



**Vaya Con Dios** by Gerald Cowan,  
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*All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.*

This prayer I heard 60 years ago made me uneasy :

"Oh Lord, go with us where we go and stay with us where we stay,  
choose our changes for us and suit our circumstances to us."

Is there anything wrong with that prayer? I didn't know then why it made me feel uneasy. Now I know. I will explain later.

**True:** God's presence will be with us if we are willing to go to, walk with, and stay with Him. Moses said, "If Your presence go not with us, do not send us." If Your presence is not with me, I do not want to go" (**Ex. 33:15**). God says, "I will not leave you, nor will I forsake you" (**Heb. 13:5-6**). Many words we use when parting company. Two familiar but misunderstood expressions are: Goodbye. Short for "God be with you," meaninglessly shortened to "Bye" or "Bye bye." I particularly like the Hispanic "Vaya con Dios." It means, "Go with God."

**GOING WITH GOD REQUIRES AGREEMENT WITH HIM** (**Amos 3:3** Can any two walk together unless they are agreed?).

Some may assume they are in agreement with God as long as they are not conscious of any specific or particular disagreement. David Thoreau, when dying was asked if he had made peace with God. He said, "I'm not aware that God and I have had any quarrel." Lack of overt conscious disagreement does not necessarily mean agreement. Agreement must be conscious. One must know what he agrees with or to.

One might wish agreement with God were simpler than it is. If God asked, "Do you want to go to heaven?" or "Are you willing to go to heaven?" probably everybody would say yes, nobody would say no if they know what heaven is. But when they find out the requirements, conditions, and restrictions they back off. For example, when we are told that we must "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and love your neighbor as you love yourself" and love everybody as Jesus loves many balk and push back against it (**Mk. 12:28-30, John 13:34-35**).

There are many examples of areas where one must agree with God and disagreement is futile. A few examples: The standard of morality. Test everything (by the word of God), keep what is good and reject whatever is doubtful or has any hint of evil about it (**1 Thess. 5:20-21, Rom. 14:23**). Sin should not be rewarded and righteousness should not be punished. Limitations on marriage and remarriage after a divorce. Absolute rejection of homosexuality, both male or female, and the LGBTQ agenda.

Limitations on women's work and function in the church, especially as related to men. The exclusive nature of the church – denominationalism is completely invalid. The point is: nobody can "go with God" and God will not "be with" anybody who does not agree with Him about things He says are essential.

### **GOING WITH GOD REQUIRES COMMITMENT TO HIM.**

Commitment means personal free-will choice, not coercion or bribery. One who accepts and obeys God because he feels forced or coerced, or because he is afraid not to do so, may think he "has no choice" (**2 Cor. 5:14**). Everybody has the right and power to choose. But the choice may have a great price. One may "do what is right" for any number of reasons, all of which can be valid. The desire for personal reward – the ultimate reward in heaven – is valid. We press toward that very goal and we are taught to seek it (**Phil. 3:13-15**). Fear is a proper motivation (**Psalms 111:10, Prov. 1:7**, etc. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Reverence and respect for God is one kind of fear (**Eccl. 12:13**). Dread and terror are appropriate motivating factors (**2 Cor. 5:11, Heb. 10:31**).

Doing something for love is a noble motive – for the love of God, love of the truth, love of others, love for the church, love for the lost, or love for oneself. "Perfect love casts out fear" of judgement (**1 John 4:18**). What does this mean? It does not mean if you "love" or say you love, nothing else matters. Love for God means keeping the commandments of God (**1 John 5:3, 2:5, 1:7**).

Commitment implies willingness to defend God, His word, and His church from enemies (**Phil. 1:17, 2 Cor. 10:3-5, Eph. 6:17**). One who is fully committed to God finds that God is also committed to him (**Heb. 13:5, 6**).

