



I Am Christ's Friend

November 26, 2011 devotional from *Days of Praise**

Some things in Scripture are harder to understand and believe than others. Christ, the Sovereign Creator of all things, the offended Judge who declared the penalty for sin to be death, the One who willingly died to pay that penalty and redeem us from bondage to sin, now calls us His friends. Certainly we would like to consider Him our friend; but are we really His friends? If He were telling someone about His friends, would He include us? Somehow this seems too much—too good to be true; but He insists it is.

John 15:9-17 (KJV), As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. ¹⁰If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. ¹¹These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. ¹²This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. ¹⁵Henceforth 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. ¹⁶Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. ¹⁷These things I command you, that ye love one another. (*Emphasis added*)

Actually, Christ said, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you” (John 15:16). We are His friends by conscious choice on His part, even though He knows more about our inward nature than we will admit to ourselves. He has demonstrated His friendship by the greatest act of love imaginable, when He voluntarily died to save us from our sins. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (v. 13). Furthermore, for His friends He promises, “Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (v. 16).

His love for us surpasses human love. “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love” (v. 9) “that your joy might be full” (v. 11). He has “ordained” us as friends so that we “should go and bring forth fruit, and that our fruit should remain” (v. 16). What joy!

There should be a response on our part to His friendship. Almost as a self-evident fact, He states, “Ye are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you” (v. 14), among other things, “that ye love one another” (v. 17). How can we do less?

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Unceasing Praise

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“Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

This is, no doubt, the shortest commandment in the Bible, and seemingly the most difficult to obey. How could anyone possibly pray without ceasing? What about sleeping, or working, or other necessary pursuits?

Paul himself claimed to pray without ceasing. For example, he wrote to the Roman church: “For God is my witness, . . . that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers” (Romans 1:9). To the Thessalonians he wrote: “We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith” (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3). In his very last epistle he wrote: “I thank God . . . that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day” (2 Timothy 1:3).

It is obvious from such references that Paul did not mean we should be uttering prayers continually, but rather to be continually in a prayerful attitude and never to stop the regular practice of prayer. In like fashion, the Lord Jesus said: “Men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). In the parable following this command, He spoke of God's “own elect, which cry day and night unto him” (Luke 18:7). This would further imply that our prayerful attitude and regular practice of specific prayer should be taking place every day and every night. We should never “faint”—that is, “lose heart”—if the answer isn't what or when we hope, but keep on praying anyway. When it's the right time, He will, indeed, answer “speedily,” and in the right way (Luke 18:8).

To pray without ceasing means simply to be free to communicate quickly with Him, night and day, always in an attitude of prayer. “If ye abide in me,” He said, “and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7).

If you do not have a prayer plan, refer to [A Prayer Pattern to Help Structure Your Life](#).

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