equivalence of a death of a loved one to those involved.

I begin to ask myself, "Is it right and healthy for us to be 'cultivating' friendships? Aren't we supposed to love one another regardless of the other's actions? Are we not supposed to even pray for those who persecute us and to pray for those who even use us?"

It became evident to me that there is something involved in 'cultivating'. As an avid gardener, I know what toil and effort is spent in cultivation. One must spend a considerable amount of time to get the effect one desires. Certain things must take place and one must be very cautious and protective as well as aware. All of one's efforts eventually, or hopefully, will produce a fine crop to be enjoyed by oneself....and herein lies the wickedness of treating people like a well-groomed garden.

If what we do for and towards others is to gather a gain unto ourselves, how is this really caring about them and their souls? Are we desiring that others be okay, so we will be happy too? What if suffering was necessary in order to bring a person to conviction or repentance, but we didn't like to see it or be involved in that process? What if a nation needed to suffer to repent and this process involved suffering? Would we pray against it? Probably yes.

If the only way we can have joy and peace is to have things our way and only wish to dwell with people who like us and are like we think they ought to be, then aren't we playing God? Just think about it, what kind of friend are we to others anyway?

Are we honestly doing what is best for others and the world? Or are we seeking out what we want irrespective of God's plans and working on our own agenda? Is this the root of our problems, that we simply aren't on the same page with God? Sporting our own goals and ambitions seeking out to create the kind of people we like and a world that meets our expectations and selfish needs?

There is a very apparant darkness in everyone, a place in us all that knows it is wicked and is ashamed of who it is. This darkness when listened to, will draw other dark spirits to itself. In this world of dark spirits, they feed off of oneanother, they seek to establish power over each other, and they attempt to control oneanother to further their own plans and desires. This parallel world co-exists with us and we feel and see it daily. We call it 'flesh'.

One can easily see that that mentality, the minds of the dark ones, affects our lives and the world as we know it. Those dark spirits are ever present, just like Paul said in Romans 7 when he cried out and confessed that there is "no good thing in the flesh" and that whenever he tried to do good that "evil is present with me", then finally cryin out "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

The answer for him is the same for us. Only God can deliver us. All who walk after the Spirit are His all who walk after the flesh are not.

When Jesus died on the cross, He bore our sins. He himself became sin for us and paid the price for our faults, errored thoughts, and wicked ways. However, that is just the beginning of your life in Him.

Now you are to reckon yourself dead to this world and live unto the Father in the name of Jesus. Now, the curtain between you and God has been torn and you are able to go directly to God the Father in Jesus name. Your holiness is not your own and not of you. It is of Him and is His.

You are to live unto Truth from now on and seek the face of God. How does this relate to being a friend of God? It is paramount and I will explain in a minute.

Jesus said, "whoever is not against us is for us" and then again that only those who are "led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God". Here we see clearly that there is a way to live unto the world and a way to live unto God. We are following spirits. We are walking according to the instructions of one or the other.

1 John 4:6 makes it clear that there is a spirit of truth and a spirit of error present at all times and that when someone prophesies that others ought to indeed stand by to be sure that the prophecy came from the right spirit. Here we see again that demons are ever present with us, just as He is and that we can easily access either one in a moments notice, even unawares.

Mankind, humans, are much like small receiver stations, and we can adjust our little antennas as easy as a radio dial moving between differing sources of voices that are in the air around us. This is how evil is everpresent with us, we can't help it, it is the way our world works.

Now, compare that situation to a room full of people. Let's say that these people are all trying to get you to do different things, to believe what they say in order to get you to do those things. Each man comes carrying his own agenda for your life. Like salesman dressed in tacky suits, they begin to pitch their stories and some have great presentations having looked into your soul to see what your own wrong agenda is, then they seek to use that knowledge to advance themselves in your life.

Now that you see how our lusts carry us away? Be aware that others, both spirits in and around you, look for these in us and when they find our weaknesses they capatilize on them to their own advantage. They barter, trade, reward, and punish you accordingly in order to bring about and to get what they want out of you.

This is the friendship of the world. This is how they work. We are told by Jesus to not be like them because the spirits behind such actions are not His nor of Him. God is not like this. Only dark spirits, who are like their father, satan, come with the agenda to kill, steal, and to destroy; they are users, takers, and players.

Any relationship that is based on a 'you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours' will always end in anger or failure. Eventually, someone gets fed up with being used and quits or ups the ante until someone else folds....and the gamble called 'friendship or marriage' fails.

Most go looking for someone who has what they need. Their fathers love that they

never had through a spouse or male acquaintance, a mother's approval through a wife, etc.

We are used to operating like the dark world as it is a tradition handed down to us by our failing parents and their parents to them. So this kind of thinking simply seems 'normal'. However, it is not the way God thinks or the path of righteousness, but we continue on in our falsehoods to include Him as well, supposing he is also like us and He is not. We treat Him like we do other 'people'.

