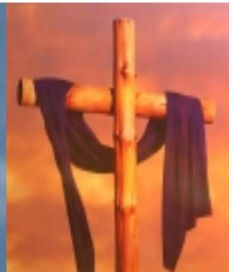




# Calvary Apostolic Ministries

Building a legacy of spiritual truth  
for present and future generations

*And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,  
Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone (Ephesians 2:20)*



**F**RIENDS

**R**EJOICE

**I**N

**E**AACH-OTHERS

**N**EVERENDING

**D**REAMS



Joseph D'Allende

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## DEDICATION

Along life's journey, certain persons enrich your life for the better. These people know your strengths and weaknesses, and because they love Jesus Christ, they reach out to you with the Grace and Love of God.

Though they see your faults and failures, they are not deterred from befriending you. The interest in their Friendship Relationship is not for their enrichment. Instead, their goal is to enrich you with the Love and Care they can bring you through the Grace and Love of God that Has enriched their life. Their purpose of fostering Friendship is for one's spiritual benefit.

God has blessed my wife (Dolores) and me with a friend who has passed on to be with Jesus eternally and has left us with precious memories and a life enriched by her care and love for us.

Words from our hearts, as good as they may be, cannot describe the Grace and Love of God that flowed from this dear Saint of God to us. Therefore, to truly honor and esteem her, we must turn to God's Word:

### PROVERBS 31:30-31

CHARM IS DECEITFUL, AND BEAUTY IS VAIN,  
BUT A WOMAN WHO FEARS THE LORD IS TO BE PRAISED.  
GIVE HER OF THE FRUIT OF HER HANDS,  
AND LET HER WORKS PRAISE HER IN THE GATES.



MARY BOWES

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank God for the tremendous joy I experienced authoring this book. However, I do not claim originality. Serving The Lord and motivated by THE HOLY SPIRIT, reading, and study. I have put my heart to paper. I have written out of a wealth of FRIENDSHIP EXPERIENCES, and being in the full-time ministry since 1982, The Holy Spirit has taught me The Word of God.

Furthermore, my Spiritual Friends spoke words of correction, encouragement, and rebuke into my life over the years. Their speaking echoes so much in my life. Over years of ministry and Friendship Relationships and by God's Grace, I experienced the validity of the Proverb: "NO MAN IS AN ISLAND.

Therefore, it is with a heart of sincere gratitude that I acknowledge my Friends who, through their sound love and encouragement, have helped me pen this booklet: GOD BLESS YOU ALL MY GOD APPOINTED AND ANOINTED FRIENDS:

Pastors Robert and Ellen Frank, Jacob Isaac, Marc and Charlene Andersen, Lenny Moonsamy, Reggie Moonsamy, Sunitha Soeknundan, Paul Murugan, Paul Varathan, Victor David, Sean Thring, Peter Ward, Leon Naidoo, and Jaya Govender. Vishael, Apostles Ronnie Naidoo, and Robert Munien. Harvey and Geraldine March, Lawrence and Theona Lalla, Elvis Ogle, and Grace Zone Fellowship.

## PREFACE

God has never intended man to face life on his own. Therefore, other than God blessing man with a spouse, we still need God-given Friends who come alongside us in our times of trial and tribulation and share in our bad and good times.

Just as we need God-given Friends, so do all humanity and Christian brethren. Everyone has problems facing life's hurdles and needs a caring person to come alongside. However, it is not just coming alongside. The Word of God tells us we are our fellowman's keeper (see Genesis 4:9).

Rest assured; we cannot be the keepers of our fellow men unless we befriend them. A true Christian Friend always wants the best for his Friends, and therefore he speaks correction when his pal is missing the mark. The correction is undoubtedly based on God's Word and done in a Spirit of Love. But, on the other hand, steadfast Friendship works both ways. Not only do we correct our Friend, but we also receive correction from our Friend. The Word of God teaches that iron sharpens iron (see Proverbs 27:17).

It is not strange that the imperfect correct the imperfect. Who of us can cast the first stone? Godly-appointed Friends are supportive and more so when others let you down.

God-appointed and anointed Friends do not entertain gossip. They only listen to complaints about their Friend when they are in their Friend's company.

When a Friend falters and fails, and others turn their back on him, a God-appointed Friend comes alongside his fallen Friend and speaks caringly, with sincere words of encouragement and upliftment seasoned with Love and concern to lift his Friend out of despair and guilt.

A Godly Friend does not take a superior attitude in his relationship. On the contrary, he sees his Friend as his equal and beyond himself. Therefore, this book deals with Godly appointed and anointed Friendship with the cry THAT WE AND OUR FRIENDS WOULD MATURE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS, AND NOT JUST AS SERVANTS BUT AS FRIENDS:

**JOHN 15:15:** NO LONGER DO I CALL YOU **SERVANTS**, FOR THE SERVANT DOES NOT KNOW WHAT HIS MASTER IS DOING; BUT I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS, FOR ALL THAT I HAVE HEARD FROM MY FATHER I HAVE MADE KNOWN TO YOU.

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**READER'S NOTES**

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**CHAPTER ONE**  
**COVENANT FRIENDSHIP**

**1 SAMUEL 18:1-5 ESV**

AS SOON AS HE HAD FINISHED SPEAKING TO SAUL, THE SOUL OF JONATHAN WAS KNIT TO THE SOUL OF DAVID, AND JONATHAN LOVED HIM AS HIS OWN SOUL. <sup>2</sup>AND SAUL TOOK HIM THAT DAY AND WOULD NOT LET HIM RETURN TO HIS FATHER'S HOUSE. <sup>3</sup>THEN JONATHAN MADE A COVENANT WITH DAVID BECAUSE HE LOVED HIM AS HIS OWN SOUL. <sup>4</sup>AND JONATHAN STRIPPED HIMSELF OF THE ROBE THAT WAS ON HIM AND GAVE IT TO DAVID. HIS ARMOUR, AND EVEN HIS SWORD AND HIS BOW AND HIS BELT. <sup>5</sup>AND DAVID WENT OUT AND WAS SUCCESSFUL WHEREVER SAUL SENT HIM SO THAT SAUL SET HIM OVER THE MEN OF WAR. AND THIS WAS GOOD IN THE SIGHT OF ALL THE PEOPLE AND ALSO IN THE SIGHT OF SAUL'S SERVANTS

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**BIBLICAL FRIENDSHIP**

No one is an island; we all need Friends. Friendships are a blessing from God. God meant no creation of His to be a loner and, more so, Ministers of The Gospel of Jesus Christ. People need each other, and Ministers of The Gospel most definitely need each other.

Christians must have Godly Friends. People who influence our lives for the better, the people of God who go with us on life's journey.

There is a belief gaining much prominence concerning Friendship in our modern-day Churches, which I am afraid I must disagree with. I recently read a comment on Friendship that promotes fostering new Christian Friends and severing old Christian Friends. The irrational fallacy encourages that the old Friends have accomplished their Godly purpose of being your Friend. And therefore, one needs new Friends to further God's purposes in our life. Friends are for a lifetime and not for a season. Though God gives us new Friends during our lifetime, it is not God's will that we sever our God-centered Friend relationships.

To God be the glory, my Christian Friendships are not seasonal. They are life-lasting. Since becoming a Christian, I must admit certain Friendships I had to sever. For the simple fact, those Friends were from my past life when I was reveling in sin with them. With my newfound FAITH in The Lord Jesus, I realized that being unequally yoked would hamper my spiritual growth. Old things had to pass away, and a new lifestyle had to be adopted. I had to become new in Christ and could not if I continued with those Friends whose lifestyles differed from the standard of God's Word. So, after witnessing to most of them, my desire to serve The Lord propelled me to move on with my newfound life in Jesus Christ. Though this was hard to do, I realized that the newfound light shining upon me could no longer mix with darkness:

2 CORINTHIANS 6:17 KJV: WHEREFORE **COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM,**  
AND BE YE SEPARATE, SAITH THE LORD, AND TOUCH NOT THE UNCLEAN  
THING; AND I WILL RECEIVE YOU.

Over the years, God has taught me not to make Friends but to seek Friends God intended for me to have. All good and perfect gifts come from God (see James 1:17), and Friends are a gift from God. I most definitely see this in the Friendship Relationship between David and Jonathan. Therefore, as Christians, we must pray and ask God for those Friends He has foreordained to better our Christian walk with Him.

We can adapt to our relationships from David's and Jonathan's Friendship Relationship characteristics and apply them to our relationships. For example, David means Beloved, and Jonathan means Yahweh Has Given, thus a gift from God.

Making spiritual application, we may conclude that David was the beloved of God. He was the apple of God's eye (Psalm 17:8). Jonathan was God's gift to David. God organized their Friendship. In turn, David, the beloved of God, was also a gift to Jonathan.

Through prayer and waiting upon The Lord, Christians must seek out their David and Jonathan type of Friends, for our lives are enriched when we find them. The great Love and favor God has showered on our David kind of Friends rub onto us. The gift from our Jonathan kind of Friend astounds us beyond comprehension. God's presence flows from our David and Jonathan Friendships, thus enriching our spiritual life.



Looking at these two great Friends, we note the following:

- THEY ENTERED INTO A COVENANT THAT EXTENDED TO JONATHAN'S SON MEPHIBOSHETH ( 2 SAMUEL 9).
- JONATHAN GAVE DAVID HIS ROYAL GARMENTS AND HIS WEAPON (1 SAMUEL 18). HE CLOTHED DAVID WITH ROYAL APPAREL.
- JONATHAN'S EXTREME KINDNESS ALLOWED DAVID TO ENTER THE PALACE COURTS NOT AS A SHEPHERD BUT AS ROYALTY, FOR HE WAS CLOTHED WITH PRINCELY GARMENTS.
- JONATHAN CONSTANTLY WARNED DAVID OF KING SAUL'S EVIL INTENTIONS. AS A GOD-GIVEN FRIEND JONATHAN PROTECTED HIS FRIEND DAVID.

God-given Friends are not in a FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIP for what they can get out of it. Instead, they are in it for how they can enrich each other. So, thanks be to God. We are God's beloved. We are God's GIFT to each other.

Above all this, let us be thankful for the most incredible Friends we can ever have, the gifts from God, our Father God, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and our great Teacher, The Holy Spirit. Our most trustworthy Friends stick closer than a brother. FRIENDSHIP WITH THE TRIUNE GODHEAD, FELLOWSHIP DIVINE, OH WHAT BLESSED SWEET COMMUNION GOD MY FATHER, JESUS, MY SAVIOUR, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE FRIENDS OF MINE ( an extract from the famous Hymn: WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS ( with a little addition by Joseph D'Allende).

**PROVERBS 18: 24 ESV:** A MAN OF MANY COMPANIONS MAY COME TO RUIN,  
BUT THERE IS A FRIEND WHO STICKS CLOSER THAN A BROTHER

Jesus, our greatest Friend, who sticks closer than a brother, is not like us or our fellow Christian brothers and sisters. His Friendship is forever. He never severs the relationship, no matter what. He protects us from our enemies. When others forsake us, He stays with us; He never leaves or forsakes us. He gave His life for us. Jesus is in this Friendship Relationship with us for not what He can get from us or out of us; instead, He is in this Friendship that He might give Himself to us.

Consider David, Jonathan, and Jesus as God's Elect. However, Let us not discard our Christian Friends, no matter what they do. Instead, let us

despise their wrongdoings but never stop loving and caring for them. We are each other's keepers.

As Christian brethren, let us conclude that we need Friends, and our Friends need us. Outside of our relationship with God and Marriage, there is no greater reward than FRIENDSHIP. Others may give up on you and me, but those God-given David and Jonathan types of Friends never give up on us. They dream our dreams; they care for us, and more than anything else, they love us.

In closing this chapter, let me share an acronym that I believe our greatest FRIEND has personally given me to share with you:

**FRIENDS**

**REJOICE**

**IN**

**EACH-OTHER'S**

**NEVER-ENDING**

**DREAMS**

May I humbly ask you what your dream is? Allow me the privilege of sharing my dream at this very moment that I may be a Friend of our Saviour. Is this impossible? With us, much is impossible. However, with God, all things are possible, and even Friendship with God:

So, what causes me and many of God's ministers of The Gospel to cry out consistently to God? I have listened to many renowned televangelists who openly speak of having this unique experience. However, the alarming fact is that instead of their so-called expertise with God being a blessing, their so-called experiences filled my Spirit with jealousy and resentment.

This alarming reaction motivated me to ask God for forgiveness and praise God that our Father was faithful to His Word. I was forgiven and consoled, not comforted because of my sin of jealousy but commended and consoled for not approving the disclosure of the televangelist's personal experience. So, just what am I alluding to?

I am convinced that all called of God's Gospel ministers long and hunger for intimacy with God that defies the norm. Moses cried out to God for this unique intimacy, and graciously Jehovah gave him but a glimpse of His person. The earnest desire of all faithful Gospel ministers, the yearning, the spiritual desire that God in His glory might appear unto them and speak to them personally.

God spoke face-to-face with Moses. Will God speak face-to-face with you and me? No doubt, this is a challenging pertinent question to answer. Searching for The Word of God, I am convinced this is more than possible. However, suppose it ever happens to you and me. In that case, we must not be like these televangelists (and I am not disrespectful to them) and show it to the Church and the world.

There is a belief among scholars and theologians that the Apostle Paul had a unique experience with God. He was caught up in Heaven and there in the immediate presence of The Most-High God. He received revelations from God that could not be disclosed:

**2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-7 KJV:** I MUST GO ON BOASTING. THOUGH THERE IS NOTHING TO BE GAINED BY IT, I WILL GO ON TO VISIONS AND REVELATIONS OF THE LORD. <sup>2</sup>I KNOW A MAN IN CHRIST WHO FOURTEEN YEARS AGO WAS CAUGHT UP TO THE THIRD HEAVEN—WHETHER IN THE BODY OR OUT OF THE BODY I DO NOT KNOW, GOD KNOWS. <sup>3</sup>AND I KNOW THAT THIS MAN WAS CAUGHT INTO PARADISE—WHETHER IN THE BODY OR OUT OF THE BODY I DO NOT KNOW, GOD KNOWS— <sup>4</sup>AND HE HEARD THINGS THAT CAN NOT BE TOLD, WHICH MAN MAY NOT UTTER. <sup>5</sup>ON BEHALF OF THIS MAN I WILL BOAST, BUT ON MY BEHALF I WILL NOT BOAST, EXCEPT OF MY WEAKNESSES— <sup>6</sup>THOUGH IF I WISHED TO BOAST, I WOULD NOT BE A FOOL, FOR I WOULD BE SPEAKING THE TRUTH; BUT I REFRAIN FROM IT, SO THAT NO ONE MAY THINK MORE OF ME THAN HE SEES IN ME OR HEARS FROM ME. <sup>7</sup> TO KEEP ME FROM BECOMING CONCEITED BECAUSE OF THE SURPASSING GREATNESS OF THE REVELATIONS, A

THORN WAS GIVEN ME IN THE FLESH, A MESSENGER OF SATAN TO HARASS ME,  
TO KEEP ME FROM BECOMING CONCEITED.

