

**God's Calling Requirements**  
**Friendship with God**  
**Part 25**

*"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)*

Did the early church observed friendships? Did the apostles recommend friendships inside the church? The Scriptures is good resource for us to answer these questions.

**1- Apostle Paul:** *"5 Greet also the church that meets at their house. Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. 6 Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you. 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. 8 Greet Ampliatius, my dear friend in the Lord. 9 Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. 10 Greet Apelles, whose fidelity to Christ has stood the test. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. 11 Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew. Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. 12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord." (Romans 16:5-12 NIV) As we noticed in the previous passage of the NIV manuscript it is mentioned and repeated my dear friend four times, but if you will read the same passage in KJV, *"5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, 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 fellowprisoners, 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) Instead of my dear friend what really Paul used is my wellbeloved, my beloved, or the beloved. So Paul did not use the word friend *inside* the church. Instead he used the *beloved* in describing his faithful brethren and workers in the Lord. Let us review some of those who described by Paul as beloved. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. Epaenetus 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. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord. Persis worked very hard in the Lord, that is why Paul linked her name with the word beloved.**

The same things you can find in the other writings of Paul, *"Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings." (Colossians 4:14 NIV) "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, 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." (2Timothy 4:11)* Beloved are those who stay beside and support us for the cause of Gospel of Christ as we endeavor to reach the lost.

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 churches of God.

*"Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker." (Pilemon 1:1 NIV) "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 and friendship inside the church will introduce corruption, favoritism and injustice. Ministry is not about trip, safaris, journeys or exploration, instead is laboring and suffering for Christ. Good number they use the word friend/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/she needs to achieve.

**2- Apostle James:** *"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) "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 is 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:** *1 The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 2 Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. 3 It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. 5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brethren, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. 7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. 8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth. 9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not*

welcome us. 10 So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church. 11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God.” (3John 1:1-11 NIV) The NIV manuscript it is mentioned and repeated Dear friend four times, but if you will read the same passage in KJV “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.” (3John 1:1-11 KJV) Instead of Dear friend what really John used is Beloved. So John did not use friend *inside* the church, instead he used the wellbeloved and beloved in describing his faithful brethren and workers in the Lord. Those who are walking in the truth and who aid the brethren who went forth to bring the message of God to the lost, “5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brethren, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. 7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. 8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.” (3John 1:5-8 NIV) Beloved are those who support the mission work of God, and we need to honor the work that they are doing.

**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 according to the standards of God’s Word, as you agree to 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. Lord I understood well your Word. I repent of being using worldly friendship and wrong principles in serving you. Lord I commit myself to labor in my service and ministry, and to keep close with those who labor for your church and those who walk according to your truth. I commit myself to support those who are without support, who are willing to serve you and who are doing their best to bring the message to the lost. Lord leads me to do all of that. I thank you and praise you. This is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.

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