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THE SURE WORD

By Jonnie Hutchison

WHOSE FRIEND ARE YOU?

Friendship is a powerful privilege for all of us. Genuine friends are the source of many blessings. Friends give us encouragement, help in times of need and provide companionship often when we need it the most.

Of course, the greatest and most meaningful of friendships is that which may be obtained with Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:13-14). According to our Lord's own statement, friendship with Him is dependent upon our doing what He has commanded us. This is how one expresses friendship with our Savior. To claim friendship with Jesus while failing to obey His divine will is the height of hypocrisy. Again, Jesus asked, "Why call me Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Genuine friendship with Jesus Christ is only attained and maintained by those who are submissive to His will revealed in the New Testament.

One can either be a friend of Jesus or the friend of the world, but not of both. Jesus declared, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30). The Bible says that "friendship with the world is enmity with God" (James 4:4). The "world" refers to all sin and unrighteousness including anything that we put before God (Matthew 6:33). After telling us to "love not the world neither the things in the world" the Bible defines "the world" as "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" and affirms that these things are not of the Father but of the world (1 John 2:15-16). Before one can be the friend of Jesus he/she must give up being the friend of the world (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).

Whose friend are you? Can you honestly say that Jesus Christ is your friend? Or, do you engage in those things of the world which are contrary to the Lord's commands? Jesus wants to be your friend! He shed His precious blood on the cross so that any willing person can be His friend. His desire is to save **YOU** from the eternal consequences of sin which is eternal separation from God in the punishment of hell (Matthew 25:44-46; 2 Thess. 1:7-9). He wants all of us to be His friends in eternity! Remember Jesus says to you, "you are my friends if you do whatever I have commanded you."

Where do we go when we die? Write for a free DVD which gives the Bible answer to this question or view it online at <http://video.wvbs.org/video/where-do-we-go-when-we-die/>. Please come and visit us at the Green Plain church of Christ at the corner of Green Plain and Murray Paris Roads in Hazel. Sunday Bible classes at 10 am, Worship at 10:45 am and 6 pm. A warm welcome awaits you.