What was seen and heard could not be communicated. Paul's not revealing what he saw should be a lesson for all these televangelists and us. Our personal experience with God is confidential, not for the ears of The Body of Christ and, more so, not for the world.

Through this experience, I have found that people of God still hunger and yearn for intimacy with God. However, I have taken my lesson from 2 Corinthians 12:1-7 and that what I experience is not for disclosure to The Body of Christ and the world. God has placed within my Spirit the understanding that there is more than enough in His Word to make humanity wise unto salvation. Man needs no more revelations from God. These so-called Revelations bring confusion, and as in my case, it moved me to jealousy, and I thanked God I repented.

My yearnings for God have not ceased in any way. On the contrary, they have intensified. However, these yearnings and longings after God are now conditioned and controlled by The Word of God. I would still like personal encounters with God when God speaks to me. His presence overwhelms me, and yet I am content to have Moses,' Job's, and Abraham's experiences and what The Word of God declares in:

**JOHN 15:12-15:** "THIS IS MY COMMANDMENT, THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER, AS I HAVE LOVED YOU. GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS. YE ARE MY FRIENDS. IF YE DO WHATSOEVER, I COMMAND YOU. I CALL YOU NOT SERVANTS; FOR THE SERVANT KNOWETH NOT WHAT HIS LORD DOETH: BUT I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS; FOR ALL THINGS I HEARD OF MY FATHER I HAVE MADE KNOWN UNTO YOU."

My cries to God of late are to have a testimony from God that shows His confidence and trust in me. So many of us have been trying to please our congregations and communities for too long. Sadly, we missed God in the process. Job's testimony was outstanding. God revered and respected His servant Job, and no wonder God proudly and joyously proclaimed:

**JOB 1:8:** "AND THE LORD SAID UNTO SATAN, HAST THOU CONSIDERED MY SERVANT JOB, THAT THERE IS NONE HIM IN THE EARTH, A PERFECT AND AN UPRIGHT MAN, ONE THAT FEARETH GOD, AND ESCHEWED EVIL.

How authentic is The Holy Scriptures: "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."? But though this is so true concerning faith, let me throw my sixpence in the plate: it is one thing to have Faith in God, but it is another thing for God to have confidence in you and me. Job had a marvelous Testimony with God.

It was not so much that Job believed in God; it was God believing in Job. Let our cry be likened unto Job's testimony with The Lord. As ministers of The Gospel of Jesus Christ, let us cry to God for this unique spiritual experience. It is one thing when men speak well of you and me, but it is even more significant when God speaks well of you. A dear man of God said these wise words: "IT IS BETTER TO BE KNOWN IN THE COURTS OF GOD THAN TO BE KNOWN IN THE COURTS OF MEN."

I am of the persuasion that God treated Job as His Friend. I concur (agree) that The Word of God does not show this; however, my spiritual reasoning would God speak so highly of Job if He had not esteemed Job a Friend? Throughout Scripture, God only reveals one man as a Friend:

**JAMES 2:23 ESV:** "AND THE SCRIPTURE WAS FULFILLED WHICH SAITH, ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS IMPUTED UNTO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS: AND HE WAS CALLED THE FRIEND OF GOD.

My cry and I believe your cry as well ( mighty men of God), is that we progress from the role of servanthood to Friendship with our God. Is it possible that we may have a Friendship experience with Almighty God? What does The Word of God say about this? Praise God. It is more than likely. With God, all things are possible; it is for us to meet the standard defined in **John 15:12-15:**

- WE MUST LOVE OUR FELLOW MAN ( EVEN OUR ENEMIES),
- WE MUST LOVE OUR FELLOW MAN THE WAY GOD LOVES US,
- WE LIVE OUR LIFE AS A SACRIFICE FOR OTHERS (JESUS BEING OUR EXAMPLE),

- AS SERVANTS OF GOD, WE, LIKE JESUS, MUST DELIGHT IN DOING THE WILL OF GOD.
- WE MUST REALIZE THAT AS SERVANTS, WE WILL NEVER EVER KNOW THE FULL MIND OF GOD. THEREFORE, WE MUST CONSTANTLY YEARN FOR OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD TO TRANSCEND FROM SERVANTHOOD TO THAT OF FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS, FELLOWSHIP DIVINE.

The crucial question is, what convinces us that this beautiful transition has occurred? Our answer is found in The Unadulterated Word of God. Like God's Friend Abraham, we, too, become God's confidants. God only shares His mind, heart, and intentions with His Friends. Friends do not withhold their minds, soul, and preferences.

On the contrary, they are an open book to each other. There are no secrets between them. God, in His Friendship Relationship with Abraham, sets forth the example of sharing his intentions for the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah:

**GENESIS 18:17-22 ESV:** THE LORD SAID, "SHALL I HIDE FROM ABRAHAM WHAT I AM ABOUT TO DO, <sup>18</sup>SEEING THAT ABRAHAM SHALL SURELY BECOME A GREAT AND MIGHTY NATION, AND ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED IN HIM? <sup>19</sup>FOR I HAVE CHOSEN HIM, THAT HE MAY COMMAND HIS CHILDREN AND HIS HOUSEHOLD AFTER HIM TO KEEP THE WAY OF THE LORD BY DOING RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE, SO THAT THE LORD MAY BRING TO ABRAHAM WHAT HE HAS PROMISED HIM." <sup>20</sup>THEN THE LORD SAID, "BECAUSE THE OUTCRY AGAINST SODOM AND GOMORRAH IS GREAT AND THEIR SIN IS VERY GRAVE, <sup>21</sup>I WILL GO DOWN TO SEE WHETHER THEY HAVE DONE ALTOGETHER ACCORDING TO THE OUTCRY THAT HAS COME TO ME. AND IF NOT, I WILL KNOW." <sup>22</sup>SO THE MEN TURNED FROM THERE AND WENT TOWARD SODOM, BUT ABRAHAM STILL STOOD BEFORE THE LORD.

#### **SPIRITUAL APPLICATIONS**

**SPIRITUAL APPLICATION 1:** Let us firmly resolve to progress from servanthood to Friendship as ministers of The Gospel. Let us decide by the Grace of our Saviour, the help of The Holy Spirit, and the application of The Word of God to be chosen by God to become his Friends:

**JOHN 15:15 ESV:** NO LONGER DO I CALL YOU SERVANTS, FOR THE SERVANT DOES NOT KNOW WHAT HIS MASTER IS DOING, BUT I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS, FOR ALL THAT I HAVE HEARD FROM MY FATHER I HAVE MADE KNOWN TO YOU.

Is it possible that we can become Friends with God? What will convince us? Let us glean from Abraham's experience and John 15:15. True Friends can never keep secrets from each other. They are our confidants. God respected and honored Abraham. Indeed, Abraham was God's bosom (special, dear) Friend. God spoke to Himself: "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? God could not disrespect Abraham by not sharing His intent against Sodom. Friends share their hearts:

**GENESIS 18:17:** THE LORD SAID, "SHALL I HIDE FROM ABRAHAM WHAT I AM ABOUT TO DO,

**JOHN 15:15:** BUT I HAVE CALLED YOU, FRIENDS, FOR ALL I HEARD FROM MY FATHER I HAVE MADE KNOWN TO YOU.

**SPIRITUAL APPLICATION 2:** Reflecting over 1 Samuel 18:1-4 we note that Jonathan gave David his robe, his tunic, his sword, his bow, and his belt. David was clothed as a Shepherd boy, and it was not Jonathan's desire that his new God-ordained Friend enters the palace as a commoner (a person without significance, an ordinary person). Jonathan clothed his Friend in PRINCELY APPAREL. David entered King Saul's palace clothed in royal garments. Using Typology (a picture representing ), we note that Jesus had clothed us with his Robe of Righteousness. **THOUGH SINNERS, WE ARE CLOTHED WITH THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF JESUS CHRIST:**

**ISAIAH 61: 10:** I WILL GREATLY REJOICE IN THE LORD; MY SOUL SHALL EXULT IN MY GOD, FOR HE HAS CLOTHED ME WITH THE GARMENTS OF SALVATION; HE HAS COVERED ME WITH THE **ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**, AS A BRIDEGROOM DECKS HIMSELF LIKE A PRIEST WITH A BEAUTIFUL HEADDRESS, AND AS A BRIDE ADORNS HERSELF WITH HER JEWELS.

**SPIRITUAL APPLICATION 3:** Jonathan gave David his armor, sword, breastplate, shoes, and helmet (a picture of our spiritual armor recorded in Ephesians 6). David entered the palace clothed As a seasoned soldier.

Jesus, our heavenly Jonathan (see John 3:16), has clothed us in His righteousness that we may enter the courts of God as the elect of God clothed in majestic apparel, Grace, and Power and above all the grandeur and splendor –WITHOUT SIN AND NOT EVEN A RECORD OF SIN. How correct is the Scripture:

**1 JOHN 3:2:** BELOVED, WE ARE GOD'S CHILDREN NOW, AND WHAT WE WILL HAS NOT YET APPEARED; BUT WE KNOW WHEN HE APPEARS, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM BECAUSE WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.

Let us celebrate the inevitable. So then, by the Love of God our Father, the Grace of our Saviour Jesus, and the enabling Power of The Holy Spirit, we can become Friends of God. In closing **Chapter 1**, let us remind ourselves of the glorious hymn:

**WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS  
COMPOSERS: WILLIAM BOLCOM & CHARLES CONVERSE**

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS  
ALL OUR SINS AND GRIEFS TO BEAR  
WHAT A PRIVILEGE TO CARRY  
EVERYTHING TO GOD IN PRAYER

OH, WHAT PEACE WE OFTEN FORFEIT  
OH, WHAT NEEDLESS PAIN WE BEAR  
ALL BECAUSE WE DO NOT CARRY  
EVERYTHING TO GOD IN PRAYER

HAVE WE TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS?  
IS THERE TROUBLE ANYWHERE?  
WE SHOULD NEVER BE DISCOURAGED  
TAKE IT TO THE LORD IN PRAYER

CAN WE FIND A FRIEND SO FAITHFUL  
WHO WILL ALL OUR SORROWS SHARE?  
JESUS KNOWS OUR EVERY WEAKNESS  
TAKE IT TO THE LORD IN PRAYER

**PRAYER**



FATHER, IN THE MIGHTY NAME OF JESUS, WE THANK YOU FOR ABRAHAM’S UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU. WE ARE SO EXCITED THAT YOU ARE NO RESPECTER OF PEOPLE. WE CAN HAVE THE SELF-SAME EXPERIENCE AS ABRAHAM. THEREFORE, WE ASK FOR THE NECESSARY GRACE SO WE MAY ALSO BE CALLED FRIENDS OF GOD. HELP US TO DIE UNTO:

SELF -WILL

PRIDE

PRESUMPTION

FURTHERMORE, DEAR FATHER, HELP US TO:

INTENSIFY OUR DEVOTIONAL TIME

STUDY THE WORD.

MEMORIZE THE SCRIPTURES

WITNESS OF GOD

PREACH THE GOSPEL

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**READER’S NOTES**

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**CHAPTER TWO**  
**ABRAHAM, THE FRIEND OF GOD**

**2 CHRONICLES 20:7 KJV**

ARE YOU NOT OUR [GOD](#), WHO DROVE OUT THE INHABITANTS OF THIS LAND BEFORE  
YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL AND GAVE IT TO THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM, YOUR  
FRIEND FOREVER?

**ISAIAH 41:8**

BUT YOU, ISRAEL, MY SERVANT,  
JACOB, WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN,  
THE OFFSPRING OF ABRAHAM, MY FRIEND.

**JAMES 2:23**

AND THE SCRIPTURE WAS FULFILLED, SAYING, “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT  
WAS COUNTED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS”—AND HE WAS CALLED  
A FRIEND OF GOD.

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**G**od’s intention toward his people is that we o grow in Grace and mature in our relationship with God through FAITH and righteous living. Scripture endorses this beautiful truth:

**JOHN 15:15 ESV:** NO LONGER DO I CALL YOU SERVANTS, FOR THE  
SERVANT DOES NOT KNOW WHAT HIS MASTER IS DOING, BUT I HAVE CALLED  
YOU FRIENDS, FOR ALL THAT I HAVE HEARD FROM MY FATHER I HAVE MADE  
KNOWN TO YOU.

Relationships must not stagnate (become trapped, become stale). Relationships are not on an acquaintance level. Instead, God has blessed us with the Born-Again experience and eternal life (see John 3:1-17). We are children of God. However, as the Born -Again children of God, Jesus wants us to be His Friends.

## **ABRAHAM, THE FRIEND OF GOD**

The Old and New Testaments speak highly of God's Prophets, Priests, and Kings. However, there is only one man of God whom The Word of God addresses as His Friend, and that mighty man of God was Abraham. Therefore, it is not perchance that God's Word only mentions Abraham as his Friend and that thrice:

**2 CHRONICLES 20:7** ARE YOU NOT OUR GOD, WHO DROVE OUT THE INHABITANTS OF THIS LAND BEFORE YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL, AND GAVE IT TO THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM YOUR FRIEND FOREVER?

ISAIAH 41:8: "BUT YOU, ISRAEL, ARE MY SERVANT, JACOB, WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN, THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM, MY FRIEND

JAMES 2:23 AND THE SCRIPTURE WAS FULFILLED, WHICH SAYS, 'ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.' AND HE WAS CALLED THE FRIEND OF GOD.