So the friends we seek out and literally 'pursue' are really more of a tasty snack to our failing egos, to be devoured upon and digested through our use of them and then passed out of our lives as refuse when we're through.

Ugly, ghastly, horrific battles ensue as people attempt to devour each other's lives in the name of love and friendship. Using and abusing one another in a cycle of rage, unhappiness, grief, and reward and ecstasy.

We find momentary joy and gratification when people give us what we want, tell us what we want to hear, and stroke our egos but we do not realise the price that must be paid in return for those gratifications. Knowing that when someone does something for us, we are soon to receive the 'bill' for it, we often cringe upon the sight of a supposed 'loved' one. Our stomachs churn, we refuse help...even when we really could use it, and we will often find ourselves avoiding contact with such persons when the prices of friendship become too high.

Often, when we grow extremely selfish and don't wish to participate in the give and take and decide to be only takers. We invent or create ways to rid ourselves of those who we now owe who demand payback. We read things in to what they say or invent problems that really don't exist in order to cut them out of our lives. We will look for their 'bad' so we don't have to see our own and so we can pacify our own ailing consciences and excuse ourselves of wrong doing. This way we can feel a great 'sorrow' for our own selves and justify our judgement of them all the while indulging our selves in the judgement of them.

When you seek to become God's friend it is human habit to approach Him just like

we do each other. This is the basis for a wrong relationship with God and why many simply not only cannot find Him, but He cannot be a friend in return to you. We actually close the doors on the friendship and push Him away. We take the same approach that people have to befriending the world and apply it to God. This is why many who seek to know Him, never will.

Ailing Friendship With God

One of the first signs that you are treating God just like you do people is that you seek to manipulate Him. Manipulation is the foundation of most human family and friendships. We are getting what we need by giving someone else what they need. We cut them off if they don't do what they are supposed to and have a 'requirement' that that person must fulfill in order to be considered our 'friend' and part of our lives. It is the false belief that we are in control of our own lives that set us up to do those crazy things.

Often, people who live in abusive relationships do so because it allows them to feel holy and better than those who are abusive to them. That way, they can forever pass a judgemental sentence and excuse anything else they do in life. If they were to be 'saved' from that relationship, they would immediately seek out and draw the same kind of people to them. Most people who try and help the abused find that poor abused person turning on them instead and telling them to 'butt out'.

Self pity gives us a sense of righteousness and of being better than others. This is what self-pity is about and we actually resent people who try and rescue us. How dare they intervene in our plans to continue in sin and judgement!

As we go around feeling sorry for ourselves and all the bad things we allow and actually encourage people to do to us, we are assured in our hearts that one day they will see how wonderful we really are. We relish in just how much that those who are not quite so lovely as us, will cry when they see just how good we actually are and were, compared to them. Self pity is based on self righteousness and a

deep desire to be worshiped. In truth, our only worth is the blood of the Lamb and the Word tells us to count in all joy when others are mean or cruel, not to bake ourselves a pity pie and pig out till the end of our lifetime.

People will actually encourage the evil in others so that they can enjoy their own pity. They will place others in situations by spoiling them, catering to them, trusting them with information they know that person will use unwisely, or by placing them on pedestals from which they are sure to fall so they can resent them and, once again, remove the attention from themselves and their failings to those of others.

Most of our victims fall ignorantly to our devious plots and schemes, why? They want to be spoiled, placed on pedestals, and neededdon't they? They have devious schemes of their own and are in it for the 'take'.

But what happens if we take these ways and apply them to the Creator of the Universe? What happens when we try to tell God what we think He wants to hear, live the way we think He wants us to live, and say all the right things to get Him to do what we want Him to do?

What happens when we take our mentality of what relationships are like and use that on Him? Certainly we forget that He is holy, as we probably haven't a real clue what that even is, we try desperately to get our schemes to work....but God isn't so easily foiled, is He?

Can we bait Him with our false pretenses, withhold ourselves till He gives in, argue with Him and win, or force His hand by our punishments upon Him?

Does ignoring the Truth change His stance on things? Can you fast long enough to make God do anything? No.....God is not like us, is He?

Bad relationships with Him are the by product of us trying to use the same manipulation on Him that we do each other. Neither relationships, those we have with people and those we have with God, is correct. When you learn how to establish proper relationships with people, you will find that it is easy to have a

healthy, vital, real relationship with God also.

An ailing relationship with God will have some very apparant signs. What one actually has is a relationship with themselves in His name. A supreme love of self that is looking for the best tool to use to get what it wants.

And all those who cry "Lord, Lord" but do and love their own ways and don't really know Him, will one day find themselves living forever without Him, just as they are right now without Him. See, God isn't fooled by our use of His name. He doesn't come like a faithful dog to our beckoned call. Those whom He knows and those who are His are those who have actually placed Him as the Lord or Master of their lives. He is the one who dictates their lives, not self in His holy name.

