

Friend of God

- New Testament: derivatives of *phileo*, brotherly love
- Old Testament: Many Hebrew words have been translated “friend.” Only one implies a close association. The others are companions.

Those called friends of God

- John 15:13 – 15 Greater love has no one than this than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing, but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.
- James 2:23 And he [Abraham] was called the friend of God
- 2 Chronicles 20:7 and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?
- Isaiah 41:8 The descendants of Abraham, My friend.

Those called the friend of God through published paraphrases

- Exodus 33:11 The Lord spoke to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend (companion)
- Psalm 25:14 The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him
- Romans 5:10 If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God...
- Acts 13:22 (1 Samuel 13:14) I have found David the son of Jesse a man after my own heart.
- Daniel 9:23, 10:11, 10:19 you are greatly beloved

Other contexts of friends in the New Testament

- Mark 3:21 When His friends heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him
- Mark 5:19 Go home to your friends and tell them what great things God has done for you
- Luke 7:6 When He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends
- Luke 7:34 a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners
- Luke 11:5 – 8 Which of you shall have a friend and go to him at midnight
- Luke 12:4 My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body
- Luke 14:10 Friend, go up higher
- Luke 14:12 When you give a dinner, do not invite your friends or brothersd
- Luke 15:6 he called his friends and neighbors saying, “Rejoice with me”
- Luke 15:9 she called her friends and neighbors saying, “Rejoice with me”
- Luke 15:29 that I might make merry with my friends
- Luke 16:9 Make friends for yourselves with unrighteous mammon
- Luke 21:16 You will be betrayed by...relatives and friends
- Luke 23:12 That very day, Pilate and Herod became friends
- John 3:29 The friend of the bridegroom...rejoices greatly
- John 11:11 Our friend Lazarus sleeps
- John 19:12 If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar’s friend.
- Acts 10:24 Cornelius ... had called together his relatives and close friends
- Acts 19:31 Some of the Asiarchs, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theatre.
- Acts 27:3 Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him liberty to go to his friends
- James 4:4 Whosoever wants to be a friends of the world makes himself an enemy of God
- 3 John 14 Our friends greet you.

Other contexts of friends in the Old Testament

- 2 Samuel 19:6 you love your enemies and hate your friends
- Esther 5:10, 14 6:13 Haman...called for his friends and his wife

Friend of God

- Proverbs 14:20 The rich has many friends
- Proverbs 18:24 There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother
- Proverbs 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful
- Jeremiah 20:4 I will make you a terror to yourself and all your friends
- Jeremiah 20:6 You shall go to Babylon...you and all your friends
- Zechariah 13:6 I was wounded in the house of my friends

Summary

- Only the Eleven and Abraham should be used as models for “friends” of God because in those cases the word was used with special emphasis. The others require unsupported assertions.
- In 1 John, the apostle makes some close parallels with Jesus’ words to the Eleven, expanding the idea to all believers.
 - 1 John 3:16 – 19 We also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren
 - 1 John 2:27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you all things
 - 1 John 3:23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another.
 - We, too, are Jesus’ friends if we take care of the brethren (to the extreme) and allow the Spirit to bring us to full understanding.
- Many attributes of Abraham have been suggested as the foundation of that friendship. The only safe parallels are those made by inspired writers.
 - James ended his paragraph with “And he was called the friend of God.”
 - James’ specific example is when Abraham sacrificed Isaac
 - Works made Abraham’s faith “consistent.”
 - A friend of God is one who is consistent from faith to works.
 - Jehoshaphat did not specify any attributes of Abraham, just that God promised the land to Abraham’s descendants.
 - Genesis 12:7 The promise of land came without specific reasons.
 - Genesis 15:18 The promise of land came without specific reasons.
 - Genesis 17:8 The promise of land came without specific reasons.
 - Isaiah did not specify any attributes of Abraham that caused him to be God’s friend

The “personal relationship with Jesus” idea has been badly abused, but, as with almost every idea introduced in the church, it has a good core point. People tend to project their own mental processes onto others. So, if I don’t like me, no one else could either. No matter what I believe about how people see me, God likes me as a friend. The idea of being accepted by God is too often taught from a position of power. We horrible people were so messed up that God had to come here and die to rescue us. He is still disgusted with us, but, against His better judgment, He saved us, then retreated back to heaven to remain separated from sin. The truth is that God so liked being around us that He came to be with us and have a great time, and, as a by-product, make us happy. People look at God as finally giving up on the idea that we were ever going to amount to anything, so He came to fix a bunch of dummies. Rather, coming to earth was the plan from the beginning, not a response to our failure. Mountain rescue teams only go out after a distress call tells them that a stupid hiker got himself stuck. That is not what God did – or God is partly responsible for putting us at risk. Rather, He came in order to be real and personal: a friend. So, no matter what we think of ourselves or what we think other people think about us, God likes us. He even knows the real us that we try not to let people see because we think that they will reject us if they see the real me. God likes us anyway and is the kind of friend that wants to make our lives better by listening and by clearing obstacles.