

## ***God's Calling Requirements Part 25***

### ***Friendship with God Part 4***

***“13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” (John 15:13-15 KJV)***

Did the early church observed friendships? Did the apostles recommend friendships inside the church as in the world or they taught the principles of God's Word to build the right relationship inside the body of Christ? The Scriptures is good resource for us to answer these questions and to learn good and practical things to apply in our lives and ministry unto the Lord.

***1. Apostle Paul: “5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epäenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. 6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. 7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. 8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. 9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. 10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. 11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. 12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.” (Romans 16:5-12 KJV)*** Apostle Paul here used “my well-beloved”, “my beloved”, or “the beloved”. in describing his faithful brethren and workers in the Lord. They are beloved because they are beloved to God and beloved to our Lord, Jesus Christ. The Greek word for ‘beloved’, is ‘Agäpetos’, which means esteemed, dear, or worthy of love. So we use the term beloved when the brethren are beloved by God and our Lord Jesus Christ as they are dear, highly esteemed and worthy of love to God and to Christ. Let us review some of those who described by Paul as beloved.

***A. “Salute my wellbeloved Epäenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.” (Romans 16:5 KJV)*** Epäenetus was the first convert in Achaia and his respond to the message of the gospel had helped much the mission of God that Paul was doing, and sure his conversion had brought others to Christ. ***So we should be attracted to the testimony of others who give their lives to the Lord and start to serve Him with us. Such brethren will be our beloved.***

***B. “Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.” (Romans 16:12 KJV)*** Persis worked very hard in the Lord, that is why Paul linked her name with the word beloved. ***Such brethren who work hard in the Lord and to support the ministry will be our beloved.***

The same things you can find in the other writings of Paul, ***“14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.” (Colossians 4:14 KJV)*** Luke was a Gentile disciple, and he was the companion of Paul in preaching the gospel and on his many journeys; he was a physician and the author of the books of Luke and Acts in the New Testament. In one occasion Paul mentioned to Timothy, that in certain period of his life and ministry, the only person who were beside him was Luke, ***“11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:11 KJV)*** ***Beloved are those who stay beside us and support us for the cause of Gospel of Christ as we endeavor to reach the lost. Those who***

***remain with us for the cause of Christ, while the others had left us, they are the beloved of Christ and ours.***

Inside the church and ministry there is no way for worldly friendship and the worldly relationship. Instead there is the Word of God that everyone should conduct himself according to, and to live and to serve in the fear of the Lord. Paul loved and honored his faithful coworkers who were serving the Lord wholeheartedly with him in the ministry and in leading, administering and laboring in the Church of God. ***In the same way, we honor our faithful coworkers who are serving the Lord wholeheartedly with us in the ministry and in leading, administering and laboring in the congregation of the Church of God.***

***“1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,” (Pilemon 1:1 KJV)*** Philemon was a fellowlabourer with Paul in the ministry of the Church of God, that he deserved to be called ***“our dearly beloved.”***

Now a day churches they use the word friends to admire and pamper one another but without observing to whom and for what the Word of God used. Socialization, food gatherings, and friendship inside the church will introduce corruption, favoritism, emotions, and injustice. ***Ministry is not about trip, safaris, journeys or exploration, food or parties, mutual benefits and condoning one another, but instead is laboring and suffering for Christ.***

Good number they use the word friend or friends to describe people who are giving finances to support the ministry, even if they are not showing commitment to God's Word or to His church. Paul never used the word beloved in such context. ***Let the same be for us, that we use the Word beloved to describe those who are laboring for God's church and ministry. Laboring for God's church and ministry is the goal for each and every worker that he or she needs to achieve as beloved to God and to Christ.***