Churches often get into people, just as people are into churches. This is not a relationship with God either, but rather a relationship or extention of our own evil in His name. God is not a church or religion, but a Person, The Person. To have a relationship with Him means that you will know His Person and He will know you. You will not know yourself as Him in you.

So I began to ask myself, "what is God like?" If He isn't like me, then what is He like? If He doesn't move by manipulation, by hours of arm twisting, special favors, flattery of the lips, catering, compliance with a set of weird requests, etc.then what is God like? What moves Him to do things? My twisted mentality thought that if I could find what moves Him, then surely I could use those buttons to get what I wanted?

A wicked heart knows only the ways of death and is surprisingly cunning as it has the depths of hell to draw from.

So I remembered that faith moves God. So I began to pretend to absolutely trust Him and every time He did what I believed He should do as per my request I would simply reward Him with a treat, me! Lots of praise and worship and holy stuff, you know.....(Oh, wow is that ugly to see on paper!)

So God in His graciousness, humored me and kept working on my soul, 24/7 as usual. Never changing His stance one little bit. He only moved when it was the right thing to do. Hey! That wasn't what I requested! I was working toward total obedience of Him to me! Unconsciously of course! I would never be so bold as to have said that outloud!

After many years of trying to train God to obey me properly, I discovered a horror that my flesh could nearly not face.....something that my pride and I could almost not swallow....God had not changed! After years of toil, tears, and trying desperately to arm wrestle Him into obedience He was still lovingly doing what was 'good for me'. He was taking care of me when I wasn't looking even! I'd find out later on, sometimes a year down the road that I was in trouble and didn't even know it and He made sure it was okay. He was sneaky nice! That was weird, I thought.....you'd think He'd want to make a big point of it and guilt trip me, but He didn't.

Okay, now I was really troubled, how do you make Him do things? I was perplexed. I knew He loved me, surely that was a weakness, I thought. I knew He had powers....I hoped to use them...and yes, wisely of course, but how? He didn't obey worth a darn.

At one point I decided to ignore Him. I'd show Him that if He wanted to be noticed He'd have to comply to at least some of my wishes. I lowered the bar and made it look easy for Him to win my whole heart, all He had to do was just jump through those tiny insignificant little hoops I'd placed out for Him. Little things, like giving me a wee bit of money or giving me some spiritual gifts so I'd look important, a few miracles, or something. Once again, it was as if He didn't see a thing. Now I knew that wasn't the case as I felt Him watching me always. Had He chosen to ignore my hoops?

What made it more confusing to me was that at times, out of nowhere these blessings just seemed to fall upon me. Sometimes at my ugliest moments! What in the heck was He doing? Rewarding me for being a jerk? That didn't make any sense to my 'buddy' system I had going and for sure made it harder to plot and

plan up my schemes.

I tried hard to figure out how to gauge the relationship and couldn't seem to find any pattern at all, well except for the fact that He always seemed to have His own agenda and was good no matter how I was and sometimes very corrective, unmistakably corrective.

He had ways I couldn't describe. Like the time I wanted rocks and blackberries. We were moving from Nebraska to Missouri and I really loved plants and wished hard for both rocks and blackberry bushes. As usual, He guided me to a house with supernatural abilities. I knew it was the one by receiving, as usually, a short visionary clip. I bought it and noticed two things right away. There was hardly any soil, rocks were everywhere, and blackberry bushes too! I was delighted!

However, soon my delight grew to frustration. The rocks were flint, sharp and dangerous. I had to make the kids stay in the house while I mowed as the mower would catch them and I even knocked the window out of my van! The blackberry bushes were taking over the land, I couldn't mow them as there were too many rocks.....hmmm...what was God telling me here? Was it a blessing to get what I wanted or a cursing? After only getting a few blackberries, lots of thorns, and bruises all over me from the rocks in the crawl space of the house, I decided that it was quite clear. What we want is not always what is good for us.

Hence the moral of the story. God knows what is good for us and He takes His time in making sure we 'get the point'. If you are a stubborn soul, I can guarantee you that He won't give up and change just to suit you and hope you'll make Him God. He already is God and you may well die trying to make Him not God, but you will not change Him.

All the ways that we learnt from our parents to react and respond to others are pretty much of this world and not of Him. Very little true love is passed on to us and it makes it hard for us to understand Him. The thinking that He is faulty and needy like us is the basis for a wrong relationship towards Him and also is why we are so frustrated with all the people in our lives and even our own selves.

When you take those ideas and remove them with the correct ones, then you will have much peace and circumstances and people won't change you one bit. Only Him in you will move you and you will learn how to not let the world affect you, but you will greatly affect the world. Many will hate you, many will truly despise you as your buttons that they used to push just fade away.

