

Friendship with God

by Ivan Roman

There has never been a time in history like the time we are living in right now. The prophets of old looked forward to the day when the Messiah, the King of Israel, the Son of David would come, for it meant great blessing for God's people. We live in the age of fulfillment because His kingdom has already been established. God's promises and blessings are being fulfilled now: *"Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions"* (Joel 2:28b).

In days past, God anointed and gifted certain individuals with supernatural endowments of power. Today, He still anoints and gives gifts to the church. He has His Joshuas and His Davids, but I believe that God wants to anoint an entire generation with all of the essential gifts, endowments of power, and graces to build up His church. This end-time generation is one that will wear combat boots, as an older saint once shared with me regarding a vision she had of new converts. They will reap as soon as they sow. The Lord will accelerate them forward: *"The days are coming, declares the Lord, when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes"* (Amos 9:13, NIV). In this hour there are people being saved on an unprecedented scale all over the world as He moves to accomplish His purpose: *"That whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls"* (Joel 2:32).

In this urgent hour, as we gather to fulfill His mandates, it is important that we draw close to God in friendship. He is searching for loyal and trustworthy friends with whom He can share His visions and plans for end-time harvest. Will that be you?

Is it Possible to Walk in the Power of God and not Know God?

Signs, wonders, and miracles don't save people, but His love does. Our gifting doesn't determine how much God loves us. Our gifts and anointings aren't for us, but for the people, for the lost and dying world. His gifts are a sign to the people of His love for them, and He doesn't take them back (Rom. 11:29).

Many walk in His power but do not know Him. Many operate in gifts but do not know Him. Many prophesy but do not know Him. *"Thus says the LORD [through the prophet Jeremiah]: 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD'"* (Jer. 9:23, 24a).

The enemy can duplicate power, but he can't duplicate God's nature. People can see the power, but they also have to see God before they'll believe in Him. The disciples weren't loyal to Jesus because of the miracles He performed; they gloried, understood, and knew that He was Lord because Jesus exuded His character and had every confidence in the Father. One of the reasons why Jesus had every confidence in the Father was because He spent time with Him (Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16). If we don't know God, how can we know His power?

THE MAKING OF FRIENDSHIP

Friends Know Each Other

How will unbelieving people come to trust in our God if we don't know Him well enough to trust Him ourselves? Getting to know someone requires commitment and faithfulness. When two people draw close, one knows what the other is doing.

Moses was one who knew God as a friend (Ex. 33:11). He knew what God would do and therefore was confident in going to Pharaoh to ask him to set the Israelites free. He knew God well enough to stand in for Him as His mediator. If Moses didn't have a close relationship with God, he wouldn't have known that God would show Himself to be stronger and more powerful than any power Pharaoh had ever known.

Pharaoh had a hard time believing what Moses said about His God, because Pharaoh knew nothing of Him. Pharaoh's magicians could also perform signs and wonders—when Moses and Aaron turned their rod into a serpent, Pharaoh's magicians did the same with their rods (Ex. 7:8-12)—so if Moses didn't know his own God's nature and power, he would have had a hard time convincing Pharaoh. But Moses and God were close friends; His friend didn't let him down and neither did Moses let God down. God's serpent gobbled up the snakes of the magicians and wise men. Over time, Moses demonstrated God's might and power in many ways to Pharaoh, and Pharaoh eventually believed in the power of Moses' God.

Friends Share their Plans

Friends share their plans, and Moses was confident in God's plans. *"But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face"* (Deut. 34:10). Their conversational relationship began when he was eighty years old, when he met God at the burning bush. In this particular conversation, Moses heard God's voice, witnessed His power, received instruction on how to deal with Pharaoh, and then put into action the tasks God gave him (Ex. 3:4 – 4:17; 4:21–27). As leader of the Israelites for the next forty years, God continued to speak to him. He let Moses in on more plans and gave him instructions before receiving the Ten Commandments (Ex. 12:14–19), in how to set up of the Tabernacle (Ex. 40:1–15), in items related to the Passover (Ex. 12:1–20; 12:43–48), and while on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 24:9; Ex. 34:6–27).

Yes, we should desire gifts and to move in the things of the Spirit, but God wants us to desire to know Him more, so He can reveal the things He is doing and so that we will know His nature and never doubt Him. As we walk in this increase and experience the manifestation of His anointing, we must continue to make it the cry of our heart to know Him.