***2. Apostle James: “4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” (James 4:4 KJV)*** James condemned friendship with the world, and he make it clear that if the friendship of the world and its principles would be introduced in the life of the people of God and His church, that would build enmity with God. James used the Word brethren to describe his relationship with the rest of the members of the body of Christ, as you can read here, ***“2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;” (James 1:2 KJV)*** The Greek word for ‘brethren’ is ‘Adelphos’. The meaning of brethren here is being brethren to Jesus, as Paul described Jesus, being the firstfruit, the first who raised from the death among many brothers, ***“29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8:29 KJV)***

***“1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.” (James 2:1 KJV)*** James made it very clear that God has no respect to man, so in this he affirmed that there are no more worldly principles of friendship inside the body of Christ. ***In this way he eliminated favoritism, injustice and corruption inside the members of the Church of God; therefore those who are friends with Jesus they are indeed our brethren.***

3. **Apostle John:** let us read the third letter of John: *“1 The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. 3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. 5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; 6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: 7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth. 9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. 10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. 11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God. 12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true. 13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: 14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.”* (3 John 1:1-14 KJV) What John used is “Beloved” and “friends” in describing his faithful brethren and workers in the Lord, who are walking in the truth, and who aid the brethren who went forth to bring the message of God to the lost.

*“1 The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.”* (3 John 1:1 KJV) Apostle John, the writer of the epistle wrote to *“the well beloved Gaius”*. Gaius lived in some place near to Ephesus, for the apostle in his old age purposed to come and see him shortly, *“13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: 14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee.”* (3 John 1:13-14 KJV)

*“2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”* (3 John 1:2 KJV) Gaius was well beloved of God, having received the grace of God; his soul was saved, walking in the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ, for all the brethren that knew him were aware that he was faithful, and that is why he was well beloved by Apostle John: *“3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”* (3 John 1:3-4 KJV) Apostle John wished him prosperity in state, and good health for his body when he wrote to him, *“that thou mayest prosper and be in health.”* (3 John 1:2 KJV) **In the same way we wish the same prosperity in state, and good body health to our beloved brethren in the Lord who walk faithfully with the Lord and honestly serve Him and the ministries of God.**

*“5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; 6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well.”* (3 John 1:5-6 KJV) Gaius was of good testimony and a good witness being faithful in his doing and service to the brethren and to the strangers. Gaius it seems he had the same measure in dealing with the brethren and the strangers. He was giving charity, service and support to those who were doing the work of God without favoritism and with a pure heart and motive, for Gaius was supporting even the

brethren who were strangers to him that he did not know before, and he was doing that because they were taking their initiative to reach out the Gentiles and bring the gospel to them, *“7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.”* (3 John 1:7-8 KJV) Gaius was supporting those people who were honest in their mission and who went forth to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and who were not receiving any support from the Gentiles. Apostle John was saluting Gaius for his support and his charity to such people who were serving the Lord faithfully. But Apostle John was sad about Diotrephes, who was opposite to Gaius, *“9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.”* (3 John 1:9 KJV) Who was selfish, proud of himself, and refused to receive Apostle John when he refused to receive the brethren who were recommended by the Apostle John to be helped. Further, Diotrephes spoke non correct things about Apostle John, and expel the brethren who obeyed the instruction and received the brethren who were recommended by the Apostle to be received and helped. Therefore Apostle John decided to rebuke him when he will be there: *“10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.”* (3 John 1:10 KJV) Apostle John told Gaius and is telling us today not to follow such bad example, *“11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.”* (3 John 1:11 KJV)

In addition to the good example of the beloved Gaius, Apostle John gave another good example to follow, the example of Demetrius as he said, *“12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.”* (3 John 1:12 KJV) Now we are aware what kind of people we call brethren and beloved, and to whom we need to help and to support.

Apostle John ended his letter in this way: *“Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.”* (3 John 1:14 KJV) the Greek word for ‘friends’ is ‘Philos’. And we had clearly explained that those who are friends with Jesus Christ based on the criteria of the friendship with Him, they are our friends and our beloved as well. There were friends who are friends with Jesus with Apostle John and with Gaius. The same for us that we need to have friends with Jesus with us today.