An outwardly motivated person can never truly be happy. They need just the right circumstances and the perfect environment to sustain their false perception of themselves. When someone doesn't fulfill that, they get angry and start looking for buttons. "Where's the control lever, anyways?"

Correct Relationships

So what is a correct relationship even look like, I wondered? This is awful that I even had to ask that question, but all I see are users and the person being used who is soon to turn into a user. I actually thought that God was using us too....using us to worship Him cause without us He wouldn't have anyone to tell Him how great He is. That's just a sick concept and sadly the one I possessed.

How can I have and be a good friend, if I actually don't know what one is? When even family means, "I get to use you more", then something is very sick and really wrong. I cried.....it was horrible, surely there must be real love and friendship somewhere! I can't be God's friend because I don't know what it even is to be a friend. I've used people all my life, consented to being used to get what I wanted, like a whore in a whore house doing 'favors' for reward.

The worst part was that everyone I knew was working in the whore house too! Even if I really discovered what it meant to be a real friend, where would I find a person who would be willing to do the same? I cried....it was just all so ugly and shameful.

So I looked to God. He's supposed to be without fault and He was the only person I knew of who hadn't sold himself for self gain. He never stopped treating me right even when I was beyond ugly he saved my life, time and time again.

Why? What did I have to offer the Creator of the Universe with powers untold and whose wisdom a person can't even measure! I already knew that my soul, body, and spirit didn't belong to me and that it was on lone from heaven's gates. So why did He even bother dealing with me? What was in it for Him? Surely everyone has a sublime motive to do things, I thought.

Part of me really wondered if in the spiritual realm that God and demons were alike. Did they both feast off of your soul when you died? Did they both sustain themselves by using you to the end? Maybe a person is tricked into heaven by going through horrible circumstances on earth and then you are subject to a life of eternal servitude where you will always wish you could have one moment to yourself, you know to do something like make a garden or climb a tree but God would have too many chores lined out and you would have to obey or he'd send you to hell.

So I did something that I had not tried before.....something uncanny, something not like me at all....I respectfully told God exactly what I what I was thinking of Him...."God, are you planning on eating me? Are you going to rip me up and make me into a spiritual robot programmed for eternal servitude where I will suffer for eternity at Your all powerful hands?

Like the true Friend He is.....He didn't say anything at all. I felt His love in my heart and the shame for even having thought such a lie lit across my soul....okay...that was a good answer, I thought.

God is immutable Truth. He doesn't move by our whinnings, wailings, and fears. Everything He does is good, perfect, true, and without error or falsehoods and those whom He knows learn to discern His thoughts and move on them.

Right away, without a single word spoken, I knew I was wrong in my assumption of Him as Dinosaur King and realised that I had described Satan! Repentance and turning from that false perception of a devouring God was nearly instantaneous.

The sad thing is that we live and move from many, many false thoughts. These thoughts are handed down to us from generation to generation and began with Adam and Eve who took a thought apart from God and moved on it. They believed and followed a lie. That is exactly how sin enters our lives daily. Will live and move from thoughts that are not correct.

Okay, so how do you befriend people? How do you befriend God? I found that one answer answers them both. You always do what is right and good for the person, just like God had done and does to and towards us. You never move from an evil motive, but only look for what is best for that person and the right thing to do. You never do things to advance a selfish outcome, you simply don't have one to advance.

It sounds easy, but wait till you apply it. People that you thought loved you, will hate you! Why? Much of what we do for others is not at all good for them or done out of kindness at all. They have grown to count on your support for their egos. More than often you will find that the people who are used to using you will quickly turn their 'like' of you into their 'hate' of you, actually they are the same thing....both a means of getting what you want. Like a salt and pepper shaker....you use them to get the flavor you want on your food.

However, when you pull away from being one of them, one of the world's children, you will find yourself being and having the best Friend you could ever imagine! But it takes some time to retrain your brain and God is still working on me.

What I have observed from the years I have spent with God, the years spent in an attempt to manipulate and move Him, is that He understood it all and is still plenteous in mercy and patience. He really doesn't care if I do something stupid like make a mistake or spill my milk, or forget the words to a song while on stage.

He doesn't seem to ever be disturbed by my being a completely fallible and human.

But He also isn't happy with me 'just the way I am' as many people preach it today. He actually does expect me to repent when He shows me the error of my ways and if I don't I already know that a strong disciplinary action is coming and well on its way. So I do try to pay heed and spare myself the agony of the 'blackberry' experience.

I am reminded of the Israelites demanding meat in the wilderness. God was grieved at heart with their ungratefulness and gave them exactly what they asked for. Judging it from my flesh I would say that they succeeded in manipulating God, but then they died with the food in their mouths. I think God made His point.