Friends Draw Close

When we seek to draw close, we walk and operate with the mind and the new heart of Christ as prophesied in Ezekiel 36:25–28: *"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God."* This is the strategy of heaven.

One day, in a vision, the Lord brought me into His strategy room. The room was filled with angels, and it appeared as if they were looking at a computer monitor. The only thing I

could see on the screen was our minds and our hearts. Then I saw as our minds became like the mind of Christ, and a new heart was given to us, and then the words “walking in the spirit” appeared.

If we want to walk with God, we have to have the heart and mind of Christ. But can we be on close, intimate, and friendly terms with someone so awesome in power, might, and majesty, someone so infinitesimally far above us who the Bible describes as having mighty angels bow humbly in His presence? Is it possible to walk with the Creator of the Universe? He’s such a powerful being.

How can we, as “small” as we are, commune with one so big? God made that possible by sending His Son to us in human form. Through Jesus we have the opportunity to know God. How important is it to know God? *“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”* (John 17:3). Eternal life is knowing God. John implied an intimate relationship with God, and intimate relationships mature. Hosea also encourages this intimacy: *“Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth”* (Hos. 6:3).

And that’s what happens to us. God made us in His image, and is transforming us into the image of Jesus. Our minds become the mind of Christ, as our hearts change. This process requires us knowing God intimately, and when we do strive to know Him, He reveals His whole nature so we can know it and allow Him to reproduce it in us. Therefore, we *“put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him”* (Col. 3:10).

THOSE THE LORD CALLS “FRIENDS”

God counted many saints as true friends. Here are examples of a few:

Moses

This close friend of God faced many challenges as he led the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt and into the Promised Land. He regularly dialogued in friendship with God, and God even directed Moses to build a place of worship, a tent, as a place to talk together: *“Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp”* (Ex.33:7). Exodus chapters 33 and 34 contain some of their most captivating conversations.

Enoch

Enoch enjoyed a three-hundred-year friendship with God (Gen. 5:22). He showed his faith first by offering to God the blood of an animal as a sacrifice that covered his sin. God credited Enoch’s faith to Him as righteousness, forgave him, and purified his heart. Friendship with God was important in Enoch’s day because it was a corrupt and wicked time, much like it is today. But Enoch knew that God created man to live in holiness, and he didn’t allow sin to control him. Just like God, he loved righteousness but hated sin. People insulted and persecuted him, but it didn’t bother Enoch. He knew that nothing was more important than the friendship he knew with God. How much did God think of Enoch’s three-hundred-year friendship and loyalty to Him? *“By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, ‘and was not found, because God had taken him’; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him”* (Heb. 11:5, 6).

Abraham

James said: *“Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 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”* (James 2: 21–23). When God came down to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, He first took Abraham aside and told His friend what He was going to do. Just as friends question friends, and without fear of reproach, Abraham questioned God, though not out of irreverence. He and God were understanding friends, and that’s why he dared to ask God “why.”

Job

Feeling abandoned, Job cried out, *“Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God watched over me; when His lamp shone upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness; just as I was in the days of my prime, when the friendly counsel of God was over my tent; when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were around me; when my steps were bathed with cream, and the rock poured out rivers of oil for me!”* (Job 29: 1–6). In effect he cried, “What happened to our friendship? We used to talk all of the time, what’s wrong?” These men were more than the Lord’s servants. They were more than friends with God. They were close friends with God. They knew what the Father was doing; they yearned for fellowship with Him; they cried out to Him because they purposed to know Him.

FRIENDSHIP ESSENTIALS

Jesus said to His disciples, *“No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you”* (John 15: 15).

Find a tent. Find a tent, a quiet place to meet God. Be quietly attentive to Him. When we position ourselves quietly before Him, we welcome the transforming power of His Spirit. The result of such attentiveness is a spirit sensitive to His voice and call. Spending time with Him dissolves fear, anger, and selfishness. It disarms whatever stands in the way of knowing Him.

Be silent before God. Decrease the noise and make room for His voice. A lot of the noise in our lives is not worldly, but self-made. We have to learn to quiet our minds so that we can listen for Him and to Him.

Obedience is important. But it’s not the blind obedience of a servant or slave to his master; rather, it’s the free cooperation of friends. *“You are my friends if you do whatever I command you”* (John 15: 14). As a friend of God, we are assured of His faithfulness, *“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord”* (1 Cor. 1: 9).

Live as a friend. *“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin”* (1 John 1: 6, 7).

