

## **How to Become the Friend of God Romans 4**

### **Introduction:**

1. John 15:13 states, “*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*” If this is true, then all of us have a mighty good friend this morning, and that friend is Jesus Christ. Read Romans 5:6-8.
2. “What a friend we have in Jesus!” Jesus died on the cross for our sins so we could be forgiven and gain eternal life.
3. But we all know that a friendship can’t be one-sided. How do we return that friendship to God? How do we become the friend of God?
4. There is one man in the Bible who is said to be the friend of God. His name is Abraham (Isaiah 41:8; 2 Chronicles 20:7; James 2:23). Three different times he is said to be the friend of God.
5. How did Abraham become the friend of God? Let’s turn in our Bibles to Romans 4. This entire chapter is about Abraham, and will provide us the answer.
6. The same way Abraham became the friend of God, every person in here can become the friend of God.

### **First, notice that Abraham did not become the friend of God because of good works that he did.**

1. Read verses 2-6. These verses make it very clear that Abraham wasn’t justified, or made right with God, or made the friend of God because of some good work that he did.
2. Did you know that this is true of all of us? Nobody becomes the friend of God by being a “do-gooder.” Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5
3. Have you ever done something really good, and then kind of got real puffed up about it? You built something and couldn’t wait to show it off to somebody? Or you did something really successful and couldn’t wait to tell somebody?
4. Did you know there won’t be any of that in heaven? Nobody will be bragging about what they did to get there because God has set it up so that we don’t become His friend and go to heaven because of our good works.

### **Second, notice that Abraham did not become the friend of God because of an outward religious ceremony.**

1. After God made His covenant with Abraham, that from him would come nations and kings, and that God would give him all the land of Canaan, look at what God said in Genesis 17:10-12.
2. While this holds no significance one way or the other for us today, it was very significant in Abraham’s day. It was a huge religious ceremony with the baby and the parents on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the baby’s life.
3. But here in Romans 4, it is made very clear that Abraham did not become the friend of God because of some religious ceremony (vs. 9-10). He was declared righteous and made acceptable to God way before he ever partook in this religious ceremony.

4. A close example to this today would be the ceremony of baptism. Many people go through a religious ceremony and they are baptized as a baby. But the Bible is clear. We don't become the friend of God that way. There is no religious ceremony that can make you righteous and acceptable before God.

**Third, notice that Abraham did not become the friend of God because of keeping a law.**

1. Let's read verses 13-15. Many years after Abraham, God gave to Abraham's descendants the law, including the Ten Commandments. But the total law was 613 different commandments.
2. So Abraham didn't become the friend of God by keeping the Ten Commandments or keeping the law. It hadn't even been given yet when Abraham was alive.
3. Some people mistakenly believe that they can go to heaven and become acceptable before God by keeping the Ten Commandments, or by keeping a list of rules, or by striving to keep the Golden Rule.
4. We see clearly that Abraham didn't become the friend of God by keeping a law, or a commandment, or a rule.
5. So if Abraham didn't become the friend of God by any of these methods, how did he become the friend of God?

**Abraham became the friend of God by simple faith alone.**

1. God made Abraham a promise. He promised him that he would have a son, and that a great nation and mighty kings would come from his loins, and that his seed would one day be a blessing to all the nations of the earth.
2. How did Abraham respond? Look at verse 3. Abraham believed God's promise. He was declared righteous. He was made the friend of God by one word – faith! Look at the rest of this chapter, and you will see this recurring theme. vs. 5, 9, 13, 16
3. Verses 19-22 tie it all up and make it so clear that you cannot possibly miss it.
4. You may say, "Okay, I see it. Abraham became the friend of God and was made right before God by faith alone, but how does that affect me? Abraham lived a long time ago.
5. God is going to show us how it applies to our lives in the next couple of verses (vs. 23-25). Jesus died for our sins, and three days later He rose again so that we could be justified, or made right with God.
6. But how do you appropriate this in your life? How do we become the friend of God? The same way Abraham did. By faith alone! vs. 24
7. Abraham was declared righteous and acceptable before God the moment he believed God's promise to him. God has made us a promise also - the promise of eternal life through what Jesus has done for us. Titus 1:2; 1 John 2:25; 1 John 5:11-13; Romans 6:23b
8. God has done it all. The only thing left for us to do is to believe (vs. 24). The moment we believe on Christ, all of our sins are forgiven and we become the friend of God. vs. 7
9. Would you like to become the friend of God today?