So what does it mean to be a friend to God? Certainly manipulation is not really what a friend is. It is what we have come to see and know in our lives as family and friends, but that is why we feel so lonely and cold. Vampires, all sucking the life out of each other, constantly taking and never having. Does life really exist outside of ourselves? Or does life come up from Him in us and then flow outwards?

This is why we miss it. We seek 'friends' to fulfill us, to give us what we 'need'. But what if we already had all that we needed? What if someone said, "I love you" and you thought, "that's okay....I have enough love already. I'll just do what is good for you and let you be on your way. Come back anytime or leave or whatever."

The thought is almost too hard to comprehend. We are a needy people that can never seem to get enough....enough money, enough food, clothes, things, and love, attention, and recognition. Is there such a thing as being really full and satisfied?

Always on the hunt for bigger and better, we spend our lives in this endless pursuit of happiness and call it the 'American Dream'. I would say that the

'American Fantasy' might be closer to the truth. We set our sights on what is supposed to fulfill us and get it, and sure enough it lasts for a few seconds, just like the other million things that we got, but unable to come up with a more ingenious way we just keep right on pursuing the ghost of peace through possessing.

Amidst this quest, this endless rather mindless journey, we devour one another like we do our purchases, homes, and cars. Sometimes we even joke about 'upgrading' our relationships like we do our cars or computers. The thinking is identical....if it doesn't give us what we need, we move on to something that we think will. Sadly, nothing seems to really give us a lasting peace and joy and we convince ourselves it is only because we haven't found the 'right' something.

Then, we grow to despise anyone or anything that either seems to stand in the way of our search for happiness or that appears to withhold it from our grasps. This is where many friendships die as each person 'requests' too much or not enough and no bartering can take place. It is also the beginning of crime and violence.

When you walk away from the system of hell, the one the world operates under, you will experience some major rejections and much frustration. Just as I was grievous in my relationship to God, people will be the same with you when you stop playing their games of reward and punishment. When they reach for the buttons in you that they used to push and they are not there, just watch the confusion and anger build on their resentful faces.

An ailing relationship is one where you are using someone and being used. See those relationships for what they are and you will be on your way to a healthy soul. You must allow the Holy Spirit to permeate your being and retrain your mind with His ways and thoughts. You can no longer live like the world and act like the world and be His. You must begin to see the Truth and to move on it. Then you will be free to be His friend.

The Heart of God

God's heart is pure. He does not do things to advantage self. He has 'no' self and no 'flesh'. He is love. He has and is complete understanding. He isn't lacking anything. You have nothing you can offer Him to sway Him and even if you did, He isn't 'swayable'. He will often give you what you ask for to teach you a lesson or show you something, but you will not make Him change His mind because He chose wrongly or was guilty somehow.

We see an example of this with Moses. Moses pled for the lives of the Israelites when God was about to destroy them all. God said that He would simply raise up a nation unto Moses. Moses, being human, I'm sure saw all those faces whom he'd come to know personally and couldn't bear to think the thought. I can just imagine that there were many children and families he knew well. I bet he even knew the names of some of the goats and cows wandering around camp!

God gave Moses his wish but look how it turned out. God already knew that the Israelites were going to not enter the promised land, but Moses wasn't seeing the full picture. God is kind and smiled I'm sure upon His son who in essence was asking for blackberry bushes. I often wonder what the world would look like today if Moses had said, "okay, God....I'll go with your plan and we'll make a nation from me." I wonder what the earth would look like today.

One of the reasons we think we can move God, is that He does listen to us on occasion. Having His ears we then believe we can 'pull a few strings'. For years I subconsciously kept trying to formulate Him, harness His power, and find a way to use Him. Sometimes He seemed to cave and give in and at other times it felt like I spoke to deaf ears and that my prayers and efforts sort of hit the ceiling.

Then I noticed one common thread. God always did the right thing regardless of me or circumstances. He always did what was best for me or others and expected

me to learn and grow and He never went against His own Word, but rather seemed to be a complete expression of it.

I can see now, how a mature person in Christ at least sort of ought to be. It has been a wonderful discovery. For instance, I have learned that suffering isn't really a bad thing, but part of life in Him. It is a quiet enduring patience based on faith. It is something that He goes through and something He expects us, as His students, to also go through. I have learnt why too....that a person discovers much through it, like how to possess their own soul, how to walk in faith, how to love, and to be faithful. Often, by suffering at the hands of those who used to be our 'friends' comes the salvation of their souls, as you sort of switch gears on them and lead them into the truth of who they are as the 'ugly' in them shows up to torment you into obedience.

As people begin to see their own wicked schemes by the obvious light that you are now shining upon them, they will either eventually repent or hate you....both simply bless you so you've nothing to fear. Those who hate you will teach you patience, forgiveness, and grow your soul towards heaven....and those who repent, become your true friends....your non-bloodsucking ones who edify your soul in Truth.

