

## WHY I AM NOT A BASKETBALL FAN

Genesis 18 - 12<sup>th</sup> in a Series on Abraham

What we think has a huge impact on who we are and what we do. You all know that I am a lover of sports, to a fault. But I don't love all things sports. Oddly, I really don't care for basketball. Not that you care, but I am going to tell you why this is so. Near the end of my junior high school days a coach at the high school I would attend had a basketball clinic. It ran for a number of weeks on Saturday mornings. Basketball had never been a big thing with me. I had played a little of it at school during lunch hour and at a neighbor's house. But for the most part I concentrated my efforts on football and baseball. Nevertheless, somehow I got it in my head that I might like to play basketball in high school. This was probably because my mean parents had already unreasonably ruled out football for me. So I decided it would be basketball and baseball.

I dutifully went to the clinic and never missed a session. I worked hard to develop the skills of basketball. I thought I did pretty well and so when high school rolled around I figured I was ready to go out for the team. Back then in Bakersfield where I grew up they had a lot of basketball teams for high school. There was the varsity and JV, but there were also two teams called the C team and D team. So a guy could conceivably play on a different team each of his four years in high school, culminating on the varsity. Of course, good players would move up the ladder much more quickly than that. I felt pretty confident that I would at least make the D team. After all, the best freshmen would be either on the C team or the JV, leaving spots open on the D team for me. Since the basketball season started in late November tryouts were in early October. There were a couple of weeks where we practiced every day before the first cuts came. When cut day came I was shocked to learn that I had been cut. I did not make the team. Not even the D team! Apparently they had no room on their team for a short, skinny kid who didn't have any basketball ability whatsoever. I had thought I was doing pretty well, but being cut disabused me of that illusion. I now knew the truth. I wasn't any good at all.

That experience changed how I saw myself and my basketball abilities. Well, Michael Jordan was cut from his high school team and he just worked harder. I'll just respond to that comment by saying that when it comes to athletic ability you shouldn't use the words "Michael Jordan" and "Rick Myatt" in the same sentence. Changing the way I thought had tangible results in my life. To put it in a nutshell, I gave up on basketball. In later years I would play on some recreational basketball teams but basketball no longer held interest for me. To this day I am not a fan of basketball. It's kind of ironic that while I love football, baseball and hockey, and watch them all on television even

though I was never any good at them either, I basically pay no attention to basketball whatsoever. I trace it back to that incident when I was a freshman in high school. I changed the way I thought about basketball and that has had an impact on how I live to this day.

We all know that how we think impacts how we act. There is one aspect of how we think that is critically important. That one aspect is how we think about God. The late A. W. Tozer wrote in his book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is ***the most important thing about us.***” Who we think God is and what he is like will have profound impact on the kind of people we are. It has huge impact on how we think, on our world view, on who we think we are and how we see ourselves, on our morality and our ethics, on what we believe is important, on what we live for, on how we treat people and whether we have peace and confidence in life. Tozer went on to write, “If we would bring back spiritual power to our lives we must begin to think of God more nearly as he is.”

So I am going to begin today with the premise that it is crucial that we think clearly about God and that we know his character as it really is. But how do we know about God’s character? He has revealed what he is like in the person of Jesus Christ and in his truth communicated to us in the Bible. Therefore, to help us with knowing who God is we’re going to look at a couple of incidents out of Genesis 18. There are many lessons we can take from this chapter but what is most important is what we can learn about the character of God. There are three questions that are asked in this chapter and their answers point us to three key ideas about who God is. Let’s look at Genesis 18.

## GOD VISITED ABRAHAM

Consider what happened in the first half of this chapter through Abraham’s eyes. One day he was sitting in front of his tent minding his own business when three men came along. The arrival of three strangers was an unusual and noteworthy event back in that day. People didn’t travel as much as they do today. Abraham lived out in a sparsely populated region so having three strangers come by was a big deal.

At first Abraham had no idea who these men were, but in his culture hospitality was paramount. So he prevails upon the men to stay at his camp and he rushes around marshaling his forces, including his wife Sarah, to prepare a meal for them. What Abraham did not know, at least at first, was that one of these men was the Lord himself appearing in human form. He was accompanied by two angels. We don’t know for sure when Abraham realized that these were no ordinary travelers. My suspicion is that happened in verse 9 when they asked him, “Where is your wife Sarah?”

