



## PNEUMA: FRIENDSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT...Week 7

### - BEING A FRIEND OF GOD

As we continue our study of the person and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, our focus turns to **growing in friendship with the Spirit of God**. We will never have a kinder, more compassionate friend than the God who dwells within us. What does it mean to be a “friend of God?” How does that friendship with the Holy Spirit manifest, grow and deepen in our lives?

“The Spirit desires to do life with you. He wants to guide you, speak to you, and love you. He wants to satisfy your longing for relationship and can do so in greater ways than you can imagine.” ~ Craig Denison, *Friendship with the Holy Spirit*

In friendship with the Holy Spirit we begin to experience a connection with God that breathes life and wholeness unlike any other relationship. When God begins to change the way we think **about** him, that transformation manifests in our hearts as friendship **with** him (Rom. 12:1-2). With friendship comes peace, security, honesty, healing, and freedom. There’s absolutely nothing like it!



Rev. Craig Denison

As you live your life in step with the Spirit, you will experience what Adam and Eve experienced as they walked with God himself in the Garden of Eden. You will discover the vast reservoir of love, affection, and perfect joy that’s available to you in the Holy Spirit.

### - PATHWAYS TO FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

- **Psalms 25:14...** *Fear of the Lord opens the door to friendship with him. The door to friendship opens not because we’re afraid of God, but we long for a covenant connection with his heart.*

The LORD is a **friend** to those who fear him. He teaches them his covenant. (Psa. 25:14 NLT-SE)

The **friendship** of the LORD is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant. (Psa. 25:14 ESV)

- **John 15:15...** *The open door to friendship with God is one he initiates. He calls us friends because of his desire for the same intimate communication with us that exists in the Godhead (Father, Son and Spirit).*

I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn’t confide in his slaves. Now **you are my friends**, since I have told you everything the Father told me. (John 15:15 NLT-SE)

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, **I have called you friends**, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15 NIV)

I have never called you 'servants,' I because a master doesn't confide in his servants, and servants don't always understand what the master is doing. But **I call you my most intimate friends**, for I reveal to you everything that I've heard from my Father. (John 15:15 TPT)

- **True friendship looks like...**

- **True friends have your back...** Someone who is a true friend stands up for you. When others try to hurt you, they will step in and make sure you're safe. If they can help you, they will without hesitation or reward.
- **They are honest with you...** Especially when it matters most. Any true friendship requires some level of vulnerability. When a friend opens up to you and shares their struggles and disappointments, it shows the trust and value they place in you. They are willing to have difficult conversations with you, telling you things you may not be eager to hear, yet they do it with love and grace. They don't tear you down, but **a true friend will hold you to a standard they know your character is worthy of.**
- **They accept you for you...** True friends don't give you the feeling that they are comparing you to others. They encourage you to be a better version of you, while at the same time help you to see the beauty of who you are right now. Although a true friend may encourage you to make good decisions, they trust your judgment and respect your choices. They respect your boundaries and value your feelings and thoughts.
- **They want what's best for you...** A true friend doesn't just tell you what you want to hear, but points you toward the goal you are personally aiming for. They are not complacent when it comes to your personal growth and don't passively sit by and watch you make choices that are not good for you. They've learn the art of being your biggest cheerleader, while holding you accountable to your goals as well.
- **True friends don't abandon you...** A real friend won't just stick around when things are easy, but will remain faithful when life gets hard. They stick with you through traumas, disappointments, spiritual health crises, and physical illnesses. A friend isn't around simply for the things they can get out of relationship with you, they are around for you! So when your life gets more challenging and you find yourself feeling pretty down or overwhelmed, you are not stuck going through trials alone when you have a true friend in your corner.
- **John 14:16-17...** *Friendship with God is a promise the LORD made to the patriarchs of the Old Testament and fulfilled in Jesus when he sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of believers.*

<sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another **Advocate**, who will never leave you. <sup>17</sup> He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. (John 14:16-17 NLT-SE)

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<sup>16</sup> I will talk to the Father, and he'll provide you another **Friend** so that you will always have someone with you. <sup>17</sup> This Friend is the Spirit of Truth. The godless world can't take him in because it doesn't have eyes to see him, doesn't know what to look for. But you know him already because he has been staying with you, and will even be in you! (John 14:16-17 MESSAGE)

- **The Holy Spirit really doesn't want credit for anything! What he does want is permission to pursue everything!** He wants to accomplish everything that is in the heart of the Father. The Spirit accomplishes this completely through our relationship with Jesus, the Son. Anything Jesus says is the voice of the Holy Spirit, anything Jesus does is a result of the power of the Holy Spirit, and anything Jesus promises is a plan of the Holy

Spirit. When God said, “**I will never leave you or forsake you,**” he was talking specifically about our ongoing relationship with the Holy Spirit until the return of Jesus.

