

A Deep Fellowship With The Living God

by

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1 John 1:

Fellowship is a basic human need. Without it people suffer; without it, additional problems are created.

Some people don't do well when they are left alone in the world:

- Personal hygiene is left undone
- Loneliness and depression often set in.

A dear friend of mine committed suicide after his only living relative (brother) had passed away.

Life is so much more enjoyable when shared with those whom we love.

A London newspaper offered a cash prize for the best answer to the question, "Which is the shortest way to London?" The answer which won the prize was, "The shortest way to London is good company."

All travelers know how true that answer is. Good company shortens any journey, no matter however long. In such company time flies, miles slip rapidly past, and the end is reached almost before one is aware of it.

The journey to heaven is very much shortened, the road is made easier, when Jesus Christ is our traveling companion.

The greatest fellowship in the world is man's fellowship with God. But, to many people, this relationship has been severed because of their sin.

Isaiah 59:1-2, "*Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*"

Everyone has at some time been in this state and needs this fellowship established or restored.

- Rom. 3:10, "*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.*"
- Rom. 3:23, "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,*"

- Rom. 6:23, *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

If this relationship is left standing in this condition, the end result is eternity in a land of torment.

A deep fellowship with God is necessary to attain eternal life.

With whom should we fellowship?

In this lesson we want to study some facts about a deep fellowship with the living God.

Fellowship with the Father.

1 John 1:3, *“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”*

God is our Creator, Defender, Father, Helper, Protector, Strength, and Teacher. There isn't any one of these attributes that we dare be without. We must be worthy of such friendship, or we will find ourselves in just such a state.

Rev. 3:4, *“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.”*

A few in Sardis were worthy to experience the deep relationship of God. Why? Because they kept their garments white — they did not live a life of sin.

Fellowship with the Son.

- 1 Cor. 1:9, *“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”*
- Matt. 18:20, *“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”*
- John 12:26, *“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”*
- John 15:15, *“Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”*

Jesus lived a perfect life without sin as an example for us; He died a cruel death on the cross for our sins; He purchased our bodies with His blood; He established a church wherein brethren can come together and remember His sacrifice and to strengthen one another; and He is now building an eternal home for His beloved friends. On the Day of Judgment He will intercede in behalf of the faithful. We have no greater friend than Jesus. Can we afford to do without His friendship?

Fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

Phil. 2:1-2, *“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”*

The Holy Spirit helped confirm the word of God in the days of the apostles; He dwells in, and strengthens God’s children as they live for God; and He assists Christians in their prayers to God.

- Rom. 8:11-17, *“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”*
- Rom. 8:26-27, *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”*

With this kind of assistance we can ill afford to do without the Holy Spirit in our lives. Paul had a deep relationship with the Holy Spirit, and he told Christians to be likeminded.

What is a deep fellowship with God?

What it is not.

It is not a casual acquaintance – Many people claim to “know God”, but they fail to show that such an acquaintance exists in their lives.

On such a basis I could claim to have known T. A. Wilson, past chairman of The Boeing Company, and now deceased; and Albert Rossellini, past governor of the State of Washington; both which whom I once had a conversation. Many claim to be Christians on the basis of owning a Bible or because their relatives go to church. A deep relationship requires daily interaction.

A deep fellowship with God is not one based on your conditions.

When I worked at the Wind Tunnel tears ago, I had a good relationship with my boss, Jeff. We were friends, but he had the authority. I respected it and didn't challenge it. When he gave me a directive, I followed it according to however he wanted it done, not the way I thought it should be done. Whenever Jeff was gone, sometimes he put Mark in charge and sometimes he put me in charge. Whichever of us was not given the responsibility of authority did according to what we were asked to do. What do you think would have been the outcome if I told Jeff (or Mark if he was in charge), “I'm not going to do that!”? I would find myself hurting our relationship, being reprimanded, and possibly dismissed because of my attitude of making light of their authority.

Many people today do not understand they are hurting their relationship with God and undermining His authority when they reject His directives. They do this when they make such statements as, “I don't think baptism is important”, or “Any church will do”, or they “entertain” instead of preaching God's word.

Rom. 1:16-17, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”*

A deep fellowship with God is more than an emergency relationship (like a first aid station).

With some people it takes a life-threatening situation before they think of God.

What a deep fellowship with God is.

Total commitment.

Matt. 16:24, *“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”*

Cross-bearing is not enduring such things as poverty, sickness, bad weather, or any other of life’s discomforts, but it is the acceptance of the burdens of life for the sake of the will of God. While it is true the Christian denies himself of the many pleasures of this life, the taking up of the cross refers to the enduring of the scorn and abuse of others when standing up for God in our lives.

A deep fellowship with God is one that is based upon HIS conditions.

John 14:6, *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*

People like to hear John 15:16 and tell others of its words.

John 15:16, *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”*

They emphasize *“whatsoever”* we ask we will receive, but they ignore another *“whatsoever”* just two verses preceding this one:

John 15:14, *“Ye are my friends, **if** ye do whatsoever I command you.”*

God’s love is conditional. He is the one who placed the *“if”* word in our relationship. Unless we are truly His friend our prayerful petitions will not be granted.

