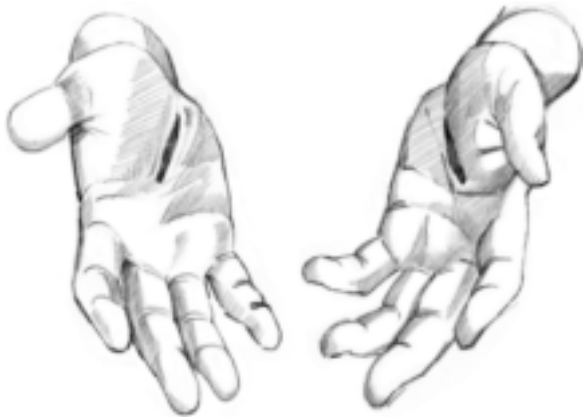


LESSON 12



JESUS IS OUR FRIEND

Scripture Texts: *John 15:9-16; Luke 12:32; Revelation 3:20; John 17:3*

To unite man with Himself is the purpose of all God's dealings with man from creation to the resurrection and final Judgment. The One Who came to man to transact the union is Jesus Christ. His coming was sacrificial, intimate, warm, and loving. Jesus came to us in love, understanding, and sympathy. He opens His heart and invites us to know Him so that He can show us the Father. To know Him and the Father is eternal life.

MEMORY VERSE: *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.* *John 15:7*

How to Be Joyful

John 15:9-11 As the hour drew near for Jesus to die on the Cross, He was alone with His disciples. Jesus talked with them intimately and sincerely. He told them, **As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.** A love that is great and strong and lasting. It is the basis for all other love. Again and again Jesus has emphasized His love for them, but here He compares His love to that which the Father had for Him. The disciples should continue in it, live in it. They could do this only by obedience to His commands. Obedience is the key to all the riches of Christ. By obedience Jesus Himself remained in the Father's love (John 8:29).

The thought that underlies Jesus' speech in these last hours, about dwelling in Christ, in His joy, in His Words, and in His peace, is that of a safe dwelling place, a safe house, into which going, we may be secure. Here, all that continue in it find a fortress from sorrow or care or trouble or temptation. His love shields us from whatever befalls. We can sing: "He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock . . . and covers me there with His hand." By continuing in His love we can have joy abiding and full, His joy that is greater than any joy the world knows—**unspeakable and full of glory** (1 Peter 1:8). Jesus wants our joy and happiness to be full. The thought of these verses is: What the Father was to Jesus, He would be to His disciples.

John 15:12-13 Jesus does not command anything impossible. He commands to love as He loves. We can do it only if we have His love and His power. His love placed in a human heart enables that one to love as He loves. Jesus loved enough to die for both friends and enemies. An enemy who accepts His sacrifice becomes His friend.

Friends of Jesus

John 15:14-16 **Ye are my friends.** A great and high privilege! But there is a condition: **If ye do whatsoever I command you.** Jesus proves His friendship by disclosing His knowledge and plans to us and by choosing us to bear fruit for Him and to receive answers to prayer. Because the fruit we bear is divine in origin, it remains or is permanent. To those who go forth obeying and bringing forth fruit, Jesus, our Friend, opens His storehouse of blessings.

Luke 12:32 **Fear not, little flock.** Jesus used this term like a fond parent speaks to loved children—familiar and intimate. **It is your Father's—"your"** rather than "my" this time—**good pleasure**—He enjoys the giving, which

indicates His quality and quantity of love—to give you the kingdom. This gift—the rule of God in the heart—He wants all humanity to have.

How great a lack of joy and happiness there is! There is a remedy for this. Thanks and praise be unto God! The love and friendship of Jesus enables one to be happy in the midst of illness, poverty, trouble, or loss.

We are told in 1 John 3:2 that when we see God as He is, we will be like Him. We see God when we meet Jesus, His Son. The better we know Jesus the more like God we grow. This knowledge is brought about through prayer, Bible study, and spiritual leaders who are given by God to assist (Ephesians 4:13). One must first enter Christ before there can be an increase in knowledge of Him (1 Corinthians 2:14). How does one enter?

Results of Knowing Jesus

Revelation 3:20 Jesus said to John, **I stand at the door, and knock**—the polite Visitor seeking entrance to the most private, personal place of a person—his home. He waits to be invited in. **I will . . . sup with him, and he with me.** We have here a picture of close friends in a warm, satisfying relationship, honoring each other as host and Guest. Thus Jesus draws near to His friends—any who open the heart to Him. Oh, what sweet communion this brings to the friends of Jesus!

John 17:3 Life eternal, begun and enjoyed here and now, is the final treasure all desire to find at the end of earth's years. Most will fail. A few will reach it. How? By knowing God the Father and His Son, Jesus and abiding in them. This reveals the exceeding importance of knowing Him. It is not merely to know ABOUT Him but to KNOW Him, to be acquainted, to experience a relationship with Him personally. He wants to do a work in us, that we can know Him as He knows us. We reach this through repentance, believing in Him, and following Him. Then we can rightfully say, I know Him, I have eternal life.

JUST A THOUGHT

**No one is a failure in this world who lightens
a burden for someone else.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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