

## John 15:12-17

<sup>12</sup> **"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.**  
<sup>13</sup> **"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> "You are My friends, if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and *that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.* <sup>17</sup> "This I command you, that you love one another.**

Love is the very essence of Christianity! In fact, love is the foundation of the Christian faith. The two greatest commandments that we are given by God are to love Him above all things, and to love one another as we love ourselves. Yet, here Jesus is saying something that is so easy to overlook. God, the Living God, is telling you and me that we have an opportunity to be called His friend. This friendship is not automatic as some might want to believe. A price or cost is involved in this friendship, and to be honest, it is designed to cost us everything. Jesus said, <sup>14</sup> **"You are My friends, if you do what I command you.** Would any of us tolerate anyone else putting such restrictions on a friendship? Absolutely not! The difference is, with man we are equal one to another; but with God we certainly will never be His equal. What is imperative to understand, is that according to the creation account in Genesis, we are living dirt. We came from the earth, and we will return to the earth. Adam and Eve lost the very privilege that Jesus Christ is offering to every believer or follower today. But, just as Adam and Eve lost that privilege through a choice of disobedience in the Garden of Eden; so you and I can only attain that relationship by being obedient. We must choose daily to obey His word, and His voice; this is not optional! We will never attain the relationship and friendship that God is offering to us, unless we choose daily to take up our cross and follow Him. Taking up our cross, was never designed to be some simple cliché; but rather it is a physical reminder to all of us, that the life of a disciple of Christ, is a life that will ultimately cost us everything.

Jesus then makes an astonishing announcement, <sup>16</sup> **"You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and *that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.*** Every follower of Jesus Christ has been hand selected by the Living God. This is not something for us to take pride in, or boast about; but rather it is a sobering reminder that we have been chosen to fulfill His purpose here on this earth. I believe that the fruit that Jesus is talking about here is people. The ministry of Jesus was people! The Jews of His day, believed that He was returning to overtake the Romans, and to establish His kingdom here on earth. Jesus is returning to do that very thing, but until He does you and I are to follow in His steps, and to make fishers of men. Church, we have been given the greatest gift mankind will ever receive!! It is our responsibility to go out and share that good news. Jesus said, <sup>14</sup> **"You are My friends, if you do what I command you.** What about you church, do you obey His commandments? Do you love all men as you are commanded? Are you fishers of men? Ultimately, can Jesus call you, His friend?