I heard a radio evangelist one time claim that Christ never made His love conditional. He simply does not know what he is talking about.

- John 15:14, *“Ye are my friends, **if** ye do whatsoever I command you.”*
- John 14:15, *“**If** ye love me, keep my commandments.”*

A deep fellowship with God stems from love.

1 John 4:19, *“We love him, because he first loved us.”*

Jesus has displayed His love to us by giving His life on the cross. His love caused Him to perform an action. John 15:13, *“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”*

His friends also give their love back to Him. Eph. 6:24, “*Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity...*”

That love must be a true love — one that does not fade when we feel that Jesus is not needed; a love that is constant in our good times as well as our bad. When we show Him that we love Him, He will dwell within us.

1 John 4:16, “*And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*”

When we love Him our actions will show it.

Antithesis (opposite): If you refuse to dwell in God, don't expect Him to dwell in you, because He won't.

How some are committed.

Half-heartedly.

Like Lot's wife. She yielded to a temptation to look back to her friends and relatives who remained behind when God destroyed the cities of Sodom, after God said not to look back.

Luke 17:31-32, “*In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife.*”

She performed an action contrary to what God said to do.

When we take on God's service in our lives, we should not look desiringly back on our former lives. Our focus when we become a Christian is to be on Jesus Christ and our service to Him.

2 Pet. 2:20-22, “*For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*”

Let's not serve Him half-heartedly. God's despises a lukewarm Christian.

Reluctantly.

Many people are reluctant in their service to God. They are overcome by the cares of this life.

Luke 8:11-14, "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

When we let the cares of this life take precedence in our lives, our love for Jesus will not be strong enough to sustain us. If we place Him first in our lives, He will take care of our needs.

This includes our jobs, schools, sports activities, etc. that we let interfere with our relationship with Him.

With excuses.

Some people make excuses.

Luke 14:16-24, "Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

Fellowship with God requires total commitment, not one that looks for excuses.

How does a deep fellowship with God begin?

At the realization of sin.

We need to realize that when we sin our fellowship with God is severed. When we understand that this situation has happened, we need to repent and obey the gospel.

When we escape the corruption of the world, we can be partakers of God's love and promises.

Some think that their sins have been too great for them to ever think about being a Christian. Paul is an example of one who had a dark past, but changed. Peter denied Christ, but repented. Remember, everyone has sinned. You are not alone. You can escape your sins!

2 Pet. 1:4, "*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*"

So, sin must be dead in our lives to enjoy a deep fellowship with God.

Rom. 6:1-6, "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*"

If we reject sin in our lives and accept the companionship of Jesus, our lives will be much richer for it.

An inferior rose left to itself will remain inferior. Among the Dutch the rose was sometimes cultivated by planting an inferior rose close to a rose of superior quality. The rose of inferior quality was carefully watched, and its anthers were removed so as to avoid self-pollination; the object being that it should be pollinated by the superior rose.

This the way our life should be with that of Jesus. If our lives are pollinated, as it were, by His righteousness into our hearts, then we will lose our own inferior quality, and be transformed into the superior quality of Christ.

Our lives must be maintained by a faithful walk or else our life is a lie. Some go to church on Sundays but live the rest of the week as if God doesn't exist.

1 John 1:6-7, "*If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*"

When fellow churchgoers see you living the life of the world, your fellowship with them is hindered.

What are the results of a deep fellowship with God?

Fellowship.

With God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. (see 1 John 1:6-7 above).

With one another. (see 1 John 1:6-7 above.)

The results of a deep fellowship with God are manifested in our life and actions. We show love, patience, happiness, peace, joy, etc. in our lives.

We have a deep fellowship with the gospel.

Phil. 1:3-5, "*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;*"

When we truly love God, our desire is also to dwell on the words He has given to us.

I hear people say that church is boring; reading the Bible is boring. Here's a story about a young lady and an author:

A young lady once laid down a book which she had just finished, with a remark that it was the dullerest story she had ever read.

In the course of time, she became engaged to a young man; and one night she said to him, "I have a book in my library whose author's name, and even initials, are precisely the same as yours. Isn't that a strange coincidence?"

"I don't think so," he replied.

"Why not?", she said.

"For the simple reason, that I wrote the book."

That night, the young lady sat up until 2 o'clock in the morning reading the book again. And this time it seemed the most interesting book she had ever read.

The once dull book was now fascinating because she knew and loved the author.

So, a child of God finds the Bible interesting because he knows and loves the Author!

If we think the Bible is dull, it is time to re-evaluate our relationship with God.

Conclusion.

How about you? Are you in fellowship with God? How deep is that fellowship?

If there is something in your life that is causing a rift in that fellowship with God, won't you do something about it today?

Don't be like Felix, who told Paul, "*Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.*" There is no indication that "convenient season" ever came for him.

Won't you change your relationship with God today? Won't you have a deep fellowship with Him?