Correct friendships are based upon the Truth. You will not be doing good for gain, but always looking for and doing what is right regardless of the personal outcome. You will never speak or do things to get things....but rather, you will move from your conscience and seek to do what is right in all that you do.

As there is darkness in and around us all, obviously this will affect all we do. God knows that we have this problem on earth and it doesn't disturb Him. He also made a way for us to live unto Him amidst this world and Jesus prayed and asked God to keep us from this world while living in it. I have a strong feeling that God didn't ignore that prayer. He can indeed 'keep' you.

God's heart is that He wants you to have life. Not from a self-centered

standpoint promoting you to become your own god. He really wants what is right and good for you and doesn't want you to perish. However He gave you a will and a choice and so you get to be the one who decides. What will you do? The outcome of your life depends upon your own choices. God will still continue on without you. You are not the source of Life, He is. Take some time to ponder this truth. It may well save your soul.

A True Friend

Let me begin with a story:

There was a boy named Jonny. Jonny was afraid of alligators. Jonny had two friends Bob and Mike. Mike told Jonny to not be afraid of alligators because he could tell that the fear was very overwhelming, giving Jonny nightmares, and Jonny was not happy having those fears and besides he was hoping that Jonny would share his new baseball cards. Jonny liked the news that Mike gave him and so they, together, formulated of just how nice and friendly alligators really were and even drew some pictures with Jonny riding them around and Mike made up some stories of how he had had an alligator once that saved his life. Jonny felt swell and shared his baseball cards with Mike as Mike had hinted and hoped he would and patted himself on the back for having helped Jonny over his fear of alligators.

The next day, Jonny told Bob of the happenings....sure that Bob would also agree with him and quite sure that Bob like baseball cards too. Jonny happily poured his fears of alligators out to Bob and told him all that he and Mike had discovered. Bob, stunned at the drawings, warned Jonny severely to stay away from alligators and that they weren't ride on toys or fun little pets. Jonny was furious! How dare Bob try and make him afraid and even call his good friend Mike a liar! Bob tried to

explain that there is a healthy fear and an unhealthy fear but Jonny would not hear of it. He told Bob off and demanded he leave and did not give him a single baseball card. Promising himself that he would never speak to Bob again.

Bob was grieved but knew that it wasn't right to lead someone into a lie. He took the punishment and left.

All seemed to go well for Jonny the next few years. He clung to Mike's wisdom but his conscience would not leave him alone. So one day he decided to get an alligator to **prove** to his 'conscience' that he was right. It was upon the loving embracing hug of his new pet alligator that Jonny learned who his friend had truly been....unfortunately it was also upon that very moment that it was too late for Jonny to share his new found wisdom with anyone.

So it is in the world. We cling to advice that we like and want to hear and actually chase those away who would give us advice we don't like, words that God, our conscience, backs. We horde 'friends' to us and surround ourselves with people who whisper lies into our ears and souls, all for want of the impossible....glory, fame, honor, and to be gods.

When someone 'believes' in us, we call it a good thing and call them 'friends' if they excuse our sins and love us for the wretch we are. We don't like people who see us as we really are, even if they don't say a word about it. Just knowing that they see us, faults and all, makes us uncomfortable beyond measure.

A true friend is someone who doesn't want anything from you, but is content to let you live your life between you and God and is only there to truly bless you and do what is good for you. A true friend will be someone who enjoys hearing from you just to see how you are doing and hopes to bless your life in some way for your good. Should you treat them badly, they don't respond in like manner because they are doing the right thing, being patient, overlooking, and kind as

always, because it is that which is good for you. If they rebuke you, it will be only to truly help you. There will be no pleasure ever taken in your pain. Good friends really do care about your soul.

You can't offend a true friend easily either. It is nearly impossible to make them mad or drive them away by responding to them incorrectly, why? They aren't being good to you because you are good, but because they are obeying God irregardless of how you are.

So everything that they do is done because it is the right thing to do, regardless of how you are behaving. For some, this is down right maddening! The buttons that they are use to pushing all but disappear and fade over time as this person learns to live and move from within, instead of from without. You can't gratify them into subjection, you can't torment them either, both bring about the same affect. They seem to be blind to the outside world, yet see everything with such clarity it is disturbing and unnerving.

These people don't live by or through the world, but by the Spirit in them, the world answers to them, they don't answer it.

How do you deal with or treat someone who is like that? Everything feels pointless....you do good and try and get their approval and they just sit there like bumps on a log....so you try to get their disapproval and get them to hate you and that doesn't work either. They are just the same either way.....good, kind, patient, yet stern when they need to be to get a saving point across to you or to edify your soul.