Abraham is referred to as the Friend of God thrice in The Scriptures, which no doubt sets up the Threefold Cord of Truth:

**ECCLESIASTES 4:8-12 ESV:** ONE PERSON WHO HAS NO OTHER, EITHER SON OR BROTHER, YET THERE IS NO END TO ALL HIS TOIL, AND HIS EYES ARE NEVER SATISFIED WITH RICHES, SO THAT HE NEVER ASKS, "FOR WHOM AM I TOILING AND DEPRIVING MYSELF OF PLEASURE?" THIS ALSO IS VANITY AND AN UNHAPPY BUSINESS. TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE BECAUSE THEY HAVE A GOOD REWARD FOR THEIR TOIL. <sup>10</sup> FOR IF THEY FALL, ONE WILL LIFT HIS FELLOW. BUT WOE TO HIM WHO IS ALONE WHEN HE FALLS AND HAS NOT ANOTHER TO LIFT HIM! <sup>11</sup> AGAIN, IF TWO LIE TOGETHER, THEY KEEP WARM, BUT HOW CAN ONE KEEP WARM ALONE? <sup>12</sup>, AND THOUGH A MAN MIGHT PREVAIL AGAINST ONE WHO IS ALONE, TWO WILL WITHSTAND HIM, AND A THREEFOLD CORD IS NOT QUICKLY BROKEN.

Though we are honored to be Jesus' servants, Jesus wants to promote us from servanthood to Friendship. The question that follows: WHY? An excellent discrepancy between being a servant and a Friend helps us

understand why we are to become Friends of God. Using the Linguistic Principle of Hermeneutics, we discover the distinctions between servanthood and Friendship.

SERVANT

5650. ebed ►

STRONG'S CONCORDANCE (HEBREW)

EBED: ENSLAVED PERSON, SERVANT

ORIGINAL WORD: עֶבֶד

PART OF SPEECH: NOUN MASCULINE

TRANSLITERATION: EBED

PHONETIC SPELLING: (EH'-BED)

DEFINITION: ENSLAVED PERSON, SERVANT

NAS EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE

WORD ORIGIN

FROM ABAD

DEFINITION

ENSLAVED PERSON, SERVANT

NASB TRANSLATION

ATTENDANTS (1), BONDAGE (2), MALE (24), MALE SERVANT (7), MALE SERVANTS (5), MALE SLAVES (1), OFFICERS (1), OFFICIAL (2), SERVANT (6), SERVANT (332), SERVANT'S (4), SERVANT\* (1), SERVANTS (353), SERVANTS' (2), SERVANTS\* (12), SLAVE (25), SLAVE'S (1), SLAVE\* (4), SLAVERY (11), SLAVES (19), SLAVES\* (8).

FRIEND

STRONG'S CONCORDANCE 7453

REA: FRIEND, COMPANION, FELLOW

ORIGINAL WORD: רֵעַ

PART OF SPEECH: NOUN MASCULINE

TRANSLITERATION: REA

PHONETIC SPELLING: (RAY'-AH)

DEFINITION: FRIEND, COMPANION, FELLOW

NAS EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE

WORD ORIGIN

FROM RAAH

DEFINITION

FRIEND, COMPANION, FELLOW

NASB TRANSLATION

ANOTHER (27), ANOTHER'S (5), ANOTHER\* (1), COMPANION (3), FELLOW (1), FRIEND (30), FRIEND'S (1), FRIENDS (18), HUSBAND (1), KIND (1), LOVER (1), LOVERS (1), MATE (1), NEIGHBOUR (64),

NEIGHBOR'S (23), NEIGHBOURS (3), NEIGHBOURS' (1), OPPONENT (1), OPPONENT'S (1), OTHER (6), TOGETHER\* (1).

Reflecting on Strong's Hebrew Concordance, we note that a servant is an enslaved person owned by a master who had bought the enslaved person. The enslaved person has no mind of their own, for they are the property of their master. The enslaved person is at the beck and call of his master. An enslaved person is subservient, whereas a Friend is a companion (buddy).

The Merriam's Websters Dictionary defines servant and Friend as:

**DEFINITION OF SERVANT**

ONE THAT SERVES OTHERS, PUBLIC SERVANT, ESPECIALLY: ONE THAT PERFORMS DUTIES ABOUT THE PERSON OR HOME OF A MASTER OR PERSONAL EMPLOYER

**ESSENTIAL MEANING OF A FRIEND**

1: A PERSON WHOM YOU LIKE AND ENJOY BEING WITH. I LIKE YOU TO MEET MY FRIEND. SHE IS SUCH A GOOD/CLOSE/DEAR FRIEND (OF MINE).  
SEE MORE EXAMPLES

2: A PERSON WHO HELPS OR SUPPORTS SOMEONE OR SOMETHING (SUCH AS A CAUSE OR CHARITY) IS A FRIEND OF THE ENVIRONMENT. [=SHE SUPPORTS ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSES. THE STRIKERS KNEW THEY HAD A FRIEND IN THE SENATOR. [=KNEW THAT THE SENATOR SUPPORTED

THEM] ARE YOU FRIEND OR FOE? [=DO YOU SUPPORT US OR OPPOSE US?]

3: QUAKER

FULL DEFINITION OF FRIEND

(ENTRY 1 OF 2)

1A: ONE ATTACHED TO ANOTHER BY AFFECTION OR ESTEEM. SHE'S MY BEST FRIEND.

B: ACQUAINTANCE

2A: ONE THAT IS NOT HOSTILE. IS HE A FRIEND OR AN ENEMY?

B: ONE THAT IS OF THE SAME NATION, PARTY, OR GROUP OF SHOWBIZ FRIENDS

3: ONE THAT FAVOURS OR PROMOTES SOMETHING (SUCH AS A CHARITY). THIS TREND HAS ALARMED FRIENDS OF THE LIBERAL ARTS— RAYMOND WALTERS THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY WILL HOST A FUND-RAISER.

4: A FAVOURED COMPANION

THE INFLUENCE OF ABRAHAM'S FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

During a national crisis, king Jehoshaphat is the first person to mention Abraham as God's Friend. The Moabites and Ammonite armies and some of the Meunites were coming against king Jehoshaphat's army for battle. He prays, reminding God (not that God forgot) that God gave the land to his Friend Abraham and Abraham's descendants

**2 CHRONICLES 20:5-12 ESV:** <sup>5</sup>AND JEHOSHAPHAT STOOD IN THE ASSEMBLY OF JUDAH AND JERUSALEM, IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD, BEFORE THE NEW COURT, <sup>6</sup>AND SAID, "O LORD, GOD OF OUR FATHERS, ARE YOU NOT GOD IN HEAVEN? YOU RULE OVER ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE NATIONS. IN YOUR HAND ARE POWER AND MIGHT, SO NONE CAN WITHSTAND YOU. <sup>7</sup>DID YOU NOT, OUR GOD, DRIVE OUT THE INHABITANTS OF THIS LAND BEFORE YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL, AND GIVE IT FOREVER TO THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM YOUR FRIEND? <sup>8</sup>AND THEY HAVE LIVED IN IT. THEY HAVE BUILT FOR YOU IN IT A SANCTUARY FOR YOUR NAME, SAYING, <sup>9</sup>'IF DISASTER COMES UPON US, THE SWORD,

JUDGMENT, OR PESTILENCE, OR FAMINE, WE WILL STAND BEFORE THIS HOUSE AND BEFORE YOU—FOR YOUR NAME IS IN THIS HOUSE—AND CRY OUT TO YOU IN OUR AFFLICTION, AND YOU WILL HEAR AND SAVE.’<sup>10</sup> AND NOW BEHOLD, THE MEN OF AMMON AND MOAB AND MOUNT SEIR, WHOM YOU WOULD NOT LET ISRAEL INVADE WHEN THEY CAME FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT, AND WHOM THEY AVOIDED AND DID NOT DESTROY—<sup>11</sup> BEHOLD, THEY REWARD US BY COMING TO DRIVE US OUT OF YOUR POSSESSION, WHICH YOU HAVE GIVEN US TO INHERIT.<sup>12</sup> O, OUR GOD, WILL YOU NOT EXECUTE JUDGMENT ON THEM? FOR WE ARE POWERLESS AGAINST THIS GREAT HORDE THAT IS COMING AGAINST US. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO, BUT OUR EYES ARE ON YOU.

King Jehoshaphat prays according to God’s promise to Abraham, his Friend. Jehoshaphat knew God would not go against his Word to his Friend, Abraham. Note what the king prayed: “DID YOU NOT, OUR GOD, DRIVE OUT THE INHABITANTS OF THIS LAND BEFORE YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL, AND GIVE IT FOREVER TO THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM, YOUR FRIEND”? Jehoshaphat knew God could not revoke his promise to his Friend Abraham and his descendants.

The armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites would not conquer Abraham’s descendants, for their Father was Abraham, the Friend of God.

Isaiah is the second person who refers to Abraham as a Friend of God. However, there is a marked distinction between Isaiah 41.”

**ISAIAH 41:1-20 ESV:** LISTEN TO ME IN SILENCE, O COASTLANDS; LET THE PEOPLES RENEW THEIR STRENGTH; LET THEM APPROACH, THEN LET THEM SPEAK; LET US TOGETHER DRAW NEAR FOR JUDGMENT.<sup>2</sup> WHO STIRRED UP ONE FROM THE EAST WHOM VICTORY MEETS AT EVERY STEP? HE GIVES UP NATIONS BEFORE HIM SO THAT HE TRAMPLES KINGS UNDERFOOT. HE MAKES THEM LIKE DUST WITH HIS SWORD, LIKE DRIVEN STUBBLE WITH HIS BOW.<sup>3</sup> HE PURSUES THEM AND PASSES THEM ON SAFELY. BY PATHS, HIS FEET HAVE NOT TROD.<sup>4</sup> WHO HAS PERFORMED AND DONE THIS, CALLING THE GENERATIONS FROM THE BEGINNING? I, THE LORD, THE FIRST, AND WITH THE LAST; I AM HE.<sup>5</sup> THE COASTLANDS HAVE SEEN AND ARE AFRAID; THE ENDS OF THE EARTH TREMBLE; THEY

HAVE DRAWN NEAR AND COME. <sup>6</sup> EVERYONE HELPS HIS NEIGHBOR AND SAYS TO HIS BROTHER, "BE STRONG! <sup>7</sup> THE CRAFTSMAN STRENGTHENS THE GOLDSMITH, AND HE WHO SMOOTHS WITH THE HAMMER HIM WHO STRIKES THE ANVIL, SAYING OF THE SOLDERING, "IT IS GOOD"; AND THEY STRENGTHEN IT WITH NAILS SO THAT IT CAN NOT BE MOVED. <sup>8</sup> BUT YOU, ISRAEL, MY SERVANT, JACOB, WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN, THE OFFSPRING OF ABRAHAM, MY FRIEND; <sup>9</sup> YOU WHOM I TOOK FROM THE ENDS OF THE EARTH, AND CALLED FROM ITS FARTHEST CORNERS, SAYING TO YOU, "YOU ARE MY SERVANT, I HAVE CHOSEN YOU AND NOT CAST YOU OFF"; <sup>10</sup> FEAR NOT, FOR I AM WITH YOU; BE NOT DISMAYED, FOR I AM YOUR GOD I WILL STRENGTHEN YOU. I WILL HELP YOU. I WILL UPHOLD YOU WITH MY RIGHTEOUS RIGHT HAND. <sup>11</sup> BEHOLD, ALL WHO ARE INCENSED AGAINST YOU SHALL BE PUT TO SHAME AND CONFOUNDED; THOSE WHO STRIVE AGAINST YOU SHALL BE AS NOTHING AND SHALL PERISH. <sup>12</sup> YOU SHALL SEEK THOSE WHO CONTEND WITH YOU, BUT YOU SHALL NOT FIND THEM; THOSE WHO WAR AGAINST YOU SHALL BE AS NOTHING AT ALL. <sup>13</sup> FOR I, THE LORD YOUR GOD, HOLD YOUR RIGHT HAND; IT IS I WHO SAY TO YOU, "FEAR NOT, I AM THE ONE WHO HELPS YOU." <sup>14</sup> FEAR NOT, YOU WORM JACOB, YOU MEN OF ISRAEL! I AM THE ONE WHO HELPS YOU, DECLARES THE LORD; YOUR REDEEMER IS THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL. <sup>15</sup> BEHOLD, I MAKE OF YOU A THRESHING SLEDGE, NEW, SHARP, AND HAVING TEETH; YOU SHALL THRESH THE MOUNTAINS AND CRUSH THEM, AND YOU SHALL MAKE THE HILLS LIKE CHAFF. <sup>16</sup> YOU SHALL WINNOW THEM, AND THE WIND SHALL CARRY THEM AWAY, AND THE TEMPEST SHALL SCATTER THEM. AND YOU SHALL REJOICE IN THE LORD; IN THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL, YOU SHALL GLORY. <sup>17</sup> WHEN THE POOR AND NEEDY SEEK WATER, AND THERE IS NONE, AND THEIR TONGUE IS PARCHED THIRST, I THE LORD WILL ANSWER THEM; I THE GOD OF ISRAEL WILL NOT FORSAKE THEM. <sup>18</sup> I WILL OPEN RIVERS ON THE BARE HEIGHTS AND FOUNTAINS IN THE MIDST OF THE VALLEYS. I WILL MAKE THE WILDERNESS A POOL OF WATER AND THE DRY LAND SPRINGS OF WATER. <sup>19</sup> I WILL PUT IN THE WILDERNESS THE CEDAR, THE ACACIA, THE MYRTLE, AND THE OLIVE. I WILL SET IN THE DESERT THE CYPRESS, THE PLANE, AND THE PINE TOGETHER, <sup>20</sup> THAT THEY MAY SEE AND KNOW, MAY CONSIDER



AND UNDERSTAND TOGETHER, THAT THE HAND OF THE LORD HAS DONE THIS, THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL HAS CREATED IT.