Be a friend. It takes being a friend, to be God's friend. Moses was simply that. He was faithful, intimate, and sought to know God and spend time with Him. He simply enjoyed friendship with God: *"So the LORD said to Moses, 'I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name'"* (Ex. 33:17).

Be loyal and faithful. Moses pleased God because of his faithfulness and loyalty as a friend. Moses' meetings with the Lord were not as slave to Master, but as a man speaks to a friend, face to face (Ex. 33:11). He met with the Lord regularly. He had such an intimate friendship with the Lord that the Lord revealed His form to Moses: *"Then He said, If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?"* (Num. 12:6–8).

Stick closer to God than a brother. *"A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother"* (Prov. 18:24). God is that friend to you, and it must be mutual.

Ask questions. Friends aren't afraid to ask each other questions. Trust that God will answer them. Moses asked. Job asked. David asked. Abraham asked. Enoch asked. Ask.

Express your feelings. Job wasn't afraid to express his feelings to his friend. In fact, God honored his honesty.

Trust God. God's not a stranger. We aren't to trust strangers, but we're to trust God. God wants our trust. Enoch pleased God because He trusted and believed in Him, loved Him, obeyed Him, stuck closer than a brother, asked questions, spent time communing with Him, and remained loyal and faithful especially under difficult circumstances. One day God called his name and Enoch found himself in Paradise with his best friend.

Purpose in Your Heart to be His Friend

As we get to know Him through spending time with Him in a daily relationship, we'll discover both the riches of being in His presence and the fullness of joy that comes from knowing Him personally, as Moses and Enoch did.

The more I read and hear about people that the Lord calls His friends, the more my heart burns to be a friend of God. I heard a story about an elderly man whom God spoke to, and He said, "I'm going to take you all over the world, and I want you to tell people about our friendship." Well, the old man did. He'd sit in a chair at meetings and tell stories of their friendship. As soon as he finished, he'd pick up the chair, turn it around, and then the presence of God would fall. People jumped out of wheelchairs; others fell to their knees and gave their hearts to the Lord. When God's presence lifted, this man would turn his chair back around, and thank everyone for letting Jesus, his friend visit.

Wow! That is what my heart longs for. Not just a good meeting where we see a few miracles, but where my friend Jesus walks into the meeting and shares His heart with me for the people.

Our Hearts are Important to Him

If you were to witness the parting of the Red Sea, would you still doubt God's way? The children of Israel witnessed the parting of the Red Sea, manna from heaven, water from the

rock, shoes that grew with them, and they still questioned God's motives, because they weren't in a close relationship with Him. They didn't know His heart, understand His plans, or know His purpose. They didn't see with their spiritual eyes what the Father was doing because they didn't know Him.

God knows the motives of our hearts, and He wants us to know what motivates His. We can't unless we know Him. Many men and women of the past have experienced incredible visitations from the Lord and have seen the power of God in their lives, yet, still lacked faith and trust in Him.

SOLD OUT FOR GOD

Those who are deeply in love with God and sold out for Him are the most effective witnesses. God's love becomes contagious. When we're intimate with Him, He reveals His nature, and it rubs off on us as He transforms us into the image of His Son (Col. 3:10). His nature reproduces in us, and we, in effect, become like mini-Jesus' to the world. As we go about in our giftings, people see the Giver behind the signs, wonders, and miracles. That's how King David turned an entire nation around. His heart was totally sold out and given solely over to God. His heart reflected God's heart, and it turned a nation apart from God into one of passion, worship, and service. His attitude toward God created an opportunity for God. We can see this principle in Hannah's prayer of praise in the First Samuel 2:1-10 and then we see it illustrated in David's own attitudes toward God in Second Samuel 22:2-27. David said in Psalm 24:6, *"Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob (RSV).*

In one vision, the Lord took me into His trophy room. I was amazed to see that the walls were filled with the hearts of men and women that have walked with Him. Some of the hearts were gold, and others, silver. I asked the Lord which heart was His favorite. He walked over to a special place in the room and pulled out the heart of King David. It was a battle-scarred heart, wounded and broken, but even though I could see the scars and wounds, it was healed.

It wasn't signs, wonders, and miracles that turned a nation around, it was God's character shining through a man Scripture describes as *"a man after His own heart"* (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22b).