These kinds of people are nearly impossible to manipulate. They don't do things for advantage and when they are seemingly selfish, they don't even act guilty! They just move from some inner place of peace and often appear strung out on peace like a drug of some sort. To a wavering unhappy mate or soul, this can

become the epitome of a nightmare. The back scratching is gone! That other person actually enjoys being alone, they don't seem to want anything from anyone but God. They smile for no apparent reason and cry the same way. They give up all kinds of situations that would be useful to manipulating others and never seek so much as an apology when wronged. How do you motivate that kind of person and manipulate them to do things? You can't....and that frustration will either make you see what a wretch you are and turn you into a truly repentant godly person or it will drive you to run for your life!

What kind of person are you? What kind of friend are you? What kind of friend to God are you?

Who do you go to when you are in trouble or having trouble?

Who do you talk to about everything, openly and honestly?

Are you honest with Him or manipulative?

Do you trust Him, even if you don't understand how or what the outcome of the situation might be?

And are you a Bob or a Mike? Are you willing to suffer for the Truth to help someone or willing to sell out the person to get what you want?

A true friend is hard to find and often not really wanted. People who live for themselves don't want true friends, but puppets and people that they can use, people who make them feel 'good'.

If you are a person who is running from your conscience, then a true friend will be painful to you. At this time, you may even consider them your enemies because they don't obey you very well or at not at all. Often, children who can't deal with

the hypocrisy of our own lives become rebellious on us and we don't realise what a true friend they really are. They see us like we are and they rebel against it.

If you are just awakening to this, be patient with yourself, after all you know that patience allows us to possess our souls. Observe yourself behaving badly, using people and being used. As you come to realise your ways and the ways of others, you will slowly begin to turn, without effort, into the correct path ways. You'll see yourself, like or as if He is standing there too, watching the horror movie of your life play before both your eyes and you will be ashamed and that shame will lead you to repent and change.

Let everything happen in its time, as you are ready and as He convicts your heart. Do not try and rush out and be 'a good friend'. Slowly come into the reckoning of the person that you are and repent for what is not right as you see it in His light.

As you begin to have patience with your own misgivings, this will allow you to also have patience with others; not excuses, but patience. Do not excuse your behaviour away. If it is wrong, then it is wrong. Feel it and see it and don't change anything, God will change your heart and you will obey from your heart.

Don't try to be anything to anyone. Just let them be who they are and you be who you are. Just because one person likes the color yellow, doesn't mean we all have too, right? Let everyone in your life be who they are, without judgement of them....and you will soon see your anger dissipating, along with the memories of them that were unkind.

As you forgive yourself and become a true friend to yourself, honest, patient, kind, overlooking, nonjudgmental, and considerate, you will find that it is easy to also be this way to others. But as long as you continue to see yourself in a make-believe limelight or to hold onto things that you know are not true, you will suffer anguish in your soul.

Be a friend, a true friend, to yourself and you will be befriending God in you as you will be truthful and drawing from Him in you, the Spirit of Truth. The opposite is also true. Be a friend of those other spirits, the spirit of error, and you will find yourself holding company with them. They fight, argue, and seek their own and are using you for their own purpose.

It boils down to this. Are you friends with the Truth or with Lies. Are you compadres with honesty, goodness, truthfulness, kindness, love, compassion, patience? Or are you befriending and seeking out anger, lust, greed, self gain, resenting all who oppose you and striving to establish that world in you.

God is Truth. How can we be His friends if we don't honestly love Him? Aren't we just wasting our breath if we say we are seeking Him, but really in truth we love wicked ways? How can you be a friend of Truth and cherish lies at the same time?

I have pondered this all very deeply and if we don't know the Truth in us as us then it is obvious that only one other thing has taken His place in our hearts. Although there are varying levels of realisation of Truth in oneself, it is evident that a person who is seeking the Truth is the only person covered by Truth's grace. A person who is seeking self in Truth's name and seeks to know himself as that Truth will not know Him and will only deceive themselves and those who are also like them.

A person who is a true friend of God will seek Him in Truth to know Him as He is the will not seek a way to make Him be what they want and try and use Him for gain. This is why Paul said that they would assume that godliness is gain and from such turn away. People who are religious to 'get' something out of it are not moving from a love of Truth, but a love of themselves using Truth to get what they want.

God's friends truly know Him. They truly love Him and they love Truth. Although they are works in progress, they know that too, and don't fret because they also know that they aren't saved by what they do but by who is living in them. No sin is accounted unto them as they are under grace and they know that it is the blood of Jesus that has redeemed them and they are truly living unto God.

Dealing with Persecution

As you begin to walk into this truth and begin to be a true friend, you will experience much persecution. All who follow Truth are persecuted and there is no reason to seek sympathy for it....it is a part of being His. We are to be joyful in that we are awake and not asleep with the world, that we no longer have to live unto it slavishly, responding to other people through our physical senses and being dominated by the outside world.