#### **THE FUTILITY OF IDOLS**

**ISAIAH 41:21-29 ESV:** SET FORTH YOUR CASE, SAYS THE LORD; BRING YOUR PROOFS, SAYS THE KING OF JACOB <sup>22</sup> LET THEM BRING THEM, AND TELL US WHAT IS TO HAPPEN. TELL US THE FORMER THINGS, WHAT THEY ARE, THAT WE MAY CONSIDER THEM, THAT WE MAY KNOW THEIR OUTCOME, OR DECLARE TO US THE THINGS TO COME. <sup>23</sup> TELL US WHAT IS TO COME HEREAFTER, THAT WE MAY KNOW THAT YOU ARE GODS DO GOOD, OR DO HARM, THAT WE MAY BE DISMAYED AND TERRIFIED. <sup>24</sup> BEHOLD, YOU ARE NOTHING, AND YOUR WORK IS LESS THAN NOTHING; AN ABOMINATION IS HE WHO CHOOSES YOU. <sup>25</sup> I STIRRED UP ONE FROM THE NORTH, AND HE HAS COME, FROM THE RISING OF THE SUN, AND HE SHALL CALL UPON MY NAME; HE SHALL TRAMPLE ON RULERS AS ON MORTAR, AS THE POTTER TREADS CLAY. <sup>26</sup> WHO DECLARED IT FROM THE BEGINNING THAT WE MIGHT KNOW, AND BEFOREHAND, THAT WE MIGHT SAY, "HE IS RIGHT"? NONE DECLARED IT, NONE PROCLAIMED, NONE HEARD YOUR WORDS. <sup>27</sup> I WAS THE FIRST TO SAY TO ZION, "BEHOLD, HERE THEY ARE!" AND I GIVE JERUSALEM A HERALD OF GOOD NEWS. <sup>28</sup> BUT WHEN I LOOK, THERE IS NO ONE; AMONG THESE, THERE IS NO COUNSELOR WHO, WHEN I ASK, GIVES AN ANSWER. <sup>29</sup> BEHOLD, THEY ARE ALL A DELUSION; THEIR WORKS ARE NOTHING; THEIR METAL IMAGES ARE EMPTY WIND.

James is the third servant of the Lord that speaks of Abraham as the Friend of God. the context principle of hermeneutics, we note James chapter 2:14-26, contrasts faith without works to faith with works. In this context, Abraham, the Friend of God, is mentioned. Abraham, the Friend of God, is a man of faith. His faith was with action. He was willing to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice to God.

The two Old Testament scriptures (2 Chronicles Chapter 20 and Isaiah Chapter 41) emphasize the role of God as the protector of Abraham's descendants. A loyal Friend always protects his Friend and their descendants against enemies to the best of his abilities. So, I have a saying

(and I am not original): Hurt my Friend, and you are hurting me. My Friend's battle against you, the enemy, is my battle.

#### **ABRAHAM'S HUMILITY**

Another untold spiritual characteristic of Abraham, the man of faith, was humility. Abraham never referred to himself as God's Friend, not once in his relationship with God. No doubt, if I were Abraham, I would use my Friendship Relationship to my advantage. I would have told all against me not to touch me for God; my Friend would deal with them. It is common for us also to use influential people to gain favor with renowned people. Let us glean from Abraham that there is no need to boast about our relationship with God. God is our promoter, and HE will boast of us as His Friends. We do not need to boast of our special relationship with God, for God boasts of us -His Friends.

#### **HYMN**

##### **FRIEND OF GOD**

**COMPOSER: ISRAEL HOUGHTON**

WHO AM I THAT YOU ARE MINDFUL OF ME?

THAT YOU HEAR ME WHEN I CALL

IS IT TRUE THAT YOU ARE THINKING OF ME?

HOW YOU LOVE ME, IT'S AMAZING!

I AM A FRIEND OF GOD

I AM A FRIEND OF GOD

I AM A FRIEND OF GOD

HE CALLS ME FRIEND

GOD ALMIGHTY, LORD OF GLORY

YOU HAVE CALLED ME FRIEND

I AM A FRIEND OF GOD

I AM A FRIEND OF GOD

I AM A FRIEND OF GOD

HE CALLS ME FRIEND

HE CALLS ME FRIEND

HE CALLS ME FRIEND

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#### **PRAYER**



**CHAPTER THREE**  
**THE CALL OF ABRAHAM**

**GENESIS 12:1-5 ESV**

NOW THE LORD SAID TO ABRAM, "GO FROM YOUR COUNTRY AND YOUR KINDRED AND YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE TO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU. 2 AND I WILL MAKE OF YOU A GREAT NATION, AND I WILL BLESS YOU AND MAKE YOUR NAME GREAT SO THAT YOU WILL BE A BLESSING. 3 I WILL BLESS THOSE WHO BLESS YOU, AND HIM WHO DISHONORS YOU I WILL CURSE, AND IN YOU ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED." 4 SO ABRAM WENT, AS THE LORD HAD TOLD HIM, AND LOT WENT WITH HIM. ABRAM WAS SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD WHEN HE DEPARTED FROM HARAN. 5, AND ABRAM TOOK SARAI, HIS WIFE, AND LOT, HIS BROTHER'S SON, AND ALL THEIR POSSESSIONS THEY HAD GATHERED AND THE PEOPLE THAT THEY HAD ACQUIRED IN HARAN, AND THEY SET OUT TO GO.

---

**I**n God's dealing with Abram (Abraham), there is a record of God personally calling him a Friend (Isaiah 41:8). Other than Isaiah, King Jehoshaphat and James, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (the author of God's Word), spoke of Abraham as the Friend of God:

**2 PETER 1:21 ESV:** FOR NO PROPHECY WAS EVER PRODUCED BY THE WILL OF MAN, BUT MEN SPOKE FROM GOD AS THE HOLY SPIRIT CARRIED THEM ALONG.

Furthermore, Abraham, the humble man of God, never referred to himself as the Friend of God. Though God's testimony of Abraham was more than enough, God set up A THREEFOLD CORD OF TRUTH by using King Jehoshaphat and James speaking of Abraham as a Friend of God. The Lord God wisely established THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE OF TRUTH that everything must be established in the mouth of two or three witnesses:

**2 CORINTHIANS 13:1:** THIS IS THE THIRD TIME I AM COMING TO YOU. IN THE MOUTH OF **TWO OR THREE WITNESSES** SHALL EVERY WORD BE ESTABLISHED.

Considering the above Scripture, the two witnesses who have spoken under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit were King Jehoshaphat and James. The Third person is God Himself. What a great endorsement of God's Friendship with Abraham. However, the king and James spoke by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. However, note carefully that it is one fact for man to speak on behalf of God and another for God to speak for Himself.

#### **ABRAHAM'S FATHER-TERAH**

Abraham was born in the Ur of the Chaldeans. His father, Terah, was a maker and seller of idols. His trade was profitable for Chaldeans were polytheists (those who serve numerous gods).

#### **TERAH'S OCCUPATION**

According to rabbinical tradition, Terah was a wicked (numbers Rabbah 19:1; 19:33), idolatrous priest (midrash hagadol on Genesis 11:28) who manufactured idols (elijahu rabbah six, and eliyahu zuta 25). In opposition to his father's idol shop, Abram smashed his father's idols and chased customers away.

Joshua, the mentee (pupil, disciple) of Moses, confirms that Terah, together with Abram and Nahor, were idol worshippers:

**JOSHUA 24:2 ESV:** AND JOSHUA SAID TO ALL THE PEOPLE, "THUS SAYS THE LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL, 'LONG AGO, YOUR FATHERS LIVED BEYOND THE EUPHRATES, TERAH, THE FATHER OF ABRAHAM AND NAHOR; AND THEY SERVED OTHER GODS.

Terah fathered three sons, Abram (Abraham), Haran, and Nahor. Abram married Sarai. Haran, the father of Lot, died in the land of his birth. Abram, the responsible and caring man, took Lot to Canaan and Sarai, for they had no children. The entire family of Terah was IDOLATORS.

#### **THE CALL OF ABRAM**

God called Abraham at the age of seventy-five. A mature man who grew up in idolatry. Did God speak face-to-face with Abram? Did God speak to Abram in a vision? Did God speak to Abram in a dream? How God

called Abram is unimportant. What matters is that Abram obeyed God. The call was total separation from all influences of idolatry:

GO FROM YOUR COUNTRY

GO FROM YOUR KINDRED

GO FROM YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE

God's call to Abram was complete separation from family and all heathen influences. God had great plans for Abram and Sarai. However, why would God call an idolator? Who of us can fully understand the heart and mind of God? There are four reasons why God called Abram:

- ALL CALLINGS ARE ACTS **OF GRACE**. NOT ONE OF US DESERVES THE HONOUR AND BLESSINGS GOD BESTOWS ON US.
- GOD NEVER FAILS IN HIS CALLINGS, FOR GOD KNOWS THE END FROM THE BEGINNING. GOD, WHO IS OMNISCIENT (ALL-SEEING, ALL-KNOWING), SEES FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END. THEREFORE, GOD KNEW BEFORE HE CALLED HIS FRIEND THAT ABRAM WOULD NOT DISAPPOINT HIM.
- GOD WAS TO BIRTH A NEW NATION FROM ABRAM AND SARAI. A NATION WHOSE PURPOSE WAS TO MAKE KNOWN TO ALL OTHER NATIONS THAT THE GOD OF ABRAHAM WAS THE ONLY TRUE GOD, AND BESIDE HIM, THERE WAS NO OTHER.
- ALL CALLINGS FROM GOD ARE ACTS OF GRACE. Therefore, NO ONE DESERVES THE CALL FROM GOD, FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND COME SHORT OF GOD'S GLORY (SEE ROMANS 3:23).

#### **SPIRITUAL APPLICATION**

The call of God to humanity has not changed. The Old and New Testament callings are in harmony. Society must separate itself from the world's sinful standards, embrace God's holy standards, and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

**2 CORINTHIANS 6:17 KJV:** WHEREFORE COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM, AND BE YE SEPARATE, SAITH THE LORD, AND TOUCH NOT THE UNCLEAN THING; AND I WILL RECEIVE YOU.



**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM**

**GENESIS KJV 12:2-3**

AND I WILL MAKE OF THEE A GREAT NATION, AND I WILL BLESS THEE, AND MAKE THY NAME GREAT, AND THOU SHALT BE A BLESSING: AND I WILL BLESS THEM THAT BLESS THEE, AND CURSE HIM THAT CURSETH THEE: AND IN THEE SHALL ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED.

---

The call of separation to Abram comes with a sevenfold promise of blessing:

1. I WILL MAKE OF YOU A GREAT NATION
2. I WILL BLESS YOU
3. MAKE YOUR NAME GREAT
4. YOU WILL BE A BLESSING
5. I WILL BLESS THOSE WHO BLESS YOU
6. I CURSE HIM WHO CURSES YOU
7. IN YOU SHALL ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE  
EARTH WILL BE BLESSED

The number seven in the study of bible numerology speaks of completion. It was God who brought the promises to realization. Abram's contribution to the realization of the promises was threefold. First, he had to leave his land of birth. Secondly, he separated himself from his family, and thirdly followed God's direction to the land God had promised him. Thus, Abram fulfilled the natural and God the supernatural Abram's call of separation.

Abram expressed faith in God in that he obeyed God's directives. However, no doubt there was one flaw (defect) in his obedience. he took Lot, Haran's son, with him. he felt responsible for his deceased brother's son. Furthermore, he and Sarai were childless.



### **PROMISE 1: I WILL MAKE OF YOU A GREAT NATION**

To fulfill His promises to man, God must perform many miracles. Therefore, making Abraham a great nation, God performed three wondrous miracles. Therefore, all three patriarchs of the Jewish nation are mentioned sixteen times in the Bible phrase: the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, all three of the patriarch's wives were barren:

**GENESIS 11:30 ESV:** NOW SARAI WAS BARREN; SHE HAD NO CHILD.

**GENESIS 25:11 ESV:** ISAAC PRAYED TO THE LORD FOR HIS WIFE BECAUSE SHE WAS BARREN. AND THE LORD GRANTED HIS PRAYER, AND REBEKAH, HIS WIFE, CONCEIVED.

**GENESIS 29:31 ESV:** WHEN THE LORD SAW THAT LEAH WAS HATED, HE OPENED HER WOMB, BUT RACHEL WAS BARREN.

#### **SARAI'S UNBELIEF:**

Abram was seventy-five and Sarai sixty-five when they obeyed the call of God. As the years went by, Sarai became frustrated not having a child. Abraham's and Sarai's concern was that Eliezer, Abraham's servant, would inherit their wealth.

**GENESIS 15:2 ESV:** BUT ABRAM SAID, "O LORD GOD, WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME, FOR I CONTINUE CHILDLESS, AND THE HEIR OF MY HOUSE IS ELIEZER OF DAMASCUS?" 3 AND ABRAM SAID, "BEHOLD, YOU HAVE GIVEN ME NO OFFSPRING, AND A MEMBER OF MY HOUSEHOLD WILL BE MY HEIR.

God-honored faith never interferes with God's promises. On the contrary, doubting God's Word leads to interference with the Word of God. Sadly, Sarai convinced Abram to lie with her handmaiden Hagar:

**GENESIS 16:2-3 ESV:** "AND SARAI SAID TO ABRAM, "BEHOLD NOW, THE LORD HAS PREVENTED ME FROM BEARING CHILDREN. GO INTO MY SERVANT; IT MAY BE THAT I SHALL OBTAIN CHILDREN BY HER." AND ABRAM LISTENED TO THE VOICE OF SARAI. 3 SO, AFTER ABRAM HAD LIVED TEN YEARS IN THE LAND OF CANAAN, SARAI, ABRAM'S WIFE, TOOK

HAGAR THE EGYPTIAN, HER SERVANT, AND GAVE HER TO ABRAM, HER HUSBAND, AS A WIFE.

Undoubtedly, Sarai's interference with God's plan is frowned upon in our modern-day Christian society. However, let us not be harsh on Sarai. In her time, children of enslaved people belonged to their masters and mistresses. No doubt, a dark shadow came upon Sarai. Her interference backfired, and instead of Hagar bringing her joy, Hagar taunted (mocked, jeered) Sarai (see Genesis 16:4-6).

#### **THE FIRST SEED OF THE NATION**

In Genesis 17, God changes Abram's name to Abraham. He is no longer called Abram (Exalted Father). Instead, Abraham was blessed as the FATHER OF A MULTITUDE. "

**GENESIS 17:5 ESV:** BEHOLD, MY COVENANT IS WITH YOU, AND YOU SHALL BE THE FATHER OF A MULTITUDE OF NATIONS. 5 NO LONGER SHALL YOUR NAME BE CALLED ABRAM, BUT YOUR NAME SHALL BE ABRAHAM, FOR I HAVE MADE YOU THE FATHER OF A MULTITUDE OF NATIONS.

In Genesis 17, when Abram was ninety-nine years old, God declared his new name: "Abraham" - "a father of many nations" and gave him the covenant of circumcision. In addition, God gave Sarai her new name Sarah, which means princess.

#### **PROMISE 2: I WILL BLESS YOU**

The promises of God are not taken lightly. God means what He says and watches over his Word to carry it through. No wonder God has magnified His Word above his name.