GOD IS SOLD OUT FOR US

Revelation of God's Love

Many people walk in giftings and incredible levels of anointing and still feel empty inside. Christianity is not only about works, but relationship. Relationship is for us. Relationship with Yahweh is all we need for empowerment, edification, healing, and growth. In friendship we understand God's ways and nature so that we aren't wandering or wondering as the Israelites were, disappointed and discouraged when things don't happen the way we think they should. God loves us simply because we are His children! Matthew 3:16, 17 reveals that God loved Jesus simply because Jesus was His Son: *"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"* Most fathers want to spend time with their children, and most children want to spend time with their fathers. Our heavenly Father wants us to get to know Him. He wants to walk,

talk, and commune with us, just as He did with Jesus His Son, with Adam and Eve before sin reared its ugly head, and with Moses and Enoch.

Understanding His Nature

And yet, many men and women who have been born into the kingdom do not understand this revelation that He loves us simply because we are His children. I had trouble grasping that before I sought intimacy with Him. I'd leave anointed meetings where I'd witnessed miracles, and even delivered prophetic words, but still feel disappointed. Sometimes I wouldn't even feel saved. That's because I didn't know Him or understand His nature and ways.

However, when we understand and know Him, we praise Him for what He did do, or does do, and trust Him for the rest. Psalm 103:8 tells us, *"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy."* It says He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. He has not punished us for all our sins, nor does He deal with us as we deserve. For His love is unailing toward those who fear Him: *"As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust"* (Ps. 103:12–14).

Even if God gifts us with every anointing, mantle, or gift of the Spirit, and we walk and minister to thousands, even if we see hundreds of thousands of souls saved, if we aren't walking in intimacy with Him, we'll never grasp His love for us, and eventually we'll become disillusioned.

FRIENDSHIP IS A TWO-WAY STREET

In the beginning, Adam walked with God in the cool of the day. God wants to restore that moment with His people.

One day in a prophetic experience, I saw the Garden of Eden and two cherubim standing in front of it with swords drawn. I, then, watched as they drew their swords back and a hand beckoned me to come. Then, I heard the Lord say, "I love your presence more than you love mine."

Friendship with God is not only knowing the Lord in unbroken fellowship, but also letting the Lord know you. Remember, Jesus can say, "I don't know you." I believe it is possible to never let God know you. I continued to cry out to God that He would let me be His friend.

A Friend of the King

If we are seeking to have anything less than face-to-face encounters with the person of Jesus, then we are settling for less.

In a meeting in Homer, Alaska, I saw a brown mantle falling from heaven. When I asked the Lord what that mantle was, I had an open vision of Jesus standing in front of me and He said, *"Today I call you my friend."* Later, I asked the Lord why He chose that day to tell me. I felt like He had said, "I have always been your friend, but you haven't always been Mine." *"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you"* (John 15:15). God is looking for friends with whom He can share His heart. There is a trumpet call from heaven for anyone who will respond to the invitation to be a friend of the King.

God's Ultimate Desire

Are you willing to be a friend of the King? God's ultimate desire is that we know Him more. He knows though, that as long as we're in these bodies, we cannot know Him as fully as He'd like us to, or even as fully as we want to. Moses operated almost daily under the anointing and performed many signs and wonders, but still, he yearned to draw close to God. He said to his friend, God, on Mt. Sinai, "show me your glory," and God said "okay," but warned Moses that he couldn't see His face and live. Moses settled for seeing God's back as He passed by—that's all he could have handled in his earthly body (Ex. 33:19–23). That's more than most of us can handle today.

Our Ultimate Desire

We too can know God as Moses, Enoch, David, and many of the other saints did by spending time in His presence, in a daily relationship with Him. This should be our first priority. We'll discover both the riches of being in His presence and the fullness of joy that comes from knowing Him personally and intimately. Moses held on, and God allowed Moses to experience Him as fully as possible. Why? Because as God told His good friend Moses, *"Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD. For it is an awesome thing that I will do with you"* (Ex. 34:10).

We have to hold on and draw close to God in friendship, especially in these turbulent times, just as Enoch did for almost three hundred years. As this end-time generation walks in an increase of the anointing, God's Spirit calls out to us for intimacy and friendship. Listen for His voice. The Spirit is telling you about His love, the intimacy He desires with you, His offer of friendship and relationship, and about His forgiveness and grace. Your friendship with God will win nations.

David said of God in this Psalm, worthy to be written in gold: *"You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore"* (Ps. 16:11). Friendship with God is the highest place of privilege and power in His kingdom and the ultimate sign, wonder, and miracle for believers of this last age. God's friendship becomes what satisfies us eternally, with His lasting peace and joy. Spending eternity in paradise with our best friend will be our greatest reward.