How did they know he had a wife? How did they know his wife's name was Sarah? Right then Abraham probably had a clue, if he hadn't before, that there was something really special about these men. They knew things about him that there was no way for them to know. All doubt is removed in verse 10. The Lord tells him that he would return a year later and, that when he did, Abraham and Sarah would have a son.

There are people who think everything having to do with God is deadly serious. After all, God is holy and majestic and awesome. But one of the things I see about God from this little story is that he also has a sense of humor. Our humor is wildly different from that of an ancient Semitic culture. However, this story is obviously intended to be funny. One of the key elements of humor is surprise. This story is all about surprise. Who expects God to show up at his tent on a hot afternoon? No one. And it's pretty funny to imagine Abraham scurrying around to get a meal ready for his visitors with no idea that who he's entertaining is actually the Almighty God, the creator of the universe.

There is more surprise with the news about the impending pregnancy and birth of Isaac. When the Lord announces this news Sarah's reaction was to laugh. I suspect it was the bitter kind of laugh we give with a, "Yeah, right" response. Who could believe that? A year later Abraham would be 100 years old and Sarah would be 90. That's not exactly prime childbearing years. To put it bluntly, it was impossible for them to have a child at that point in their lives. There was no hope.

Once again we see humor when in verse 13 the Lord said, "Why did Sarah laugh?" Sarah's response was, "I didn't laugh." Liar, liar pants on fire. She did, too. And that's exactly what God said. "Yes, you did laugh." Back in chapter 17:19, God had told Abraham that he was to name this promised son "Isaac." The name "Isaac" means laughter. Do you know what this means? It means God likes puns. God's promise of a son produced laughter from both Abraham and Sarah. That's where the pun comes in, because his promise of a son produced laughter, in the form of a boy named laughter. Get it? God said his promise would produce laughter. It produced a laughter from the couple, and a boy named "Laughter."

There is a question asked in verse 13 that is the key message in this little story. Is anything too hard for the Lord? The implied answer is no, nothing is too hard for God, not even giving a child to a couple when it was physically impossible for that to happen. So there's the first thing we can learn about the character of God. He is powerful. He is so powerful that nothing is too hard for him.

**GOD NEGOTIATED WITH ABRAHAM**

The humor continues in the second half of the chapter. Dinner is over and the party is breaking up. The three visitors get up to leave. Abraham walks a ways with them talking to the Lord. In verses 20-21 the Lord informs Abraham that they are on their way to visit Sodom and Gomorrah and they are going with serious intentions. The evil going on there must be stopped. Abraham understands the implication that they are on their way to bring judgment to those cities.

This news causes great concern for Abraham because his nephew, Lot, whom he loves, is living in Sodom. If the city is destroyed by the Lord then Lot is about to have a very bad day. Abraham was concerned for his nephew so he decided he would do everything he could to avert the impending disaster. He decided he would negotiate with God to talk him out of destroying the city of Sodom. Essentially he said, “Hey, God, what if there are 50 righteous people living there? When you destroy the city you’ll destroy them too. That doesn’t seem right, does it?” God agreed that it wouldn’t be right, so if there were 50 he would back off.

This is where the humor sets in. Abraham starts bargaining him down. How about 40? What would you say to 30? The subject of this negotiation is as serious as a cancer ward, but the process was intended to bring a smile to your face. Isn’t this kind of funny? Twenty years ago we initially planned to take a vacation trip in the summer. We had a couple of expensive breakdowns at home that wiped out our vacation fund. We hated to disappoint our kids, but we had no choice. We just didn’t have the money for the trip. They moved on to the next best thing in their minds. If we can’t go on a trip can we get a dog? We already had a rabbit as a pet but they wanted to go to the next level and get a dog. I had really wanted to avoid that but Laurie and I decided that, having disappointed them about the vacation, maybe it was time for a dog. So we decided to go to the shelter and adopt a dog. We found one everybody loved. His name was less than creative, it was Poochie, and he was a mix of Husky and American Eskimo. We were shocked when the shelter denied our request to adopt the dog. They explained that we were unfit to take care of the dog. Right, we can raise two human beings but not a dog. Unfortunately for us, the kids now had a serious case of dog fever and they knew what kind of dog they wanted. After becoming acquainted with Poochie they had gone home and done the research and had come to the conclusion that they absolutely had to have an American Eskimo dog. One problem, they are expensive. I didn’t want a dog in the first place and the last thing I wanted to do was shell out a bunch of money to buy an expensive dog.