The Hebrew words for bless and blessing denote prosperity (see Strongs Hebrew Concordance numbers H1288 H1293). Thus, Abraham was a wealthy man of God:

**GENESIS 13:2 ESV:** NOW ABRAM WAS VERY RICH IN LIVESTOCK, SILVER, AND GOLD.

**GENESIS 14:14 ESV:** WHEN ABRAM HEARD THAT HIS KINSMAN HAD BEEN TAKEN CAPTIVE, HE LED FORTH HIS TRAINED MEN, BORN IN HIS HOUSE,

THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN OF THEM, AND WENT IN PURSUIT AS FAR AS DAN.

**GENESIS 13:5 ESV:** AND LOT, WHO WENT WITH ABRAM, ALSO HAD FLOCKS AND HERDS AND TENTS, 6 SO THAT THE LAND COULD NOT SUPPORT BOTH OF THEM DWELLING TOGETHER; FOR THEIR POSSESSIONS WERE SO GREAT THAT THEY COULD NOT DWELL TOGETHER.

### **PROMISE 3: MAKE YOUR NAME GREAT**

The Hebrew words for great (see Strongs Hebrew Concordance H1431 and H8034) mean magnify, promote, famous, honor, authority, and renown. The following nineteen Scriptures confirm the greatness of the name Abraham:

**GENESIS 24:27 ESV:** AND HE SAID, BLESSED BE THE LORD GOD OF MY MASTER ABRAHAM, WHO HATH NOT LEFT DESTITUTE MY MASTER OF HIS MERCY AND HIS TRUTH: I AM BEING IN THE WAY, THE LORD LED ME TO THE HOUSE OF MY MASTER'S BRETHREN.

**GENESIS 24:42 ESV:** I CAME TODAY TO THE SPRING AND SAID, 'O LORD, THE GOD OF MY MASTER ABRAHAM, IF NOW YOU ARE PROSPERING THE WAY THAT I GO,

**GENESIS 24:48 ESV:** THEN I BOWED MY HEAD AND WORSHIPPED THE LORD AND BLESSED THE LORD, THE GOD OF MY MASTER ABRAHAM, WHO HAD LED ME BY THE RIGHT WAY TO TAKE THE DAUGHTER OF MY MASTER'S KINSMAN FOR HIS SON.

**GENESIS 26:24:** PARAPHRASE VERSION" AND THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM THE SAME NIGHT AND SAID, "I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM YOUR FATHER. THEREFORE, FEAR NOT, FOR I AM WITH YOU AND WILL BLESS YOU AND MULTIPLY YOUR OFFSPRING FOR MY SERVANT ABRAHAM'S SAKE."

**GENESIS 28:13:** AND BEHOLD, THE LORD STOOD ABOVE IT, AND SAID, I AM THE LORD GOD OF ABRAHAM THY FATHER, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC: THE LAND WHEREON THOU LIEST, TO THEE WILL I GIVE IT, AND TO THY SEED.

**GENESIS 31:42:** EXCEPT THE GOD OF MY FATHER, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE FEAR OF ISAAC, HAD BEEN WITH ME, SURELY, THOU HADST

SENT ME AWAY NOW EMPTY. GOD HATH SEEN MINE AFFLICTION AND THE LABOUR OF MY HANDS AND REBUKED THEE YESTERNIGHT.

**GENESIS 31:53:** THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF NAHOR, THE GOD OF THEIR FATHER, JUDGE BETWIXT US. AND JACOB SWORE BY THE FEAR OF HIS FATHER ISAAC.

**GENESIS 32:9:** AND JACOB SAID, O GOD OF MY FATHER ABRAHAM, AND GOD OF MY FATHER ISAAC, THE LORD WHICH SAIDST UNTO ME, RETURN UNTO THY COUNTRY, AND TO THY KINDRED, AND I WILL DEAL WELL WITH THEE:

**EXODUS 3:6:** MOREOVER, HE SAID, I AM THE GOD OF THY FATHER, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB. AND MOSES HID HIS FACE, FOR HE WAS AFRAID TO LOOK UPON GOD.

**EXODUS 3:15:** AND GOD SAID MOREOVER UNTO MOSES, THUS SHALT THOU SAY UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, THE LORD GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB, HATH SENT ME UNTO YOU: THIS IS MY NAME FOREVER, AND THIS IS MY MEMORIAL UNTO ALL GENERATIONS.

**EXODUS 3:16:** GO, AND GATHER THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL TOGETHER, AND SAY UNTO THEM, THE LORD GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, OF ISAAC, AND JACOB, APPEARED UNTO ME, SAYING, I HAVE SURELY VISITED YOU, AND SEEN THAT WHICH IS DONE TO YOU IN EGYPT:

**EXODUS 4:5:** THAT THEY MAY BELIEVE THAT THE LORD GOD OF THEIR FATHERS, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB, HATH APPEARED UNTO THEE.

**1 KINGS 18:36:** SO, THE POSTS WENT WITH THE LETTERS FROM THE KING AND HIS PRINCES. IT CAME TO PASS AT THE TIME OF THE OFFERING OF THE EVENING SACRIFICE THAT ELIJAH THE PROPHET CAME NEAR AND SAID, LORD GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND ISRAEL, LET IT BE KNOWN THIS DAY THAT THOU ART GOD IN ISRAEL, AND THAT I AM THY SERVANT, AND THAT I HAVE DONE ALL THESE THINGS AT THY WORD. SO, THE POSTS WENT WITH THE LETTERS FROM THE KING AND HIS PRINCES THROUGHOUT ALL ISRAEL AND JUDAH, AND ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF THE KING, SAYING, YE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, TURN

AGAIN UNTO THE LORD GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND ISRAEL. HE WILL RETURN TO THE REMNANT OF YOU, ESCAPED OUT OF THE HAND OF THE KINGS OF ASSYRIA.

**PSALM 47:9:** THE PRINCES OF THE PEOPLE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER, EVEN THE PEOPLE OF THE GOD OF ABRAHAM: FOR THE SHIELDS OF THE EARTH BELONG UNTO GOD: HE IS GREATLY EXALTED.

**MATTHEW 22:32: ESV:** I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB? GOD IS NOT THE GOD OF THE DEAD BUT THE LIVING.

**MARK 12:26:** AND AS TOUCHING THE DEAD, THEY RISE: HAVE YE NOT READ IN THE BOOK OF MOSES, HOW IN THE BUSH GOD SPAKE UNTO HIM, SAYING, I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB?

**LUKE 20:37:** NOW THE DEAD ARE RAISED, EVEN MOSES SHOWED AT THE BUSH, WHEN HE CALLETH THE LORD THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB.

**ACTS 3:13 ESV:** THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, OF ISAAC, AND JACOB, THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS, HATH GLORIFIED HIS SON JESUS; WHOM YE DELIVERED UP AND DENIED HIM IN THE PRESENCE OF PILATE WHEN HE WAS DETERMINED TO LET HIM GO.

**ACTS 7:32:** SAYING, I AM THE GOD OF THY FATHERS, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB. THEN MOSES TREMBLED, AND DURST NOT BEHOLD.

Out of all the Prophets, Priests, Kings, and Apostles in The Bible, only one man of God is mentioned twenty times as the God of Abraham and thrice as the Friend of God. God highly favored Abraham.

#### **PROMISE 4: YOU WILL BE A BLESSING**

Strange but true, many people are in relationships for what they can get out of it. These people have a receiving mentality. Three persons are dominant in their life: I, me, and myself. This attitude was contrary to Abraham's lifestyle. He always placed others before himself. He lived the Scripture: **ESTEEM OTHERS BETTER THAN YOURSELF** BEFORE IT WAS PENNED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

God's Word teaches it is more blessed to give than to receive, and when in the predicament of choosing the grazing land for Lot's and Abram's sheep Abram gave Lot the first choice:

**GENESIS 13:5-18 NLT:** LOT, WHO WAS TRAVELLING WITH ABRAM, HAD ALSO BECOME VERY WEALTHY WITH FLOCKS OF SHEEP AND GOATS, HERDS OF CATTLE, AND MANY TENTS. BUT THE LAND COULD NOT SUPPORT BOTH ABRAM AND LOT WITH ALL THEIR FLOCKS AND HERDS LIVING SO CLOSE TOGETHER. SO, DISPUTES BROKE OUT BETWEEN THE HERDSMEN OF ABRAM AND LOT. (AT THAT TIME, CANAANITES AND PERIZZITES WERE LIVING IN THE LAND.) FINALLY, ABRAM SAID TO LOT, "LET'S NOT ALLOW THIS CONFLICT TO COME BETWEEN OUR HERDSMEN OR US. AFTER ALL, WE ARE CLOSE RELATIVES! THE WHOLE COUNTRYSIDE IS OPEN TO YOU. TAKE YOUR CHOICE OF ANY SECTION OF THE LAND YOU WANT, AND WE WILL SEPARATE. IF YOU WANT THE LAND TO THE LEFT, I'LL TAKE THE LAND TO THE RIGHT. IF YOU PREFER THE LAND ON THE RIGHT, I'LL GO TO THE LEFT." LOT TOOK A LONG LOOK AT THE JORDAN VALLEY'S FERTILE PLAINS IN THE ZOAR DIRECTION. THE WHOLE AREA WAS WELL-WATERED EVERYWHERE, LIKE THE GARDEN OF THE LORD OR THE BEAUTIFUL LAND OF EGYPT. (THIS WAS BEFORE THE LORD DESTROYED SODOM AND GOMORRAH.) LOT CHOSE FOR HIMSELF THE WHOLE JORDAN VALLEY TO THE EAST OF THEM. HE WENT THERE WITH HIS FLOCKS AND SERVANTS AND PARTED COMPANY WITH HIS UNCLE ABRAM.

SO, ABRAM SETTLED IN THE LAND OF CANAAN. LOT MOVED HIS TENTS TO A PLACE NEAR SODOM AND SETTLED AMONG THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN. BUT THE PEOPLE OF THIS AREA WERE EXTREMELY WICKED AND CONSTANTLY SINNED AGAINST THE LORD. AFTER LOT HAD GONE, THE LORD SAID TO ABRAM, "LOOK AS FAR AS YOU CAN SEE IN EVERY DIRECTION—NORTH AND SOUTH, EAST, AND WEST. I AM GIVING ALL THIS LAND, AS FAR AS YOU CAN SEE, TO YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS[A] AS A PERMANENT POSSESSION. AND I WILL GIVE YOU SO MANY DESCENDANTS THAT CAN NOT BE COUNTED AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH!

So GO AND WALK THROUGH THE LAND IN EVERY DIRECTION, FOR I AM GIVING IT TO YOU.” SO, ABRAM MOVED HIS CAMP TO HEBRON AND SETTLED NEAR THE OAK GROVE BELONGING TO MAMRE. THERE HE BUILT ANOTHER ALTAR TO THE LORD.

Abraham blessed Melchizedek with a title:

**HEBREWS 7:1-2 ESV:** FOR THIS MELCHIZEDEK, KING OF SALEM, PRIEST OF THE HIGHEST GOD, MET ABRAHAM RETURNING FROM THE SLAUGHTER OF THE KINGS AND BLESSED HIM, AND TO HIM ABRAHAM APPORTIONED A TENTH PART OF EVERYTHING

Abraham’s blessing of esteeming others better than himself is a spiritual trait we should mimic. God honors those who esteem others.

#### **PROMISE 5: I WILL BLESS THOSE WHO BLESS YOU**

God’s multiple covenant promises of blessing to Abraham reach to this very day. Furthermore, these blessings were not only toward Abraham, his family, and the nation of Israel. The blessings are toward all who bless and praise Israel. The Strongs Hebrew Concordance elaborates on how God blesses those who bless Israel and God’s anointed servants.

H1288

בָּרַךְ

BÂRAK

BAW-RAK’

A PRIMITIVE ROOT; TO KNEEL; BY IMPLICATION TO BLESS GOD (AS AN ACT OF ADORATION), AND (VICE-VERSA) MAN (AS A BENEFIT); ALSO (BY EUPHEMISM) TO CURSE (GOD OR THE KING, AS TREASON): - X ABUNDANTLY, X ALTOGETHER, X AT ALL, BLASPHEME, BLESS, CONGRATULATE, CURSE, X GREATLY, X INDEED, KNEEL (DOWN), PRAISE, SALUTE, X STILL, THANK.

STRONG’S CONCORDANCE

BARAK: TO KNEEL, BLESS

ORIGINAL WORD: בָּרַךְ

PART OF SPEECH: VERB

TRANSLITERATION: BARAK

PHONETIC SPELLING: (BAW-RAK')

DEFINITION: TO KNEEL, BLESS

NAS EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE

WORD ORIGIN

A PRIM. ROOT

DEFINITION

TO KNEEL, BLESS

NASB TRANSLATION

ABUNDANTLY BLESS (1), ACTUALLY BLESSED (1), BLESS (111), BLESS IS BLESSED (1), BLESS ME INDEED (1), BLESS THEM AT ALL (1), BLESSED (167), BLESSED BE THOSE WHO BLESS (1), BLESSED IS EVERYONE WHO BLESSES (1), BLESSES (10), BLESSING (1), BOAST (1), CONGRATULATES (1), CURSE (3), CURSED (3), CURSES (1), GREATLY BLESS (1), GREET (2), GREETED (1), HAD TO BLESS (1), KNEEL (1), KNEEL DOWN (1), KNELT (1), PERSISTED IN BLESSING (1), PRONOUNCE BLESSING (1), SALUTE (1), SALUTES (1), SURELY BLESS (1), THANKED (1).

THE MEANING OF בָּרַךְ (BARAK) IS TO KNEEL AND BLESS. THUS, GIVING AN UNDERSTANDING BLESSING RECOGNIZES A PERSON WORTHY OF HONOUR, ESTEEM, AND RESPECT, ABOVE OTHERS.

**PROMISE 6: I WILL CURSE HIM WHO CURSES YOU**

We note in Genesis chapters twelve to twenty-five that God protected Abraham over those who came up against Abraham. Promise six is not toward Abraham only. It is toward the nation of Israel and the Body of Christ. Therefore, God's Word warns those who come up against Israel and the Body of Christ not to touch the anointed of the Lord:



**ZECHARIAH 2:8 ESV:** FOR THUS SAID THE LORD OF HOSTS, AFTER HIS GLORY SENT ME TO THE NATIONS WHO PLUNDERED YOU, FOR HE WHO TOUCHES YOU TOUCHES THE APPLE OF HIS EYE:

**PROMISE 7: IN YOU SHALL ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH WILL BE BLESSED**

Abraham's blessings from God are far-reaching. They extend to our present time until Jesus returns. Abraham secured one grandiose (magnificent) blessing (not that the other six blessings were not glorious) because of his obedience to the call of God.

