

HOW CAN A HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS GOD HAVE A FRIEND LIKE ME? (14)

To answer this question bluntly, "It is not easy!" When we come to understand the true nature of God, we will really appreciate what it means for a sinner like me to be able to have fellowship with God. We learned in our last lesson that even though men and women were terrible rebels, God still loved them even while they were enemies. "God is love", the Bible says (see 1 John 4:16). However, even though he loves us, he is also a "HOLY" God. He is a righteous and pure God, a God of light, and in him and around him no darkness can exist at all (1 John 1:5). That is BAD news for us! Listen to the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 59:1-2

Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. (2) BUT your iniquities have SEPARATED YOU FROM YOUR GOD; YOUR SINS HAVE HIDDEN HIS FACE FROM YOU, SO THAT HE WILL NOT HEAR.

MAN // sin // GOD. Sin separates man from God!

Deuteronomy 32:4-6

"God is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. We have acted corruptly toward him; to our shame we are no longer his children, but a warped and crooked generation. Is this the way we repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?"

God has such wonderful plans for us, BUT our sins get in the way. Our sins separate us from God because he is pure and can have no sin in his presence. One prophet says of God:

Habakkuk 1:13

God's "eyes are too pure to look on evil; HE CANNOT TOLERATE WRONG."

We talked in a previous lesson about God's opinion of us. How he placed us in such a high position and made us in his image. But look what happened:

Romans 3:23

"For all have sinned and fall short of the GLORY of God."

Others cry out, "Who can stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God (1 Samuel 6:20)?

"Our God is a consuming fire, a jealous God" (Hebrews 12:29; Deuteronomy 4:24). Yes, he is a God of love, but he is also a God of wrath and anger! God is faithful and he plans only good for us, but to our shame we have acted corruptly and our sins do not allow us to come close to Him. God's wrath and anger and punishment of sin are a natural expression of his Divine nature. That is, he is absolutely Holy. So, therefore, no darkness, no impurity, no imperfection, can stand before him.

After describing the details of the sins of the nation of Israel, Isaiah said:

Isaiah 5:24-25

"Therefore, as tongues of fire lick up straw and as dry grass sinks down in the flames, so their roots will decay and their flowers blow away like dust; for they have rejected the law of the LORD

Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel. (25)Therefore the LORD'S ANGER BURNS AGAINST HIS PEOPLE; HIS HAND IS RAISED AND HE STRIKES THEM DOWN. The mountains shake, and the dead bodies are like refuse in the streets. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.

God's wrath is closely tied with his love for us. His people are like his bride to whom he has totally given himself. Therefore, when his bride turns and loves sin and worldliness, God is like a jealous husband. God's jealous love over us will not allow us to escape unpunished when we sin. The terrible WRATH and ANGER of God because of our sin are in proportion to the greatness of his LOVE and MERCY already shown to us by him.

As human sinners, we are helpless now. All we can do is throw ourselves before the God we have offended and beg for mercy?

Psalms 6:1-4

O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath. (2) Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am faint; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are in agony. (3) My soul is in anguish. How long, O LORD, how long? (4) Turn, O LORD, and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love.

In our next lesson we will see how God's unfailing love and righteous punishment were both able to be exercised or fulfilled. Our plea for renewed fellowship with an angry God can be answered only through Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS:

1. God loves us, even while we are enemies, BUT our _____ separate us from God.
2. God hides his _____ from those who will not hear and obey him.
3. All have sinned and come short of the _____ of God.
4. God is a jealous God because he _____ us so much.