Toby, however, was not to be denied. The negotiating began. Dad how much would you be willing to pay for a dog? Zero dollars. Well, how about if it was only \$300? Absolutely not. But he kept at it. Finally, he got me to agree that if he could find an

American Eskimo puppy for a certain absurdly low price I would be willing to buy it. I only agreed because I knew that there was no way on God's green earth that he would ever find an American Eskimo puppy at anywhere close to that price. Even back then there was an optimistic streak in Toby that was miles wide. He began combing the newspapers and the Pennysavers and every source he could think of looking for American Eskimo puppies for sale at the price he wanted (this was pre-Internet). Of course, he got nowhere. Even that didn't stop him. He called some people who had Eskimo puppies for sale and he began negotiating with them. The nice lady told Toby she would think about it and call him back if she decided to sell him the dog for the price he was offering. I knew that was her kind way of saying "no." So I felt very comfortable knowing I was not going to have to buy a dog. A week later Toby, still not giving up, called the woman again to ask if she had decided whether she was willing to sell the dog at that ridiculously low price. I will never forget that day. Toby came running into the room to get me to take the phone because the woman had agreed to his price. She had told him that she could see that he really wanted a dog and that she suspected he would take very good care of the dog. So she decided she wanted him to have the puppy. I was stuck. What could I do? I had given my word so I had no choice. Much to my chagrin I had to buy the dog. The woman was right in one way and wrong in another. She was right that Toby really wanted that dog. She was wrong that he would take care of the dog. Laurie took care of that dog, whom we named Luke, for the next 16 years. We had the dog long after the kids left home.

Every time I read this story about Abraham negotiating with God I remember my negotiation with Toby. It was amazing to see that 10-year-old boy negotiate down with two adults to get what he wanted. This story is even more amazing. A fallen, finite, tiny human being negotiates with eternal Almighty God in order to protect his nephew.

Do you suppose that God had never thought about what he would do if there were righteous people in Sodom? Do you think he really wasn't aware of how many righteous people lived in that city? Do you think he had to reconsider his plans after negotiating with Abraham? Do you see him standing there with Abraham saying, "Hmmm, you bring up some really good points, Abraham. I hadn't thought of that." God knew what he was going to do. He knew who lived in Sodom and what they were like. He did not have to change his mind or his plan after his little talk with Abraham.

As I said, this story is intended to bring a smile to our faces. I don't know about you but I find it pretty funny. However, the main point is not to get a laugh or to help us see our great God has a pretty good sense of humor. There are some crucial aspects of God's character revealed in the story. Once again we can see these characteristics demonstrated by some questions that are asked in this passage. The first question is one

in verse 17 that God asks himself: “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?” His answer obviously, though it is not verbalized, is “no.” He says in verse 19 that he has chosen Abraham, so he decided he should not hide from him what he is planning.

What can we take from that? Clearly, we cannot surmise that God always reveals his plans to his people. We know for a fact that that is not the case. He sometimes gives glimpses of what he is going to do but even that is rare. However, what this suggests to us is that God is relational. This whole conversation is not about God trying to figure out what he should do. It’s not about Abraham changing God’s mind. It is about God treating Abraham like someone he cares about and wants to have a relationship with. It’s about God inviting Abraham to talk to him about whatever is on his heart.

There are people who believe that God exists ~~but he is a being way~~ – out there in the universe somewhere. They think he has no interest in us. Others believe that God is more like some sort of force. But this story says that God is a person and that he wants to relate to us. Psalm 144:3 says, “Oh Lord, what is man that you care for him, the son of man that you think of him?” That’s a good question, isn’t it? Why should God care about us as individuals? And yet the Bible says consistently that he does care. It says he wants us to walk with him. That means to be in relationship with him. 2 Corinthians 6:16 says, “As God has said: ‘I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.’”

