

## Cultivating Friendship with God

### **SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND**

It was for the sake of relationship with God that he created humankind, and it is God's continuing desire that we cultivate friendship with him. Before the fall, Adam and Eve enjoyed unhindered communion with God. They were friends of God. Abraham was called a friend of God because of his love for and commitment to the Creator (see 2 Chronicles 20:7 and Isaiah 41:8).

As we move from Genesis to Exodus, we encounter Moses, another individual who had a special relationship with God. In fact, Moses was so in touch with the Creator, that he had face-to-face conversations with him. The epitaph of Moses in Deuteronomy attests to the friendship that he shared with God. Deuteronomy 34:10 declares: "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face" (KJV). Psalms 103:7 further illustrates the relationship shared by God and Moses. It declares: "[God] made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel."

Several other OT characters were commended for their love for God. David, for example, was known as a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). However, if we really want to understand the theme of friendship with God, we must look at the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Jesus taught his disciples to call God "Father" (Matthew 6:5-15 and Luke 11:1-4), suggesting the intimacy existing between a parent and child. He, himself, had such a close relationship with the Heavenly Father that he is the only means through which the Father can be known. His life of obedience pleased the Father in every way (John 8:29).

Finally, even though human beings were separated spiritually from God because of sin, Jesus Christ now makes friendship with God possible once again through his ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

### **FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD—PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

But how can we cultivate friendship with God? Here are five basic ingredients.

1. The first thing that is required to cultivate friendship with the Lord is godly fear (Psalm 25:14; Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 2:5; Proverbs 9:10. When we begin to understand God better, who he is and what he expects, holy fear is the natural consequence.
2. The second thing that is required to cultivate with the Lord is obedience (see 1 Samuel 15:22; John 15:14, see also, Isaiah 1:19).
3. Thirdly, we need trust (Proverbs 3:5-6; see also the stories of Abraham, Daniel, and the three Hebrew boys).
4. Fourthly, we need to spend time with the Lord in prayer and in his Word.
5. Fifthly, we must come to adore the Lord. Adoration is a form of worship that centers our love and focus on God alone.