**My dear and beloved:** Meditate on the message and apply the principles of God’s Word into your life, as you are willing to serve Him in His church, and to do your best to be called a beloved and friend according to the standards of God’s Word.

Learn from the various examples and the Scriptures that are enlisted in the message. Meditate and see how the message can be a practical one in your life. God calls you to be His friend and beloved, therefore you need to be transformed by the renewing of your mind and no more to be confirm to the pattern of this world but to apply the following principles that we learn from the Scriptures in this message and find out who are our true brethren, beloved and friends and find out what you need to do toward them:

1. True friends and beloved have a good testimony who give their lives to the Lord and start to serve Him.
2. True friends and beloved of Jesus are diligent to reach the lost.

3. True friends and beloved are our brethren who work hard in the Lord to support the ministries of God.
4. True friends and beloved are those who stay beside us and support us for the cause of Gospel of Christ as we endeavor to reach the lost. Those who remain with us for the cause of Christ, while the others had left us, they are the true friends and the beloved of Christ and ours.
5. True friends and beloved of Jesus are humble people and they are not after position, recognition or prestige, but they have discernment to help and serve those who move to serve the Lord.
6. True friends and beloved of Jesus would not act based on relationship, based on emotion, or based on benefit, favoritism, injustice or corruption, but they would act based on the principles of God's Word and conduct themselves according to, and live and serve in the fear of the Lord.
7. True friends and beloved of Jesus are our faithful coworkers who are serving the Lord wholeheartedly with us in the ministry and in leading, administering and laboring in the congregations of the Church of God. Ministry is not about trips, safaris, journeys or exploration, food or parties, mutual benefits and condoning one another, instead is laboring and suffering for Christ.
8. Laboring for God's church and ministry is the goal for each and every worker that he or she needs to achieve as beloved and friend to God and to Christ.
9. True friends and beloved of God are true people who stand beside you as you stand for God and serve Him in reaching the lost.
10. True friends and beloved of Jesus will not give trouble to the Lord nor add a further burden to the brethren, who are Christ's beloved and friends.
11. We wish prosperity in state, and good body health to our beloved brethren in the Lord who walk faithfully with the Lord and honestly serve Him and the ministries of God.
12. We give charity, service, help and support to those who are doing the work of God without favoritism, who are honest, having a pure heart and pure motive, and we treat them and consider them our friends and beloved.

*Let us pray ....*

***My Prayer:***

*Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the death to give me eternal life.*

*Let us repent and renounce our sins. Confess your sins now to the Lord. Lord I repent of the following sins \_\_\_\_\_*

*Renounce the sin of being selfish,  
the sin of seeking your own benefits,  
the sin of being boastful,  
the sin of not helping and supporting the true friends and the beloved who do the work and the service of God,  
the sin of having friends who are not friends of Jesus,  
the sin of following your emotions and taking decision based on your feelings,  
the sin of non willingness to reach the lost,  
the sin of wrong motive,  
the sin of speaking bad against those who do the work of God.*

*Lord thank you for your clear Word to me. Lord I am coming back to you and I want to be renewed by Your Word and to live my life according to your will in holiness and purity. Cleanse me Lord, and build me according to your Word and your will. Lord I pray that you will provide all my needs.*

*Lord I pray for my brothers and Sisters who commit themselves to live and to do your Word in this message, Lord give them more faith and trust in you. Lord Jesus give them more fruit of the Holy Spirit to be similar to you in character and attitude and that people will see you through their lives. Lord I pray that you will raise up more people among us who are friends and beloved of yours. Lord give us more discernment to see and recognize those who are friends and beloved of yours so we will consider them our friends and beloved as well.*

*Lord we pray for us as a church, Lord fill us with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts that we need in our lives to go and evangelize and make new disciples. Lord we pray that you will enable us to plant more Bible studies and more congregations for the church. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.*

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