There is another question that is raised in this section of this chapter that also points out an important characteristic of God. At the end of verse 25, as Abraham is negotiating with the Lord, he says, “Will not the judge of all the earth do right?” In other words, God always does what is fair. He is always just and always does the right thing. Abraham was correct, God would not destroy the few righteous people in Sodom because other people around them were truly awful. That would not be fair to those few righteous people and God would not do that. The message about the character of God is that he is just and he always does what is right.

In Job 34:10 Elihu answers both Job’s accusers and Job himself after Job maintained that God was treating him unfairly by saying, “Listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong.” In verse 12, he said, “It is unthinkable that God would do wrong, that the Almighty would pervert justice.”

In verse 12 the Hebrew word translated “justice” is the same word that is used in Exodus 26:30 where God said to Moses, “Set up the tabernacle according to the plan shown you on the mountain.” The word could also be translated “pattern,” so their God

said that Moses should set up the tabernacle according to the pattern that he had been shown. The pattern is the proper ordering of things. So when Elihu spoke of God's justice he was saying that God always properly orders things. God always does what is right and good.

## IMPLICATIONS

### GOD IS POWERFUL

God is so powerful that nothing is too hard for him. In Jeremiah 32 the forces of Babylon are besieging Jerusalem. The battle is going to end badly for Jerusalem. It is going to be conquered and destroyed. Huge numbers of Jewish people are going to lose their lives. Jeremiah has been preaching to his people that doom was coming for them and that they should not resist. He has been preaching that they are going to go into exile in Babylon and be there for many decades. In other words, bad times are ahead, times far worse than anything we have ever experienced in our lives.

Some Jewish people were lamenting the miserable state of God's people and seeing the inevitable doom ahead and wondering if God had abandoned them. Where was he? Why would he let such things happen to them if he were real and actually cared about them? In that gloomy context, Jeremiah said the word of the Lord came to him and told him that his uncle was going to come and offer to sell him a field. That's not exactly the best deal anyone has ever heard of. Great, buy some land just before the nation is conquered and destroyed and the land you just bought would become worthless. It is a bit of a surprise then to learn that the Lord instructed him to buy the land. In verse 15 we read, "For this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land." In other words, yes, hard times were ahead but there was hope. He was to buy that land as a statement that Israel would continue to exist and would eventually resume doing business there.

Normally, what happened to nations that would be conquered and destroyed as thoroughly as Israel would? Would many of them be sent to live in other parts of the world? They faded from history. But God was saying Israel would continue. God promised that someday things would be good again. Jeremiah was to buy that field as evidence that God would make that happen.

In verse 17 Jeremiah prayed, "Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you." In other words, no matter how bad things get, God is still sovereign and he will bring about his good plan. He would keep his promise that Israel would return.

In Matthew 19:26 Jesus said, “With God all things are possible.” In Ephesians 3:20 Paul wrote, “Now to him was able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.” Whatever you think of, that seems hard or even impossible to you, God is far greater and is able to do immeasurably more than that. There is a question that we all will face at some point in life, and usually at many points in life. Ultimately, the question boils down to: “Can I really trust God? Is he really powerful enough to handle whatever it is that threatens me?”

Note two things in this story. First, God appears initially in a disguised form. Second, remember that decades have passed since God promised a son and now it seems too late. What can we learn from this? First, sometimes God will be hidden from us. We won’t see his power, but that doesn’t mean it is not there. And second, sometimes we will have to wait to see the power of God displayed. But it will be displayed. We may go through periods where we see no evidence of that, just like Abraham and Sarah did, but his power will win out at the right time.

## GOD IS JUST

God’s great unlimited, unimaginable power could be a frightening thing. A nuclear bomb has incredible power. But it is a power that scares us to death and can do inconceivable damage. If God’s power were simply cold, bare power it would be dangerous beyond comprehension. But God’s power is coupled with this great truth: God always does what is right. God is just, and he is fair. He does not wield his power without regard for innocent people. We saw that in this chapter. There is no way that God would wipe out the whole city if there were even a few innocent people living in it.