Obedience is the evidence of faith. Obedience propels (drives) faith. God honors faith, which often produces compensation (reward, benefit). Therefore, God rewarded Abram in several ways (see Genesis 12:1-3). However, the ultimate reward clothed with honor and esteem is recorded in the following:

**REVELATION 7:9-10 ESV:** <sup>9</sup> AFTER THIS I LOOKED, AND BEHOLD, A GREAT MULTITUDE THAT NO ONE COULD NUMBER, FROM EVERY NATION, FROM ALL TRIBES AND PEOPLES AND LANGUAGES, STANDING BEFORE THE THRONE AND BEFORE THE LAMB, CLOTHED IN WHITE ROBES, WITH PALM BRANCHES IN THEIR HANDS, <sup>10</sup> AND CRYING OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, "SALVATION BELONGS TO OUR GOD WHO SITS ON THE THRONE, AND TO THE LAMB!"

The multitude of all nations, people, and tongues fulfill the promise to Abraham that all families of the earth will be blessed, for they have accepted Jesus as their Saviour.

The Body of Christ consists of all tribes and nations, rooted in Father Abraham, who married Sarai, a barren lady (in fact, his half-sister sees Genesis 20:12). Thus, the nation of Israel and the Body of Christ generated from a man known for his unique relationship with God (the Friend of God):

**REVELATION 7:9-10 PHILLIPS:** AFTER THIS I BEHELD, AND, LO, A GREAT MULTITUDE, WHICH NO MAN COULD NUMBER, OF ALL NATIONS, AND KINDREDS, AND PEOPLE, AND TONGUES, STOOD BEFORE THE THRONE,

AND BEFORE THE LAMB, CLOTHED WITH WHITE ROBES, AND PALMS IN THEIR HANDS.

The multitude of all nations, people, and tongues fulfill the promise to Abraham that all families of the earth will be blessed, for they have accepted Jesus as their Saviour.

Reflecting on the physical and spiritual journey of Father Abraham, he was born in the land of Ur. God sent him to Canaan. His posterity (future generations, Israel) are scattered throughout the world through violent persecution. Israel, the Messiah Jesus Christ, was born from this persecuted nation. After his induction as Prophet, Priest, and King at the River Jordan, Jesus began his public ministry of preaching, teaching, and performing miracles. At the cross of Calvary, Jesus atoned for the sins of all nations. After the third day of his sacrificial death, Jesus rose from the grave and commissioned his Apostles to preach The Gospel of Grace and Forgiveness throughout the world.

Those people from all nations who stand in Heaven clothed in white are those from all nations that God promised Abraham: "IN YOU SHALL ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH WILL BE BLESSED."

The second aspect of this blessing was: "And in you [Abraham] all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Though the national blessings would benefit other nations, this blessing includes a much broader fulfillment. There would be a specific blessing that would come through Abraham that would not just affect his descendants but would bless all peoples of the earth. This blessing is restated in Genesis 22:18 with one crucial detail: "In your *seed*, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because you have obeyed My voice."

What is this "seed" of Abraham that would bless all peoples? The answer is found in Galatians 3:16: "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ."

Jesus Christ, physically a descendant of Abraham, was the Seed through which all the earth would be blessed. The spiritual blessings that have come to the world through Jesus Christ include:

- GRACE AND FORGIVENESS OF SIN (ACTS 13:38; ROMANS 3:24; 5:15-17; TITUS 2:11).
- THE EXTENSION OF THE SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS OF ABRAHAM TO ALL PEOPLES (GALATIANS 3:28-29).
- THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL PEOPLES TO RECEIVE SALVATION IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD (1 THESSALONIANS 5:9; 2 TIMOTHY 2:10; HEBREWS 5:9).
- THE FUTURE DEFEAT OF THE ENEMY OF ALL PEOPLE—SATAN THE DEVIL ([GENESIS 3:15](#); ROMANS 16:20).

### THE SEED OF ABRAHAM BLESSES ALL THE NATIONS”

**GENESIS 22:18 KJV** <sup>18</sup>AND IN THY SEED SHALL ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED BECAUSE THOU HAST OBEYED MY VOICE.

**GALATIANS 3:16 NKJV:** <sup>6</sup>NOW TO ABRAHAM AND HIS SEED WERE THE PROMISES MADE. HE DOES NOT SAY, “AND TO SEEDS,” “OF MANY,” BUT AS OF ONE, “AND TO YOUR SEED,” WHO IS CHRIST?

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**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**GODLY COMMANDMENTS FOR GODLY FRIENDSHIPS**

**PROVERBS 12:26 NIV**

THE RIGHTEOUS CHOOSE THEIR FRIENDS CAREFULLY, BUT THE WAY OF THE WICKED  
LEADS THEM ASTRAY.

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**F**riendships are not for a time and a moment. Therefore, we must choose our Friends carefully. We often hear the phrase: FRIENDSHIPS MADE IN HEAVEN ARE LASTING FRIENDSHIPS. However, what we must realize in choosing Friends is knowing what the Scripture says of humanity:

**ROMANS 3:23:** ALL MEN HAVE SINNED AND COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

Reflecting over the above Scripture, we must realize that though humankind has sinned, God, in His boundless mercy, still has a relationship with humanity to the extent that God wants man to move from a relationship of SERVANTHOOD TO FRIENDSHIP.

Christians must follow God's example and realize that we are imperfect and need Friends to improve our lives. Jesus, our loving Saviour, shows Christians to what depth must our Friendship extend:

**JOHN 15:13:** GREATER LOVE HAS NO ONE THAN THIS, THAT SOMEONE LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.

Our Friendships with the imperfect (like us) must be sacrificial. We must be in Friendship Relationships, not just to benefit from them. Our friends must also benefit from our relationship with us. Too often in Friendship Relationships, we want the receiving end of the relationship and not the giving end. The Word of God is clear that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Our classic example of putting others first is our Lord and Jesus Christ. Jesus enriched our life by giving His Life. Jesus said no

man takes my life. I give my life. Therefore, for our Friendship Relationships to make a Godly impact, we must always put our Friends first. One of the primary keys of Godly Friendship Relationships is esteeming your Friend better than yourself.

**PHILIPPIANS 2:3 KJV:** LET NOTHING BE DONE THROUGH STRIFE OR VAINGLORY, BUT IN LOWLINESS OF MIND LET EACH ESTEEM OTHER BETTER THAN THEMSELVES.

#### **ETHICAL GEMS OF GODLY FRIENDSHIP**

Scripture teaches that what we sow is what we reap. Show kindness to receive kindness. Show empathy to receive empathy. One of the significant problems in Friendship Relationships is that we expect so much from our Friends. To get the best, we MUST FIRST GIVE OUR BEST. THEREFORE, WE MUST BE THE FIRST IN THE RELATIONSHIP TO SOW GODLY SEED.

Many of us make the mistake of expecting too much in the Friendship Relationship. Jesus gave His all. I am not suggesting that we must lay our life down. However, we must esteem the benefits of Friendship to be more beneficial to the other party than ourselves. Therefore, I AM PURPOSELY STRESSING WHAT MUST BE THE GODLIKE CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR FRIENDSHIP TO OUR FRIENDS.

#### **GODLY COMMANDMENTS OF AUTHENTIC (FAITHFUL) FRIENDSHIP**

- 1. TIME TOGETHER:** WE MUST SPEND CREDITABLE TIME WITH OUR FRIENDS. WE MUST NEVER ONLY SPEND TIME WITH THEM WHEN WE NEED THEM. THE PROVERB: A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED IS TRUE. HOWEVER, WE MUST NOT ABUSE THE RELATIONSHIP. BASING A FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIP ON JUST MEETING WHEN WE NEED COUNSELLING, ADVICE, SPECIAL FAVORS, AND EVEN SERIOUS PRAYER WILL BE SEEN AS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE SO-CALLED FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIP.
- 2. ESTEEM YOUR FRIEND:** WHEN IN THE COMPANY OF PEOPLE AND YOUR FRIEND, BE SURE TO MAKE YOUR FRIEND FEEL AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE COMPANY. BE SURE TO INCLUDE HIM IN THE TOPIC DISCUSSION. ASK FOR HIS OPINION ON WHAT IS BEING DISCUSSED. LEAVING THE FRIEND OUT OF THE CONVERSATION MAY BE INTERPRETED THAT YOU HAVE NO REGARD AND RESPECT FOR YOUR FRIEND'S OPINIONS IN PUBLIC.

3. **CONFIDANT:** WHAT YOUR FRIEND SHARES WITH YOU CONFIDENTIALLY IS ONLY FOR YOUR EARS AND THE LORD'S EARS.
4. **DEFEND YOUR FRIEND:** WHEN PEOPLE SPEAK ILL OF YOUR FRIEND, DEFEND HIM. DO NOT ALLOW GOSSIP BROUGHT TO YOU UNLESS YOU ARE IN THE PRESENCE OF YOUR FRIEND. REBUKE THOSE WHO SPEAK ILL OF YOUR FRIEND WHEN HE IS NOT AROUND.
5. **CONSISTENCY:** CONSTANTLY **CANCELLING** SOCIAL AND PRAYER TIMES WITH YOUR FRIEND: MAY BE SEEN AS WANTING TO SEVER THE FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIP. KEEP YOUR PROMISES AND APPOINTMENTS WITH YOUR FRIEND. MY DEAR FATHER ALWAYS SAID A MAN IS ONLY AS GOOD AS HIS WORD.
6. **SHOW OFF YOUR FRIEND:** INTRODUCE YOUR FRIEND TO YOUR FAMILY AND CONNECTIONS. LET YOUR FRIEND KNOW HE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE INNERMOST CIRCLE.
7. **MONEY:** NO ONE IS IMMUNE TO FINANCIAL PROBLEMS. HELP YOUR FRIEND WHEN HE IS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY. HOWEVER, WHEN IT BECOMES A CONSTANT PROBLEM, TEACH HIM HOW TO MANAGE HIS FINANCE AND LET THERE BE TIMES WHEN HE HAS TO PAY BACK WHAT HE HAS BORROWED SO THAT HE WOULD BECOME ACCOUNTABLE FOR HIS FINANCES.
8. **WORD-BASED COUNSELLING:** WHEN CORRECTING AND COUNSELLING YOUR FRIEND, NEVER USE OTHER PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES IN LIFE, MORE SO WHEN THOSE YOU SPEAK OF ARE OF ILL REPUTE. USING OTHER PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES GIVES YOUR FRIEND THE UNDERSTANDING THAT YOU MAY BE USING HIS BAD EXPERIENCES TO COUNSEL OTHER FRIENDS AND THUS GIVE HIM A BAD NAME IN THE COMMUNITY. ALWAYS USE THE CHARACTERS OF THE BIBLE, FOR THEY ARE DEAD AND GONE, AND WE HAVE NO CONNECTION WITH THEM OTHER THAN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR HISTORY OF FAILURE AND HOW GOD DELIVERED AND FORGAVE THEM.
9. **GENDER:** IT IS NOT WRONG FOR US TO HAVE FRIENDS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX. HOWEVER, ALWAYS WHEN MEETING, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE YOUR SPOUSE'S APPROVAL AND THE SPOUSE KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE MEETING YOUR FRIEND. SOME OF OUR FRIENDS ARE FROM OUR CHILDHOOD, AND THE RELATIONSHIP WAS AND STILL IS MEANINGFUL.

**10. FAMILY CONNECTIONS:** OUR FRIENDS SHOULD BE KNOWN TO OUR FAMILY. WHEN WE HAVE FRIENDS NOT KNOWN TO THE FAMILY, WE MAY GIVE THE FRIEND THE UNDERSTANDING THAT WE ARE ASHAMED OF THEM.

**11. CONTINUITY OF FRIENDSHIP:** GENUINE (SINCERE, TRUE) FRIENDSHIP NEVER ENDS AT THE GRAVESIDE. MY FRIENDS AND I ALWAYS MAINTAINED WE WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR EACH OTHER, AND IT WAS NOT TILL DEATH DID WERE PART. TRUE GODLY FRIENDS BASE THEIR RELATIONSHIP ON THE WORD OF GOD, SCRIPTURES: CARE ONE FOR THE OTHER, CARRY EACH OTHER'S BURDENS, AND ARE EACH OTHER'S KEEPERS. THEREFORE, OUR FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIPS MUST NOT END AT THE GRAVESIDE. KING DAVID GIVES US A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF FRIENDSHIP GOING BEYOND THE GRAVE IN 2 SAMUEL 9:1-13.

**12. FORGIVENESS:** ALEXANDER POPE'S WISE WORDS TO ERR IS HUMAN; TO FORGIVE IS DIVINE BY GOD'S GRACE MUST BECOME OUR WATCHWORD AND SONG.

### **IRON SHARPENS IRON**

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only PERFECT PERSON who walked the face of the earth. Though tempted in all spheres of sin, Jesus did not succumb (yield). Though we do our utmost not to succumb to temptation, there are those occasions we fall short of the glory of God and sin. Therefore. We need Godly people to become a part of our life. No one is an Island, meaning man is not like an Island that is all on its lonesome. Instead, humanity is surrounded by humanity. Someone said humanity comprises all kinds of people – THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY. We live in an environment that so quickly influences us, and therefore we must find those Friends who influence our life toward Godliness.

One of the significant problems is that we first consider every TOM, DICK, AND HARRY. No wonder we continually mess up. Furthermore, THE WORD OF GOD TEACHES that ALL HAVE SINNED AND COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD, AND NONE ARE RIGHTEOUS. The iron of humanity whirled an iron of Sin and Self Righteousness. Therefore, we must seek those Friends who desire to live a righteous life and are Born of God's Spirit (John 3:1-6).

The purpose of Godly Friendships is the enrichment of Godly character. Adam was created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27).



Unfortunately, due to sin, man has lost the image of God. However, through the Born-Again experience, the nature of God has been re-awakened. Unfortunately, we live in an environment where sin runs rampant and affects our Christian lifestyle. Therefore, we must engage and interact with Christians who honor and follow God's Word to live a holy life.

Godly Friends speak words of correction and encouragement. Godly Friends have your best interest at heart. As they, by the Grace of God, strive (endeavor, do their best) to live a Godly life, they will also encourage you to live a Godly life. As Christian Friends, we need each other; as iron sharpens iron, so do we sharpen each other.

