

## THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

**DATE:** November 11, 2018

**SUBJECT: HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS: FRIENDS (4 of 4)—Friends of God**

**SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 18:1-33; Exodus 33:11a; John 15:15; James 2:23; Matthew 25:35-40

**AIM:** God created man with the desire for companionship. God wants us to be His friends.

**MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM:** James 2:23 (And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness"; and he was called the friend of God.); John 15:14-15 (You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all the things which I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.)

**SUGGESTED SONGS:** 2810 (God Hears and Answers); 2811 (God is So Good), 2828 (Great is Thy Faithfulness); 121 (What a Friend We have in Jesus); 114 (Jesus is the Children's Friend); 1003 (A Friend Who Never Fails); 1610 (Come my Friend - *can be sung to Mary had a little lamb*); 9576 (ABRAHAM - Hospitality Song)

**CRAFT IDEAS:** (1) Inflate balloons for the children. Using various supplies, such as glitter glue, glow-in-the-dark glue, markers, or stickers, the children can write "I am a friend of God." Leave enough time for the words to dry. (2) Make a collage picturing practical ways we can be a good friend.

**NOTE TO SERVING ONES:** This is the final lesson of four lessons on friends and friendship. The first lesson shows the God-created need for companionship and friendship and how we should fill that need mainly with friends—of various ages—in the church. The second lesson is about how to make and keep friends by learning to be a good friend. The third is about how to choose proper friends, and the fourth, on how God Himself needs friends.

**APPROACH:** For the past few weeks, we have been talking about friends, the qualities and characteristics of a proper friend, and what kinds of friends we should have. But did you know that God wants *you* to be *His* friend too?

**CONTENT:** God certainly has all the qualities of a great friend, such as being loyal, trustworthy and a good listener. But we may not realize that God Himself also wants a friend. God created man with the desire for companionship. In like manner, God also desires to have an intimate companionship with man. Sometimes we have secrets that we would like to share with a close friend, but not with others whom we don't know so well. In the Bible there are some examples of men who were friends of God. God chose to speak with them heart to heart and share with them what He may not have shared with others.

Abraham was an example of someone who was a friend of God. He believed God and obeyed God, and though he made mistakes, He followed God and cared about God's heart. He went out of his land, as God had told him to, without knowing where he was going (Hebrews 11:8).

One day, while Abraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day, he looked up, and there were three men who came to visit him. One of them was actually God! God was in the form of a man and visited Abraham. (The other two men were most likely angels.) Abraham immediately took care of them by asking them to stay. Abraham said, "Please let a little water be fetched, and do wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may sustain yourselves." (Gen. 18:4-5). Abraham did things quickly to take care of his guests. He "**hurried** into the tent to Sarah (his wife) and said, **Quickly** prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it, and makes cakes." (Gen. 18:6) Then Abraham "**ran** to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, and he **hurried** to prepare it." The food was prepared as quickly as possible and set before Abraham's visitors, and he stood by them under the tree while they ate (Gen. 18:7-8).

Then God revealed two very important things to Abraham, His friend. First, God told him that Sarah would have a son. Abraham and Sarah were already very old and past the age of child-bearing (Gen. 18:9-14). Second, God revealed to Abraham what He was going to do with the sinful city of Sodom. Abraham was concerned about his nephew Lot and Lot's family who lived in Sodom. So he spoke with God, just as two close friends would. Their conversation went back and forth, until God promised that if he found ten righteous men, He would not destroy the city (Genesis 18:1-33). Their relationship was so close that the Bible says that Abraham was called the friend of God (James 2:23b).

When the Lord Jesus was on the earth, He spoke about what it means to be a friend of God. His disciples spent a lot of time with Him – following Him, listening to Him, learning from Him. He loved them so much that He laid down His life for them and for us. The Lord told His disciples “you are my friends if you do what I command you” (John 15:13-15) and that because they were His friends, He told them all that would happen to Him. He hid nothing from them. We should also desire to be friends of God.

**SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:** *Please pray and fellowship over which applications to cover. Please do not try to cover all the applications. It is sufficient to cover just **one or two applications** which are appropriate for the age group of the children you are serving.*

- **God loves us and has chosen us to be His friends** (John 15:16a). He wants to talk to us and wants us to talk to Him. When we pray, we are talking to God. He is a wonderful friend, always available and never too busy to listen to us. He understands us and knows our feelings and wants us to share our thoughts with Him, whether we are happy or sad. Even when no one else is around, He is there, waiting for us to talk to Him. He will never leave us or forsake us.
- **God wants us know more about Him.** Because our God is a living God, He also wants to tell us what is on His heart and what He desires. Sometimes we can be self-centered, only praying to God when we want or need something and once He answers our prayer, we forget about Him. But a good friend is not just someone you go to when you are in need, but someone you talk to and listen to, in good times and in bad times. Because our friends talk to us and we listen, we know our best friend's favorite food, hobby, sport, etc. God also wants us to know what He likes and dislikes.
- **The Bible is God's speaking to us.** As a friend of God, if we want to know what God wants and we want to do what He commands, then we must read the Bible and memorize our memory verses accurately each week. Also, when our parents, serving ones or others are sharing something with us concerning God's Word, we need to have open ears and an open heart to receive His words. In this way we will be able to hear what He is speaking to us, His friends. The Lord may also tell us to do or not to do something by giving us a feeling in our conscience. We should obey God, as Abraham did, trusting the Lord. What a privilege that we can be a friend of God.
- **Taking care of others.** When we take care of God's people, the Lord Jesus considers that as taking care of Him (Matt. 25:35-40 “...Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you have done it to one of these, the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me.”). Abraham took very good care of his guests. What are some ways we can take care of visitors? When there is food on the table, we should serve others instead of helping ourselves first. When our parents need to give a ride to others in the family car, and we cannot sit where we want to, we should not complain. We should make sure our guests are comfortable. When we see someone is absent in children's meeting, we can reach out to them and make sure they are okay. (We can ask our parents to get the address or phone number.)

Adapted from *Bringing Children from Adam to Christ-Human Relationships*, Vol. 3, Lesson #12 (Friends of God), and the church in New York City Children's Meeting lessons for 11/9/97; 11/11/01, 11/11/07, 11/17/13.