That is a critically important message. Yes, God is powerful, but his power is always guided by his unvarying commitment to do what is good and right and fair. This is what comforts us in those times when we don’t see his power, when it is hidden from us. Just because we don’t see it working right now does not mean it’s not there. It is there and it is waiting for the right time to be exercised in the right way. That’s what it means when the Scripture tells us that God never does wrong and always does right, when it says that he is always just.

Sarah and Abraham both laughed at the idea that God would, at this late date when it was obviously impossible keep his promise, give them a son. At this point, honestly, Sarah thought God was Lucy in the *Peanuts* cartoon strip. We’ve seen those cartoons where poor Charlie Brown is going to attempt to kick the football. Lucy insists that she will hold the ball for him so that he can kick it. But just as Charlie Brown swings his leg through to impact the ball, Lucy yanks the ball away. Charlie Brown flies in the air



and lands flat on his back. She does it time and time again. In one strip, once again, Lucy is insisting that this time will be different. This time she will not yank the ball away. Charlie Brown believes her and once again runs up to kick the football and once again she yanks the ball away and he ends up flat on his back. Lucy looks at him and says, as he lies on the ground, “Charlie Brown, your faith in human nature is an inspiration to all young people.” Unfortunately, Sarah is absolutely sure that God is just like that. He keeps insisting that he will give them a son, and then he keeps yanking it away. He is not to be trusted, just as Lucy was not to be trusted.

This story reminds us that God is to be trusted. He always does what is right. He did what was right by Abraham and Sarah. He promised over and over that he would give them a son and finally he did. Do you believe that God will do right in your life? Can you keep believing that when the years go by and you don’t see it before your eyes?

Because God is right and just and fair, there is some great reassurance for us in this country. I have heard on a number of occasions and read of Christian leaders who say things like, “If God doesn’t judge America he will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah.” They weep and wail that we in this country are going to experience a terrible judgment because we have become so evil, at least as bad as Sodom and Gomorrah, if not worse. As is always the case, when people choose disobedience to God they will reap the consequences of that. That is as true today in our country as it has always been. But are we really on the verge of a devastating and deadly judgment like that of Sodom and Gomorrah? First, remember that only happened once in history. God judged other nations, but not like that. So, that makes such a thing highly unlikely. But there is more to consider. Let me ask you this: How big was the city of Sodom? I have heard estimates ranging anywhere from 4,000 to 250,000. I believe that it is most likely that its population was on the low end of that range. Let’s use the 4,000 figure. Abraham was able to negotiate a deal with God where, if there were 10 righteous people in that city, God would not destroy it. What percentage is that? Ten out of 4,000 is one quarter of one percent. That’s 0.25%! So, here’s the big question: How many followers of Jesus do you think there are in the United States of America? Some polls say it is as high as 50 or even 70%. I don’t believe that is correct. If we define a true follower of Jesus as one who believes the teachings of the Bible and who acts on them in ways that can be measured, such as actually reading it, praying, being involved in a church, and seeking to actually live by the gospel, the numbers may be as low as the 7 to 9% range. That’s not large, but it is 28 times the number that would’ve been required to save Sodom!

Given that, does it seem likely to you that God is going to destroy this country as he did Sodom? God always does what is right. He does not punish innocent people

because there are guilty people around them. I believe that this nation is at least at this time safe from such an awful judgment, and it is because of you. It is because there are people like you who are committed to following and obeying the Lord Jesus Christ. Does that make you feel any better? It does me.

Let's extend the implication of this a little further. I guarantee ~~you~~ that there are going to be times in your life when you will completely be at a loss to understand why God hasn't acted to help you. It will feel like he has abandoned you. It is crucial at that point to remember this. Far be it from the Lord of all to do what is wrong. God does what is right. He does what is wise and is for your good. Elisabeth Elliott died recently. Have you ever considered her life? Three years into her marriage to Jim Elliott he was killed by the tribe of people he was trying to bring the good news of Jesus to. She had a ten-month-old daughter at the time. Thirteen years later she married for a second time. That marriage lasted four years before her second husband also died. How would you feel about that? It's hard to see the power of God in that. Yet a number of years later she had a radio program. Every day she opened her program with these words, "You are loved with an everlasting love, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

## GOD IS RELATIONAL

Finally, we are reminded in this chapter that God calls us to live in relationship to him. Just as he wanted to have a relationship with Abraham, so he longs to have a relationship with us. In John 15:15 Jesus said, "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." I have called you friends. Jesus wanted his disciples to understand that he wanted to have a friendship with them. He wants us to understand the same thing. James 2:23 calls Abraham a friend of God. Yes, we are God's adopted children, but he also wants us to be his friends.