- (Moses) Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. **He will not leave you or forsake you.**” (Deut. 31:6 ESV)
- (Joshua) <sup>5</sup> Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. **I will not leave you or forsake you.** <sup>6</sup> Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. (Josh. 1:5–6 ESV)
- (David) <sup>8</sup> You have said, “Seek my face.” My heart says to you, “Your face, LORD, do I seek.” <sup>9</sup> Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. **Cast me not off; forsake me not,** O God of my salvation! (Psa. 27:8–9 ESV)
- (Solomon) <sup>57</sup> The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers. **May he not leave us or forsake us,** <sup>58</sup> that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his rules, which he commanded our fathers. (1 Kings 8:57–58 ESV)
- **Parakletos...** The “friendship” that Jesus is describing is ALL made possible because the Holy Spirit dwells in believers. The Spirit enables, and sustains our relationship with Jesus. When Jesus sent another Helper (Comforter, Counselor, Advocate, Savior & Friend), He opens the door for us to “remain or abide” in him (John 15:5.) Evidence of the complexity of the word, **parakletos**, is found in the variety words scholars choose to define it.
  - Comforter (KJV, YLT)
  - Friend (MESS)
  - Helper (NASB, NKJV)
  - Counselor (NIV, DAR, WEB)
  - Advocate (NLT)
  - Savior (TPT)
- **Ephesians 4:30...** *If friendship with God is accessed through the Holy Spirit, rejecting, damaging or ignoring that friendship will impact the heart of God. In true friendship, emotions go both ways...The Holy Spirit will not only share in what you're going through, but you may actually share in what he is sensing from man as well.*

And do not **bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit** by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. (Eph. 4:30 NLT-SE)

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The Holy Spirit of God has sealed you in Jesus Christ until you experience your full salvation. So never **grieve the Spirit of God** or take for granted his holy influence in your life. (Eph. 4:30 TPT)

### **- THE OFTEN “BLURRY BOUNDARIES” OF FRIENDSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

- **The Father wants a family...** Jesus is more than willing to open the door for that to happen. The Holy Spirit has the power to accomplish all this, yet wants no credit or attention for himself. Jesus is overjoyed to be the relational connection between man and God, but can't do it without the Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart of man. The Spirit doesn't just want to dwell in the hearts of man, but wants a relationship with that person that will change his heart for the good. With every stage of spiritual growth a believer experiences by the power of the Spirit, his relationship

with Jesus goes deeper. There is a heavenly wedding on tap and the Father is working through the Holy Spirit to prepare a bride for his Son, as well as an eternal kingdom for them to dwell in...*whew!*

- <sup>5</sup> “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. **For apart from me you can do nothing.** <sup>6</sup> Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. <sup>7</sup> But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! <sup>8</sup> When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. <sup>9</sup> I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you these things so that you will be **filled with my joy.** Yes, your joy will overflow! <sup>12</sup> This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. <sup>14</sup> **You are my friends if you do what I command.** <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn’t confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. (John 15:5–15 NLT-SE)
- **Here’s one way to look at it...** “Exulting in Christ, focusing on Christ, speaking much and singing often of Christ are not evidence of the Spirit’s dismissal but of the Spirit’s work. If the symbol of the church is the cross and not the dove, that’s because the Spirit would have it that way.”
- **Our friendship with the Holy Spirit is rooted in love, not performance.** The manifestation of our friendship with the Holy Spirit is often revealed when we go through tough times.
  - <sup>14</sup> When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, <sup>15</sup> the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. <sup>16</sup> I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength **through his Spirit.** <sup>17</sup> **Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong.** (Eph. 3:14–17 NLT-SE)

## - WHAT DOES FRIENDSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT LOOK LIKE?

“Friendship with the Holy Spirit starts like any other true friendship. We must respect, love, and make time for him. We must learn what he likes and dislikes. And we must apologize when we do something that hurts him. The Holy Spirit has feelings like any other person. But he is also full of grace, forgiveness, and unconditional love. Friendship with him comes about by following his leadership, making time to ask him how he feels about things, and following his guidance away from a lifestyle of sin into the righteousness available to you through Christ Jesus.” ~ Craig Denison, *Friendship with the Holy Spirit*

- **Time.** Value, availability, access, priority
- **Honesty.** Vulnerability, humility, tender-hearted, boldness
- **Trust.** Dependence, hope, confidence, expectation, faith
- **Wonder.** Not having to have all the answers, discovery, surprise, delight