### **GOING WITH GOD MEANS BEING A PART OF HIS CHURCH – HIS KINGDOM – IN CHRIST.**

We must be reminded that the true church is and can be only what God designed it to be. Substituting other things for the church does not change the true church. Adding, subtracting and changing things was happening early (**1 Cor. 1:9-25**). Those unhappy with the church God designed have not "hijacked" it but have replaced it with counterfeit substitutes. They have hijacked the people; they have seduced the people away from the Lord. Compare **Romans 1:23**. They did not "change" God into something else, but only exchanged God for something else. Compare **Romans 1:25**. Truth is not changed into a lie, but can be exchanged for a lie. It is tragic that people do not know these things. The exchangers "go without God," whether or not they know it (**2 John 7-11**).

The Lord is in His church – "The Lord is in His holy temple" (**Hab. 2:20**). The temple of the Lord is the church – the people, not a building or place (**Acts 17:24, Eph. 2:19-22**). Those who are in the church are in the Lord (**Rom. 6:3, Gal. 3:27, 1 Cor. 12:13**). Only those who are in the Lord and in his church are accepted by God and going with God (**Eph. 1:6, 3**).

### **GOING WITH GOD REQUIRES GOING TO HIM, STAYING WITH HIM.**

Going to God is not a matter of location or place (**Heb. 10:25, Mt. 18:20**). "Come to me" is an invitation to a relationship and not to a rendezvous (**Mt. 11:28-30, John 6:37** "He who comes to me shall not be cast out"). The Lord does not say, "I will come to you" – that is a false understanding of **Luke 15:4-24**. These parables in

context do not mean the Lord will search for you and find you. The point is: all can rejoice when the lost is found, brought home or returns home.

The old brother noted earlier prayed, "God go with us where we go, stay with us where we stay, choose our changes for us and suit our circumstances to us." It cannot be literally so. If we go where God opposes and stay there God will not go with us and certainly will not stay with us – as the prodigal's father in the parable watched for his son to come home but did not visit the pig pen or try to make it more comfortable. This applies to relationships and activities, as well as to "places." But if we go to Him and stay with Him, not only will He stay with us, but will also prevent others from separating us from Him (**John 10:28-30**).

God does not choose our changes for us, but rather responds to the choices we make. God does not suit our circumstances to us or change circumstances to accommodate us – even if they become a major "thorn in the flesh" for us (**2 Cor. 12:9**). He does provide strength and grace to endure unchangeable circumstances so one is not broken by them. He did it for Paul and does it for us too (**1 Cor. 10:13, Phil. 4:19**).

Abiding in Christ and his doctrine determines if one is with or without God (**2 John 9**). One who does not abide in Christ and the doctrine of Christ goes without Christ and without God. He has neither the Father nor the Son. One who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If one is in Christ and faithful to him, both these expressions can be used and will be valid and true. We can say, "Goodbye – God be with you." He will be. We can say, "Vaya con Dios – go with God." He will accept you and allow you to walk with Him.

**CONCLUSION:** God wants all to come/ go to Him, walk, stay and be with Him (**2 Peter 3:9, 1 Tim. 2:4**). The desired result of the preaching, teaching, and writing of the apostles of Christ was that we could have fellowship with them, with God the Father, with His Christ, and with His Holy Spirit. (**1 John 1:4-7, 2 Cor. 13:14** grace of Jesus, love of God, communion of the Holy Spirit). Our songs express the desire and the need to go with God, go with His Son Jesus. A favorite song says, "God bless you; go with God." Vaya con Dios. there's our sermon title.

#### GO WITH GOD

In ev'ry part of life,  
In calm and peace or strife,  
Hold fast the hand of God  
Through all your days.  
He's with you all the way.

Let His grace your heart sustain,  
Let His pow'r relieve your pain,  
Your prayers will not be vain.  
Walk in His way  
And never cease to pray.

Ignore what others say  
Who do not know the way.  
Christ is your blessed hope;  
He'll walk with you  
And He will see you through.

– Gerald Cowan

Life has no boundary.  
Throughout eternity  
To be with Christ our Lord  
Is our desire,  
And to that we aspire.

On Christ you can depend  
For life that will not end –  
A home in heav'n with God.  
His word is true.  
He'll share his home with you.

Walk with him; do not leave.  
His promises believe,  
His crown of life receive.  
Forever free,  
Stay in his company.