But how can I be God's friend? I'm not worthy. I'm so inconsistent and I forget about him or ignore him all the time. He must be annoyed at me. Here's a crucial truth: **real intimacy can only occur when no performance is necessary!** 1 John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear." Laurie has had a recent experience that demonstrates that if performance is required in a relationship there will always be distance. There will never be freedom to be open. That is what God has established with us, a relationship where we are totally, unconditionally loved and accepted. We are invited to be his friend and nothing can push him away from us.

Laurie and I recently fulfilled a long time dream. In years past we had been to Hawaii with our then adult children and had a great time with them there. But we always knew

there was a part of that experience for them that, while wonderful, also lacked something. They loved sharing the experience of Hawaii with each other and with their parents, but we knew there was a longing in them to someday share that experience with the person they love more than anyone else in the world, their lifelong spouse. They got to do that on their honeymoons, both of them. But we had this dream of being able to be there with them and their spouses. How fun that would be. Well, a couple of months ago we got to do that. We had some moments there where Laurie and I were able to reflect as we were all together by the pool or by the beach or out to dinner and just say isn't this the best thing ever? It was what we had hoped it would be. It was so joyful for us.

But here's the interesting thing about that. Our kids and their spouses all had a great time on that trip. But they didn't experience quite the same thing that we did. To put it bluntly, it was not their lifelong dream to go to Hawaii with us. It wasn't that they didn't want to be there with us, but that experience meant a lot more to us than it did to them. In fact, I could sum it up this way: In general we think a lot more about them than they do about us, and we want to be with them a whole lot more than they want to be with us. They don't dislike us; they like us. It's just that we are a whole lot more invested in them than they are in us. Has it ever occurred to you that we are in that same situation with our God? Do you realize that he rejoices in being your friend and in being with you way more than you likely enjoy being his friend? That is, in fact, exactly the case. When we gather in his presence like we are today, all of us together, the Father says to the Son, "Isn't this the best thing ever?" He revels in being with us.

Do you think of God as your friend? That's what he wants. He wants you to revel walking with him and talking to him. In fact, in Philippians 4:6 he said he wants you to talk to him about everything in your life. He wants you to walk in his presence and to enjoy his friendship.

When we think of God as he is, it will affect us. God is so powerful that nothing is too hard for him. God always does what is right and good. God wants us to live with him as our friend. What will those truths produce in us? We will live in awe of him and want to praise him. We will love to gather with our brothers and sisters to praise him. We will live in his presence continually. He wants us to be with him. We will want to talk to him about everything. Our first thought when concerned will be to talk to him about it, when something good happens to share it with him. This will cause us to be people who live in peace and confidence. Nothing is too big for our God. We will be people full of gratitude and joy. This morning I saw a spectacular sunrise. The entire sky was ablaze with glowing, brilliant reds, oranges, pinks with patches of blue sky poking through. It was just gorgeous. As I gazed at it I realized that my friend, the

Almighty God, created this. He gave it to us as a gift. I thought, "Thank you Lord for this. What a beautiful gift this is!"

Let's pray:

Father, we thank You for this pretty funny glimpse of you. Just a story that when we read it we laugh. So we thank You that **You have a sense of humor** – You wanted us to see this and laugh and we get that, that's cool...

But we also see the way more important parts of this. God, remind us every moment of our lives that **nothing is too hard for You**, and that when there are things that are certainly well within Your power to accomplish and we don't see them happening and we wonder why, ...

we can remember that **You are always just** and You always do what is right. Help us to remember that, Father, and to remember most of all that ...

You are our Friend, that **You want to be in a relationship with us**, that You don't want us to worry about anything but to pray about everything, just like Abraham did, to be bold in just talking to You about every little concern that we have, because that's what you do with a friend. Help us, Lord, to relate to You and to share our victories and our concerns and our sorrows... all of it. To bring them to You and to know we are never alone. Father, we thank You for being our Friend.