Our directions, all our emotional and spiritual needs are met inside of us by Him and never from an outside source. Even the words in this article mean nothing if not interpreted by Him to you. Your spiritual ears are inside of your spirit, not on a peice of paper or hanging of the side of your head.

Persecution is not meant by the Father to destroy us, but was designed in itself to grow us up. It will teach us to endure, to overlook the errors and shortcomings of our fellow man, and to trust in Him to both provide and to make it all good in the end. Through patience we truly do possess our own souls. We learn that the ugly in others doesn't make us ugly at all, but rather gives us an occasion to light the way for their misguided souls. It is never a 'quest' to be better then others, but rather, that we have opportunity to practice the ways of our Father. Our goodness is not our own. Only God in us makes us good and righteous. It is His righteousness, His Wisdom, His strength, and His love that we are giving and living

from.

We are to pray for those who persecute us, not to ever take joy in their hurt. When someone mistreats you, it isn't you that will have to answer for that crime and it isn't you that will suffer, so you truly pray for that other person's condition. That other person will suffer if they don't repent. Their suffering begins with a guilty conscience and those who don't have one will have no way to heaven, so those who seem to not care about what they do are very much the living dead...pray even harder for them....perhaps God will turn on a light for them to see by.

Pray for everyone, perhaps God will send extra angels and help them. Perhaps your own light, Him in you, will be enough to shine a ray of light upon their dark souls and make them question why they are beating on you and you aren't beating back. Never resist evil, but overcome it with good.

Paul said that he knew how to be abased and how to abound. We must learn that too. All those things of the world that we are and were taught must become dispelled by the light of Truth and Reason. We cannot continue in the dark and dwell in the Light with Him. We must leave the dark by seeking the Light within us, His Light, Truth.

To be a friend of Truth, you must stop resisting Him. You must come to a place in your own heart where it means more to you to be His friend, then anything in the world. God is not fooled or mocked. He is pure Justice and pure Wisdom. We must stop seeking 'minds' outside of His and 'ways' outside of His ways and begin to love and seek the Truth with all our hearts and souls.

It is that still small voice that says, "This is the way, walk ye in it" that we must seek to know and befriend, not the voice that says, "this is what you want....here's

what you gotta do to get it".

It all boils down to who you believe and who you truly give yourself to. Either you are given unto the Truth and love Him and His ways, or you are given to a lie and to deception and often in His name, both ways are ever present with us.

If you are the kind of person who loves using others, wants to hear your name spoken in adoration, seeks titles, cries out for more recognition and honor, and holds dear to your heart anyone or anything that advances your own cause, then you are not His. This is why the love of money is the root of all evil. In this world, you can buy all those things.

Who are you giving yourself too? Who sits on the throne of your heart?

All these questions, I have been pondering, all the past experiences with Him tell me that He's not finished with me yet by a long shot, thank goodness, and I know that He is keeping Me. It is His wisdom that saves me from the lies being spoken and whispered in my spiritual ears. It is His understanding, patience, and kindness that guards over my heart every day, tirelessly to preserve His work that He has done in me.

I cannot even take credit for it. I watched Him the other day, reveal some very ugly truths about me to myself and when I broke and began to cry, He picked me back up and set me straight without a single word spoken. He then lit my path up with His Truth so I would have a path to travel on. His gentle ways are beyond my comprehension.

How can I believe that God loves others, if I don't believe He loves me? This was my question the last few days....and He answered me. I don't have to try and believe it, that He loves me, I have 40 years and counting to know that He does.

He has tirelessly guarded, protected, nurtured, convicted, spoken to, and ministered to me on a daily and minute by minute basis.

Many people simply do not see it and are not aware of Him in their lives. God is doing this with everyone. We are His creation and He as Creator is not a respecter of person's but loves us each individually and made us as individual as the snowflakes that fall from the sky.

His creation is a testimony of who He is. You can learn and know Him through it, if you but take the time to look. God is patient like the oak tree in the winter as it stores and prepares itself for the next year. He is kind, like the forgiving earth we so carelessly pollute. He guards us well, like the shores do to the continents, keeping the sea at bay protecting us from the turmoil of the vast waters and He can be both the calm breeze that wafts our spirits with Truth or the tornado that makes its resounding vivid point.

He can make us laugh and smile through the antics of a small child or kitten and then quickly reveal the truth of our own mortality as we bury the ones we love. God is creation.....All things exist 'in' Him and by Him and not anything that was made was made outside of Him. In essence, He is not only us, but all we see and all that there is.

To know Him in us, is to know Life. If you deny Him, then He/Life will deny you. Don't be one of those who perish forever in the abyss, joining the creature who sought to be truth too. A creature who fell by his pride and adoration of himself...loving his own name above the Gods.

Seek to be friends with God and you will live forever. God is not like this world and He will show you who He is if you will but seek Him. He will open the doorway to heaven, that kingdom of heaven in you, if you will but put Him on the throne of

your heart.

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