#### **THE WISE COUNSEL OF GOD'S WORD IN CHOOSING FRIENDS**

Godly friends enjoy doing and caring for each other. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). Godly friendships are self-sacrificing and life-transforming. The intimacy we long for is found in Christ and expressed through godly friendships.

2 PROVERBS 27:17 IRON SHARPENS IRON, SO A FRIEND SHARPENS A FRIEND.

The above verse speaks of **The Law of Association**. With whom we associate, we most definitely become like. When we join and relate with good Godly people, their Godly nature rubs onto us. We become like the company we keep. Their characteristics, lifestyle, and their mannerisms sharpen our characteristics and lifestyle. Therefore, we must befriend people who love and serve God wholeheartedly. Though we must witness to the unsaved, we are to influence them with our Godly lifestyle, and never must we embrace their bad habits. Our Christian duty is to influence those outside Christ with our Christlike nature.

Friendships are never a one-way exercise. We do not befriend people so that they may bless us. As much as Friends enrich our lives, so must we enrich their lives. Sadly, there is those type of people that befriend others that they may glean from them, and once they receive what they need, they withdraw themselves and move on. Sadly, they aimed to enrich themselves.

## **RECOGNIZING FALSE FRIENDS**

Friendships are a blessing from God when as Friends, we DO NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EACH OTHER.

**PROVERBS 13:20:** WALK WITH THE WISE AND BECOME WISE; ASSOCIATE WITH FOOLS AND GET IN TROUBLE.

Regardless of what we are and know, we constantly need an upgrade in knowledge and wisdom. I have always maintained that Godly imparted knowledge by Friends who have you upon their hearts will always impart knowledge that will lead to wisdom. Being wise is acting out the knowledge gained through meaningful relationships with Godly Friends who have your best interest at heart. Sound knowledge always leads to wise action. Wisdom is acting out the knowledge gained through meaningful Godly Friendly relationships. Therefore, as Born-Again Christians, we should ask God for the type of Friends to whom we impart wisdom and knowledge, and in like manner, they also impart to us.

As Christians, we must be careful not to always be on the receiving end of blessings. It is more blessed to give than to receive. Therefore, our Christlike motto should be I AM IN THE CHRISTIAN WALK, NOT JUST FOR WHAT I CAN GET FROM OTHERS. IT IS WHAT I CAN GIVE TO OTHERS. And therefore, our attitude is to first give to others and then trust God; they give us and others as well.

The company we associate with determines our lifestyle and our walk with God. Our walk is a walk of obedience and holiness to The Lord. Therefore, if unwise advice and counsel from a Friend or acquaintance breeds disobedience and sin, we have no alternative but to relinquish the Friendship. For to continue in such a Friendship, we lose out on God, who is ALL-WISE:

**PROVERBS 17:17:** A FRIEND IS ALWAYS LOYAL, AND A BROTHER IS BORN TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED:

**ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10:** TWO PEOPLE ARE BETTER THAN ONE BECAUSE TOGETHER, THEY HAVE A GOOD REWARD FOR THEIR HARD WORK. IF ONE FALLS, THE OTHER CAN HELP HIS FRIEND GET UP. BUT HOW TRAGIC IT IS

FOR THE ONE WHO IS ALL ALONE WHEN HE FALLS. THERE IS NO ONE TO HELP HIM GET UP.

**PROVERBS 18:2:** ONE WHO HAS UNRELIABLE FRIENDS SOON COMES TO RUIN, BUT THERE IS A FRIEND WHO STICKS CLOSER THAN A BROTHER.

#### **GOOD FRIENDS GIVE WISE COUNSEL.**

**PROVERBS 11:14:** WITHOUT WISE LEADERSHIP, A NATION IS IN TROUBLE, BUT WITH GOOD COUNSELORS, THERE IS SAFETY.

**PROVERBS 27:9:** OINTMENTS AND PERFUME ENCOURAGE THE HEART; IN A SIMILAR WAY, A FRIEND'S ADVICE IS SWEET TO THE SOUL.

**PROVERBS 24:6:** FOR THROUGH WISE COUNSEL YOU WILL WAGE YOUR WAR, AND VICTORY LIES IN AN ABUNDANCE OF ADVISORS.

#### **GOOD FRIENDS TELL YOU WHAT YOU NEED TO HEAR RATHER THAN TRYING TO FLATTER YOU.**

**PROVERBS 28:23:** WHOEVER REBUKES A MAN WILL, LATER ON, FIND MORE FAVOR THAN SOMEONE WHO FLATTERS HIS WORDS.

**PROVERBS 27:5:** SAYS OPEN CRITICISM IS BETTER THAN HIDDEN LOVE.

**PROVERBS 27:6:** YOU CAN TRUST WHAT YOUR FRIEND SAYS, EVEN WHEN IT HURTS. BUT YOUR ENEMIES WANT TO HURT YOU, EVEN WHEN THEY ACT NICE.

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:11:** THEREFORE, ENCOURAGE ANOTHER AND BUILD EACH OTHER UP AS YOU ARE ALREADY DOING.

#### **DO NOT CHOOSE BAD FRIENDS**

**1 CORINTHIANS 15:33:** DO NOT BE MISLED: "BAD COMPANY CORRUPTS GOOD CHARACTER."

**PROVERBS 16:29:** A VIOLENT PERSON ENTICES THEIR NEIGHBOR AND LEADS THEM DOWN A PATH THAT IS NOT GOOD.

**PSALM 26:4-5:** I DID NOT SIT WITH LIARS, AND I WILL NOT BE FOUND AMONG HYPOCRITES. I HATE THE MOB OF EVILDOERS AND WILL NOT SIT WITH WICKED PEOPLE.

**PSALM 1:1:** HOW BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO DOES NOT WALK IN THE COUNSEL OF THE WICKED, NOR STANDS IN THE PATH OF SINNERS, NOR SITS IN THE SEAT OF SCOFFERS!

**PROVERBS 22:24-25:** DO NOT BE A FRIEND OF ONE WHO HAS A BAD TEMPER AND NEVER KEEPS COMPANY WITH A HOTHEAD, OR YOU WILL LEARN HIS WAYS AND SET A TRAP FOR YOURSELF.

**1 CORINTHIANS 5:11** NOW, WHAT I MEANT WAS THAT YOU SHOULD NOT ASSOCIATE WITH PEOPLE WHO CALL THEMSELVES BROTHERS OR SISTERS IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH BUT LIVE IN SEXUAL SIN, ARE GREEDY, WORSHIP FALSE GODS, USE ABUSIVE LANGUAGE, GET DRUNK, OR ARE DISHONEST. DON'T EAT WITH SUCH PEOPLE.

### **THE ULTIMATE OF FRIENDSHIP**

**JOHN 15:13 ESV:** NO ONE HAS GREATER LOVE THAN THIS—THAT ONE LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.

### **FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS**

We do not just gain Friendship by obeying. We must recognize that WE are sinners in need of a Savior. God desires perfection, and we cannot meet the requirements. God came down in the flesh. Jesus lived a holy life that we could not live and was crucified for our sins.

He died, was buried, and resurrected for our transgressions. We must repent and trust in Christ. We must trust in what Christ has done for us. Jesus is the only way. We are going to Heaven because of Jesus.

Obeying the Bible leads us to salvation. However, we live by The Word of God because we genuinely love and appreciate Christ and thus grow into a Friendship Relationship with Jesus Christ.

**JOHN 15:14-16:** YOU ARE MY FRIENDS IF YOU DO WHAT I COMMAND. I NO LONGER CALL YOU ENSLAVED PEOPLE BECAUSE THE ENSLAVED PERSON DOES NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT HIS MASTER IS DOING. BUT I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS BECAUSE I HAVE REVEALED EVERYTHING I HEARD FROM MY FATHER. YOU DID NOT CHOOSE ME, BUT I CHOSE YOU AND APPOINTED YOU TO GO AND BEAR FRUIT, FRUIT THAT REMAINS SO THAT WHATEVER YOU ASK THE FATHER IN MY NAME, HE WILL GIVE YOU.

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**CHAPTER SIX**  
**FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD**

**JOHN 15:15 ESV**

NO LONGER DO I CALL YOU SERVANTS, FOR THE SERVANT DOES NOT KNOW WHAT HIS MASTER IS DOING, BUT I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS, FOR ALL I HAVE HEARD FROM MY FATHER, I HAVE MADE KNOWN TO YOU.

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As a minister of The Gospel of Jesus Christ, there is a longing within my Spirit that no human can satisfy, and that is a close personal Friendship with God. Many of God's Born-Again children have the same sincere spiritual hunger. I have studied The Word of God and sought The Lord's face, yet this incredible hunger and yearning to be a Friend of God are not satisfied and quenched. It is like a fire within me that cannot be extinguished.

God can only quench this continual longing and unquenchable desire that many of God's servants have. So, what causes me and so many of God's ministers and children to cry out consistently to God for a meaningful relationship of Friendship with God? Has God only one Friend, and that is Abraham? I believe that as much as we want Friendship with God, so does our loving God's desire to be our Friend.

Sadly, those few of God's Preachers give us the impression that they are Friends of God, verifying their Friendship by citing their unique so-called out-of-body experience with God. I do believe that God does give us some remarkable spiritual experiences. However, when these so-called out-of-the-body experiences contradict The Word of God, WE MUST REJECT THEM.

I have listened to many renowned televangelists who openly speak of having unique experiences. The alarming fact is that instead of their so-called experiences being a blessing and a motivation to me, their so-called experiences had filled my Spirit with jealousy and resentment. This alarming reaction motivated me to ask God for forgiveness and praise God that our Father was faithful to His Word. I was forgiven and

consoled. I was reassured by repenting of my sin of jealousy. However, God, The Holy Spirit, gave me discernment when hearing about one of America's famous tv-evangelists out of the body experiences (Chapter Six of this book deals with the so-called personal encounter this Man of God had with God).

Before we speak of the television -Evangelist's face-to-face experience in Heaven with God, let us remind ourselves that it is biblical to have such experiences as there are incidents of such experiences in The Old and New Testaments. However, we must not be gullible. We must judge these OUT OF THE BODY experiences according to The Word of God,

I am convinced that all called of God's Gospel ministers long and hunger for intimacy with God that defies the norm. Moses cried out to God for this unique intimacy, and graciously Jehovah gave him but a glimpse of His person. The genuine desire of all faithful Gospel ministers, the yearning, the spiritual thirst that God in His glory might appear unto them and speak to them personally is commendable.

God spoke face-to-face with Moses. Will God speak face-to-face with you and me? This is a challenging pertinent (relevant) question to answer. Searching The Word of God, I am convinced this is more than possible. However, suppose it happens to you and me. In that case, we must not be like these televangelists and disclose it to the Church and the world.

There is a belief among scholars and theologians that Apostle Paul had a unique experience with God, being transported into Heaven. However, there in the very immediate presence of GOD, he received revelations that were not beneficial to our spiritual well-being:

**2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-7** ESV: I MUST GO ON BOASTING. THOUGH THERE IS NOTHING TO BE GAINED BY IT, I WILL GO ON TO VISIONS AND REVELATIONS OF THE LORD.<sup>2</sup>I KNOW A MAN IN CHRIST WHO FOURTEEN YEARS AGO WAS CAUGHT UP TO THE THIRD HEAVEN—WHETHER IN THE BODY OR OUT OF THE BODY I DO NOT KNOW, GOD KNOWS.<sup>3</sup>AND I KNOW THAT THIS MAN WAS CAUGHT UP INTO PARADISE—WHETHER IN THE BODY OR OUT OF THE BODY I DO NOT KNOW, GOD KNOWS—<sup>4</sup>AND HE HEARD THINGS THAT CAN NOT BE TOLD,

WHICH MAN MAY NOT UTTER. <sup>5</sup> ON BEHALF OF THIS MAN I WILL BOAST, BUT ON MY BEHALF I WILL NOT BOAST, EXCEPT MY WEAKNESSES— <sup>6</sup> THOUGH IF I WISHED TO BOAST, I WOULD NOT BE A FOOL, FOR I WOULD BE SPEAKING THE TRUTH; BUT I REFRAIN FROM IT, SO THAT NO ONE MAY THINK MORE OF ME THAN HE SEES IN ME OR HEARS FROM ME. <sup>7</sup> TO KEEP ME FROM BECOMING CONCEITED BECAUSE OF THE SURPASSING GREATNESS OF THE REVELATIONS, A THORN WAS GIVEN ME IN THE FLESH, A MESSENGER OF SATAN TO HARASS ME, TO KEEP ME FROM BECOMING CONCEITED.

What was seen and heard could not be communicated. Paul's silence of the heavenly experience in Heaven is a lesson for all these television Evangelists and us. Our personal experience with God is confidential, not for the ears of The Body of Christ and, more so, not for the world. Though Paul's words encourage us, I still hunger and yearn for intimacy with God. However, I have taken my lesson from 2 Corinthians 12:1-7 and that what I experience is not for disclosure to The Body of Christ and the world. God has placed within my Spirit the understanding that there is more than enough in His Word to make humankind wise unto salvation. Man needs NO MORE REVELATION FROM GOD. These Revelations bring confusion, and as in my case, it moved me to jealousy, **and** I thanked God I repented of my needless envy.

My yearnings for God have not ceased in any way. On the contrary, they have intensified. However, these yearnings and longings after God are now conditioned and controlled by THE WORD OF GOD. I would still like personal encounters with God when God speaks to me. His presence overwhelms me, and yet I am content to have Moses,' Job's, and Abraham's experiences and what The Word of God declares:

**JOHN 15:12-15:** "THIS IS MY COMMANDMENT, THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER, AS I HAVE LOVED YOU. GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS. THEREFORE, YE ARE MY FRIENDS. IF YE DO WHATSOEVER, I COMMAND YOU. I CALL YOU NOT SERVANTS; FOR THE SERVANT KNOWETH NOT WHAT HIS LORD DOETH: BUT I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS; FOR ALL THINGS I HEARD OF MY FATHER I HAVE MADE KNOWN UNTO YOU."

My cries to God of late are to have a testimony with God that shows His confidence and trust in me. So many of us have been trying to please our congregations and communities for too long. Sadly, we missed God in the process. Job's testimony was outstanding. God revered and respected His servant Job, and no wonder God proudly proclaimed:

**JOB 1:8:** "AND THE LORD SAID UNTO SATAN, HAST THOU CONSIDERED MY SERVANT JOB, THAT THERE IS NONE HIM IN THE EARTH, A PERFECT AND AN UPRIGHT MAN, ONE THAT FEARETH GOD, AND ESCHEWED EVIL."

