



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## Are We Friends of the World or Friends of God?

- by Lynn Headrick

"Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God," (James 4:4).

### ***What Does it Mean to be a Friend of the World? (James 4:4)***

I once asked a group of teenagers to write down what they thought it meant to be a friend of the world. I was surprised and gratified that they knew what this meant. A composite of their answers is as follows:

1. Hide the fact that you are a Christian. Let people believe that you are not a Christian. Remember Peter (Matt. 26:69-74).
2. Go along with your friends that do evil (Exodus 23:2; I Cor. 15:33).
3. Cursing, Drinking alcoholic beverages, smoking (Ephesians 4:29; Proverbs 23; I Cor. 6:19-20).
4. Listening to dirty jokes; going to sinful movies (Phil. 4:8).
5. Wearing immodest clothing (I Tim. 2:9).
6. Putting things before the church (eg. Ball games, Matt. 6:33).
7. Finding something to do on Sunday besides worship (Heb. 10:24,25; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2)
8. Conforming to the world (Rom. 12:1,2; I John 2:15; Jam. 4:4)
9. Slowly begin accepting what the world does as if it were all right (Heb. 2:1).

### ***What Does it Mean to be a Friend of God, as was Abraham? (James 2:23)***

1. **Believe God.** Abraham did so (James 2:23). We like to have friends whom we can trust. It is impossible for God to lie and Abraham knew it. Therefore, he put his trust in God and did what He said, regardless of what God asked him to do. God called him His friend.
2. **Obey God.** "By faith, Abraham, when he was called, obeyed" (Heb 11:8). It is impossible to be a friend of God without obeying what he says. Have you repented and been baptized for the remission of sins? If not, do you think you can be a friend of God?
3. **Worship God.** Over and over, it is said in Genesis 12-15 that he "builded an altar unto Jehovah." What a privilege it is to worship Jehovah! Abraham did so and he was called the friend of God.
4. **Be assured that God can fulfill His promises.** Abraham was fully assured that what God had promised, he was able also to perform (Rom. 4:21). Just as God fulfilled the promise of a son to Abraham, so God has promised eternal life to all who obey Him. God is able!

Conclusion: Choose to be a friend of God and not a friend of the world!

## Grief Can Bring Us Closer to God

By Jamey Hinds

*"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or grieving or crying or pain, for the former things have passed away"* (Revelation 21:4).

Grief can be devastating. There is grief that is so overwhelming and forceful that we feel we can't go on in life. I think sometimes Christians believe and act as if grieving is not like Christ. Yet, one of

the most powerful passages about Jesus is John 11:33–35: “When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jew who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ‘Where have you laid him?’ he asked. ‘Come and see, Lord,’ they replied. Jesus wept.”

Why did Jesus weep? His friend Lazarus had died.

We’re not told what Lazarus was suffering from that caused him to fall asleep<sup>1</sup>, just that he was sick (vv. 1, 3–4). The Greek word used here doesn’t provide any better insight as the word *astheneia* simply means weakness, frailty, sickness.

Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” (John 11:38–44)

<sup>1</sup> This term is used by the Lord in reference to someone who has died (John 11:11–12). The apostle Paul uses the phrase in the same way (1 Corinthians 15:6, 18, 20; 1 Thessalonians 4:14–15). Matthew also uses the phrase once in 27:52. The divine implication is that those who have fallen asleep will be awakened (John 5:25–29).

### **When Grieving: Pray**

“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray” (James 5:13). The word suffering is from a Greek word that means suffering hardship (2 Timothy 2:9; 4:5), not suffering sickness. Grief definitely can be a hardship. And so, we pray to God for comfort. There’s a benefit, as the apostle Paul wrote about it in 2 Corinthians 1:3–4: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

Some people turn their backs on God, maybe feeling that He’s turned His back on them. But where else can we really go? To whom can we cry and it have any eternal effect? God is the only reasonable answer to the tragedies of life—without Him as an explanation and a help, nothing really makes any sense. In other words, if God is not there to help us in dealing with the pain of grief, if He’s unable to assist us, then we are hopelessly lost. “If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied” (1 Corinthians 15:19).

### **When Grieving: Worship**

Psalm 51 was written by King David after the child he and Bathsheba had conceived in adultery died. The direction of the psalm is toward God in a clearly worshipful disposition as David is humbled by his sin against God and God alone; David seeks mercy, through forgiveness, and God’s eternal grace. Toward the closing of the psalm David writes: “O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. ... The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise (vv. 15, 17).

Our best worship—our most heartfelt and sincere worship—probably comes when we’re in the depths of despair, when we are desperate for help that we can’t find from anyone else; yremendously frustrated by the tragedy of life’s pain. Worship helps us put everything into an eternal focus:

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:26–28)

“For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 7:17).