How authentic is The Holy Scriptures: "The just shall live by faith."? Though this is so true concerning faith. However, it is one fact to have Faith in God, but it is another fact for God to have Faith in You and Me. Job had an incredible testimony.

It was not so much that Job believed in God; God trusted Job. The Lord God believed in Job. Let our cry be likened unto Job's testimony with The Lord. As ministers of The Gospel of Jesus Christ, let us cry to God for this unique spiritual experience. It is one thing when humanity speaks well of you and me, but it is another when God speaks well of you and me.

I am of the persuasion that God treated Job as His Friend. I concur that The Word of God does not show this; however, my spiritual reasoning is that God would not speak so highly of Job if He were not esteemed as a Friend. Dr. Ronnie Naidoo of The Apostolic Faith Mission situated in Tongaat, South Africa, shared a truth concerning Friendship:

**IT IS FAR BETTER TO BE KNOWN IN THE COURTS OF GOD THAN TO BE KNOWN IN THE COURTS OF MEN.**

Throughout Scripture, God only reveals one man as a Friend:

**JAMES 2:23:** "AND THE SCRIPTURE WAS FULFILLED WHICH SAITH, ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS IMPUTED UNTO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS: AND HE WAS CALLED THE FRIEND OF GOD."

Therefore, throughout The Old and New Testaments, ministers of His Word are referred to as servants of God. My cry and I believe your cry as



well, oh mighty men of God, is that we progress from the role of servanthood to Friendship with God. Is it possible that we may have this Friendship experience with almighty God? What does The Word of God say about this? Praise God. It is more than likely. With God, all things are possible; it is for us to meet the criterion (standard) recorded in John 15:12-15:

The crucial question is, what will convince us that this beautiful transition has occurred? Our answer is found in The Unadulterated Word of God. Like God's Friend Abraham, we too may become God's confidants. God shares His mind and intentions only with His Friends. Friends do not withhold their minds and feelings from each other. They are open books to each other. There are no secrets between them.:

**GENESIS 18:17-22 ESV:** THE LORD SAID, "SHALL I HIDE FROM ABRAHAM WHAT I AM ABOUT TO DO, <sup>18</sup>SEEING THAT ABRAHAM SHALL SURELY BECOME A GREAT AND MIGHTY NATION, AND ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED IN HIM? <sup>19</sup>FOR I HAVE CHOSEN HIM, THAT HE MAY COMMAND HIS CHILDREN AND HIS HOUSEHOLD AFTER HIM TO KEEP THE WAY OF THE LORD BY DOING RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE, SO THAT THE LORD MAY BRING TO ABRAHAM WHAT HE HAS PROMISED HIM." <sup>20</sup>THEN THE LORD SAID, "BECAUSE THE OUTCRY AGAINST SODOM AND GOMORRAH IS GREAT AND THEIR SIN IS VERY GRAVE, <sup>21</sup>I WILL GO DOWN TO SEE WHETHER THEY HAVE DONE ALTOGETHER ACCORDING TO THE OUTCRY THAT HAS COME TO ME. AND IF NOT, I WILL KNOW."

With true Friendship, there is always trust. Sharing between Friends is confidential. The mere fact that Friends share secrets of themselves is sincere trust in each other. THEY NEVER DISCLOSE TO OTHER PEOPLE WHAT HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED TO THEM. I have always said that breaking confidence is breaking Friendship. What God often shares with us about others is not for disclosure. It is but for the reason to uphold them in the arms of prayer. The best-kept secrets are with Friends.

It is not unusual for God to reveal what the future holds for His servants. However, whatever God reveals to us, God often shares His will and heart with those people of God whom He considers His Friends. Some of you dear readers may say I am going too far, that we become His confidant as Friends of God. We have already referred to Abraham, the

Friend of God, whom God had said: "IT IS NOT GOOD THAT I DO NOT REVEAL TO ABRAHAM WHAT I AM ABOUT TO DO TO SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

We must further hear from God whether we must convey (communicate) to The Body of Christ and the world OF WHAT GOD HAS SHARED WITH US, Oft times what God wants us to pray about what God has revealed. The Apostle Paul's teaching is recorded in 2 Corinthians 12:1-7:

**2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-7** ESV: I MUST GO ON BOASTING. THOUGH THERE IS NOTHING TO BE GAINED BY IT, I WILL GO ON TO VISIONS AND REVELATIONS OF THE LORD. <sup>2</sup>I KNOW A MAN IN CHRIST WHO FOURTEEN YEARS AGO WAS CAUGHT UP TO THE THIRD HEAVEN—WHETHER IN THE BODY OR OUT OF THE BODY I DO NOT KNOW, GOD KNOWS. <sup>3</sup>AND I KNOW THAT THIS MAN WAS CAUGHT UP INTO PARADISE—WHETHER IN THE BODY OR OUT OF THE BODY I DO NOT KNOW, GOD KNOWS— <sup>4</sup>AND HE HEARD THINGS THAT CAN NOT BE TOLD, WHICH MAN MAY NOT UTTER. <sup>5</sup>ON BEHALF OF THIS MAN I WILL BOAST, BUT ON MY BEHALF I WILL NOT BOAST, EXCEPT MY WEAKNESSES— <sup>6</sup>THOUGH IF I WISHED TO BOAST, I WOULD NOT BE A FOOL, FOR I WOULD BE SPEAKING THE TRUTH; BUT I REFRAIN FROM IT, SO THAT NO ONE MAY THINK MORE OF ME THAN HE SEES IN ME OR HEARS FROM ME. <sup>7</sup> TO KEEP ME FROM BECOMING CONCEITED BECAUSE OF THE SURPASSING GREATNESS OF THE REVELATIONS, A THORN WAS GIVEN ME IN THE FLESH, A MESSENGER OF SATAN TO HARASS ME, TO KEEP ME FROM BECOMING CONCEITED.

Let me now share the so-called spiritual out-of-the-body experience of the American Tele-Evangelists Several years ago. I listened to an audiotape. I later had the experience of seeing the preaching on TV. This dear Tele - Evangelist spoke about his personal experience in Heaven and his unique vision of God. He entered his prayer room, and instead of spending his regular time in his daily devotions, he found himself spending six hours in the presence of God. He says that king David came to him and took him to Heaven in a chariot, and it took but a flash to get to Heaven and into the immediate presence of God. And there, he spent time with God. He says he saw God on His throne, and out of the person of God the Father, Jesus came forth. He said he was amazed and asked

the foolish question: “Where is the Holy Spirit”? He got the answer that the Holy Spirit was on Earth saving souls. My Spirit leaped in me, and I knew this man of God was exaggerating his experience. What he said and heard from God was contrary to Scripture. ALL THREE PERSONS OF THE ETERNAL TRINITY ARE OMNIPOTENT, OMNISCIENT, AND OMNIPRESENT. LIKE GOD THE FATHER AND JESUS THE SON OF GOD, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS EVERYWHERE SIMULTANEOUSLY.

First, if what this man had experienced was definite, it was not for The Body of Christ. It was a personal experience. Secondly, it had within the experience falsehood. Great lessons may be learned from what I believe was not from God. God never reveals that which is contrary to his Word.

Furthermore, through His Word, God has given us instruction from Apostle Paul, penned in 2 Corinthians 12:1-7, not to show secrets from God. However, when God does not speak confidentially, we must follow Paul’s teaching:

**1 CORINTHIANS 14:29-33 KJV:** LET THE PROPHETS SPEAK TWO OR THREE AND LET THE OTHER JUDGE. <sup>30</sup>IF ANYTHING BE REVEALED TO ANOTHER THAT SITTETH BY, LET THE FIRST HOLD HIS PEACE. <sup>31</sup>FOR YE MAY ALL PROPHECY ONE BY ONE, THAT ALL MAY LEARN, AND ALL MAY BE COMFORTED. <sup>32</sup>AND THE SPIRITS OF THE PROPHETS ARE SUBJECT TO THE PROPHETS. <sup>33</sup>FOR GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF CONFUSION, BUT OF PEACE, AS IN ALL CHURCHES OF THE SAINTS.

Friendship with God is possible. However, a faithful and wise Friend of God always stays true to The Word of God. The Word of God does speak of the servants and handmaidens of God having dreams, visions, and the gift of Prophecy:

**ACTS 2:17-18 NLT:** ‘IN THE LAST DAYS,’ GOD SAYS, ‘I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT UPON ALL PEOPLE. SO YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS WILL PROPHECY. SO, YOUR YOUNG MEN WILL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN WILL DREAM DREAMS <sup>18</sup>IN THOSE DAYS, I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT EVEN ON MY SERVANTS—MEN AND WOMEN ALIKE— AND THEY WILL PROPHECY.

However, a faithful Friend of God never preaches outside of the framework of God's Word. a loyal Friend is a confidant of God and always honors the Word of God

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**HYMN**

**FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS, FELLOWSHIP DIVINE**

**COMPOSER: JOSEPH C LUDGATE**

A FRIEND OF JESUS! OH, WHAT BLISS  
THAT ONE IS SO WEAK, AS I  
SHOULD I EVER HAVE A FRIEND LIKE THIS  
TO LEAD ME TO THE SKY!

**CHORUS:**

FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS!  
FELLOWSHIP DIVINE!  
OH, WHAT A BLESSED, SWEET COMMUNION!  
JESUS IS A FRIEND OF MINE.

A FRIEND, WHEN OTHER FRIENDSHIPS CEASE,  
A FRIEND WHEN OTHERS FAIL,  
A FRIEND WHO GIVES ME JOY AND PEACE,  
A FRIEND WHEN FOES ASSAIL!

**CHORUS:**

FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS!  
FELLOWSHIP DIVINE!  
OH, WHAT A BLESSED, SWEET COMMUNION!  
JESUS IS A FRIEND OF MINE.

A FRIEND WHEN SICKNESS LAYS ME LOW,  
A FRIEND, WHEN DEATH DRAWS NEAR,  
A FRIEND AS THROUGH THE VALE I GO,  
A FRIEND TO HELP AND CHEER!

**CHORUS:**

FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS!  
FELLOWSHIP DIVINE!  
OH, WHAT A BLESSED, SWEET COMMUNION!  
JESUS IS A FRIEND OF MINE.

A FRIEND WHEN LIFE'S SHORT RACE IS O'ER  
A FRIEND WHEN EARTH IS PAST,  
A FRIEND TO MEET ON HEAVEN'S SHORE,  
A FRIEND WHEN HOME AT LAST!

**CHORUS:**

FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS  
FELLOWSHIP DIVINE  
OH, WHAT A BLESSED, SWEET COMMUNION!  
JESUS IS A FRIEND OF MINE.

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**A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR**

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Trust that this booklet has been a blessing to you. Make copies for your family, friends, and fellow Christians. Please pray for me and my wife (Dolores), emphasizing good health and spiritual integrity. I may be contacted via email: [dallendenz@gmail.com](mailto:dallendenz@gmail.com)

God bless

Joseph and Dolores D'Allende

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Joseph D'Allende was born at 15 Pine Road, Woodstock, Cape Town, to Joseph and Maud de Allende. He attended Holy Cross Primary and Saint Agnes Secondary Schools.

Joseph was Born-Again in 1975 and attended Open Door Assemblies Greenwood Park Durban, South Africa. He served The Church as a Sunday School Teacher, Superintendent, and Deacon.

Joseph studied at International Bible College, obtaining a Diploma in Theology. And after that lectured at I.B.C for three years. After that, he pioneered A School of Ministry in Chatsworth and taught at a School of Ministry at Newlands East, which Pastor Ward had set up in his local Church.

Frequently, Joseph was blessed by The Lord, receiving invitations to minister in Tent campaigns. Many regarded Joseph as an Evangelist. However, because of Joseph's Teaching Ministry, he was approached by Life Centre Ministries to pioneer A Bible School in Sydenham. He wrote the Constitution and Prospectus by God's grace and established the Bible school. He was the principal for just over two years. Unfortunately, due to financial constraints, he had no alternative but to seek a pastor's post, as his work at Life Bible School was without remuneration.

Joseph pioneered three churches, which today have buildings (two built by his Spiritual Sons). One of the primary joys of his ministry was writing Church constitutions for Churches that transitioned from Democratic Principles of Governance to Theocratic Principles of Governance

In 2003 Joseph and his wife, Dolores, immigrated to New Zealand, and there he had the honor of serving The Tongan Assemblies of God for about four years. Joseph thanks Pastors Lenati, Sikalu, and Leo for sharing their pulpits with him. In addition, he set up a school of Ministry at Pastor Lenati's Assembly and helped Pastor Sikalu in his School of Ministry.

In 2011 with the help (paid help) of Ian Sinclair and a financial donation from his Spiritual Son, Pastor Jacob Isaac, he established Calvary Apostolic Ministries, which hosts almost 150 videos, podcasts and a few books, and several essays.

The illustrious man of God believes he owes all he has done FOR God TO God. Knowing it was God, The Holy Spirit, doing the work through him. His dear wife, Dolores, has financially supported his ministry throughout the years, taking on the responsibility of being The Bread Winner of the family. Unfortunately, the strain has harmed her health. People stand aghast when Joseph tells them Dolores has had over forty operations. Doctors and Surgeons have often given up, but Dolores said that though the Doctors and Surgeons performed the operations, and the nurses did the bandaging, God performed the healing. Dolores encouraged Joseph never to ask for donations. Instead, she convinced her husband, whom she loves wholeheartedly, that she would support his ministry financially. The loving and caring wife is seventy-seven years young and retired from manual work in February 2022.

Through Dolores' financial support, Joseph has ministered in Swaziland, Botswana, Mauritius (twice), Pakistan (twice), Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, Tonga, New Zealand

Joseph and Dolores have made things happen for God and with God. God has enriched them with Pioneering Spirits. With all that God has done with and through Dolores and Joseph. He brags that no one in The Body of Christ qualifies for the ministry like himself: "God delights to use the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," This man of God encourages all of God's people with one of his famous adages:

GOD TAKES A NOBODY FROM NOWHERE AND MAKES THAT NOBODY A SOMEBODY, AND AFTER GOD HAS MADE THAT NOBODY A SOMEBODY AND PLACED HIM SOMEWHERE, GOD THEN SENDS HIM EVERYWHERE.

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