

Fellowship with God and Christ

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1John 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.**

The fellowship which Christians have with God and Christ relates to the following points:

(1) Attachment to the same truths, and the same objects; love for the same principles, and the same beings.

- There may be more to the old saying, “Birds of a feather flock together” than we know about. In God’s great creation, the principle of this old saying holds true most of the time. Coyotes run in packs with other coyotes, gold finches fly in little flocks with other gold finches, zebras run in herds with other zebras. They have things in common and they are attached to the same ways of foraging, of sleeping, of traveling and of seeing the world.
- The same principle holds true in the spiritual world. Believers have attachments to and love for the same things and those things are from God. Unbelievers have no such ties to those things because there is nothing in them that they identify with. I believe the reason that some people who cling to some aspects of the Christian religion but generally abuse the things related to true service to God is because they have no connection with the spiritual things. But the people of God do, even if it is a sort of imperfect connection. That is a point of fellowship with God and Christ. So, let’s talk about those things.
- Same truths - We have probably all known somebody in religious circles who seemed to usually find some reason to offer a “yeah, but...” to many of the biblical truths they came in contact with. Too many times, these folks (**2Tim. 4:4**) “...turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”
 - True fellowship with God makes folks agree with His truths and such folks then would agree with each other on His truths
- Same objects - The Lord has His focus and His affections set on certain things in creation. One of these objects is His church.
 - We have a bunch of folks today who have abandoned the idea of serving the Lord through His church. They are off into something else and find fault with His churches. The Lord loves His church, and has a special relationship in that love (**Eph. 5:25**).
 - The bible teaches us that is where He has determined:
 - To meet with His people. One of the most compelling proofs of this is the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Lord’s church only on the day of Pentecost.
 - To make his living place among the people of God-**1Tim. 3:15; 1Cor. 3:16**
 - To speak the gospel to the world - **Mat. 28:19**
 - To show forth the His own attributes
 - To receive glory - **Eph. 3:21**
 - To build up believers - **Eph. 4:12**
 - What is it with folks who have come to the conclusion that they can despise the Lord’s church and pay homage to man-made organizations and programs for supposedly worshipping God?
 - Or, by their own behavior have said that man-made pursuits have a higher importance than

things related to the church.

- Same principles - We are now in an age when the so-called Christian community has begun to both say and practice that things like personal morality, personal modesty in dress, personal honesty in business behavior, and personal behavioral holiness generally is not important to the salvation experience. In fact, many religious teachers have simply removed any teaching about these things from their messages.
- This is nothing new, but it is now popular in the “Christian” world.
 - God has a set of principles. They revolve around divine love, holiness, honesty, no moral compromise, fairness, purity in behavior, no deviousness or unethical craftiness, and both speaking and doing the truth.
 - The Lord’s people believe in these same principles. They can fellowship around these very principles, both with one another and with the Lord.
 - When the Lord’s people are thinking and doing right, they practice their love like **1 Cor. 13** teaches
 - When the Lord’s people are thinking and doing right, they behave like the bible talks about in **Rom. 12:1** “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.”
 - When the Lord’s people are thinking and doing right, they practice their lives as Paul explained it in **2Cor. 4:2** “But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”
- Same beings - The Lord loves His people. He has attachments to His people. The Lord’s people love the Lord’s people. That is, they develop attachments to, and love for, other of the Lord’s people.
 - Christ gave us incentive with His own new commandment to us: (**John 13:34**) “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”
 - Paul pointed out that that love was the key to serving other believers: **Gal 5:13** “...**by love serve one another.**”
 - Paul reminded the Thessalonian church that believers are taught of God to love one another: (**1Thess. 4:9**) “But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are **taught of God to love one another.**”
 - John identified this as the mark of the children of God: (**1John 4:12**) “If we love one another, God dwelleth in us,”

(2) Fellowship with God and Christ relates to believers having the same kind of happiness, though not in the same degree.

- The happiness that God Himself has is found in holiness, truth, purity, justice, mercy, benevolence.
- The happiness of the Christian is of the same kind that God has; the same kind that angels have; the same kind that the believer will himself have in heaven - for the joy of heaven is from the same origin as that which we have right now, only then it will be expanded to the utmost capacity of the soul, and freed from all that now interferes with it, and prolonged to eternity.
- God in his fellowship with us wants us to be happy. Did you know that there are 50 instances in the N.T. of the Greek word “Makarios,” which is translated 44 times as bless or blessed and 6 times as happy? Blessed in the Old English meant happy.
- What we find in those verses where bless or happy is located is a recipe for happiness that the Lord has written. What we see is that the Lord’s people are given happiness when their carnal man is

subdued by the Spirit of God, when:

- they are humble,
- when they mourn for their sins,
- when they long to know more and act out more of the righteousness of God,
- when they show mercy,
- when they don't have double standards in their lives which creates impurities in their consciences,
- when they try to make peace between their fellow man and the Lord (I think a lot of people think that when Christ said "Blessed are the peacemakers" he was talking about people who negotiated truces between men and men... but since He always gave us principles like this that were spiritual in nature, we should understand that he is talking about people who seek to negotiate peace between men and God),
- When they are persecuted, ridiculed and lied about because of their stand for Christ,
 - In **Acts 5** we find an account of a time when the apostles were arrested and beaten for preaching Jesus Christ. The amazing thing about this experience they went through is found in verse 41 which tells what happened when they were finally freed from prison: "And they departed from the presence of the council, **rejoicing** that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."
 - This happiness under such conditions is why Polycarp could pray while he was being burned alive: "O Lord God Almighty, the Father of thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of Thee, the God of angels and powers, and of every creature, and of the whole race of the righteous who live before thee, **I give Thee thanks** that Thou hast counted me worthy of this day and this hour, that I should have a part in the number of Thy martyrs, in the cup of thy Christ, to the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body, through the incorruption [imparted] by the Holy Ghost. Among whom may I be accepted this day before Thee as a fat and acceptable sacrifice, according as Thou, the ever-truthful God, hast foreordained, hast revealed beforehand to me, and now hast fulfilled. Wherefore also I praise Thee for all things, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, along with the everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, with whom, to Thee, and the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and to all coming ages. Amen."
- (you'll find all these mentioned in **Mat. 5**).
- Believers are also happy when they go through temptation and don't cave in, (**James 1:12**);
- When they understand something that the Lord would have them to do that they are not doing and they make a commitment and begin to do that thing (**James 1:25**);
- when they practice purity in the world by using a reminder to help keep them straight. That reminder?...watching for the return of Christ (**Rev. 16:15**);

(3) Fellowship with God and Christ relates to employment, or cooperation with them.

■ There is a sphere in which God works alone, and in which we can have no cooperation, no fellowship with him.

- In the **work of creation**; in **upholding all things**; in the **government of the universe**; in the **transmission of light from world to world**; in the **return of the seasons**, the **rising and setting of the sun**, the **storms**, the **tides**, the **flight of the comet**, we can have no joint agency, no cooperation with him. There God works alone.
- But there is also a large sphere in which he admits us graciously to a cooperation with him, and in which, unless we work, **his agency** will not be put forth. Illustrations?
 - When the farmer sows his grain (the grain has life in itself, but that life will never come

forth if the farmer does not sow it in the ground);

- When the surgeon operates to heal a certain condition (healing is possible if the surgery is performed, but the healing does not perform itself; the surgeon acts as an agent to perform the surgery to start the healing)
- When we take the medicine that has been manufactured to cure some ailment (we can get a cure, but the medicine is the agent to enhance or bring about that cure)
- This is the way it is when God works in certain ways in the world.
- You want the gospel to be spread, but how is it going to be spread unless some man does the work (how shall they hear without a preacher);
- You want the saints of God to grow in knowledge of the truth, but how will that happen unless they study the word of God and sit under a teacher?
- You want your own life to become more Christlike, but how can that happen unless you as God's agent yield yourself to the cautions and guidance of the Holy Spirit and lend your own behavior to denying your old carnal man the lusts that he seeks?

➤ God graciously works with us; and unless we work, the object is not accomplished. This cooperation is referred to in such passages as these: "We are laborers together (*συνεργοί* *sunergoi*) with God," (**1Cor. 3:9**). "The Lord working with them," (**Mark 16:20**). "We then as workers together with him," (**2Cor. 6:1**). "That we might be fellow-helpers to the truth," (**3John v.8**).
➤ In all such cases, while the efficiency is of God - both in provoking us to put forth the effort, and then in crowning the effort with success - it is still true that if our efforts were not put forth, the work would not be done. In this department God would not work by himself alone; he would not secure the result by miracle. This is because He has ordained to do it through the cooperation of agents.

(4) We have fellowship with God and Christ by direct communion with them, in prayer, in meditation, and in the practices of our worship and service toward Him. Of this all true Christians are aware of, and this makes up a large part of their special joy. The nature of this, and the happiness resulting from it, is much of the same nature as the communion of **friend with friend** - of one mind with another kindred mind - that to which we owe no small part of our happiness in this world.

■ Prayer - Doesn't this have in it the very spirit of a kind of personal fellowship: (**Mat. 6:6**) "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret"

➤ Doesn't this sound like an atmosphere of fellowship between us and the Lord: **1Pet. 3:12** "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers"

➤ Doesn't this sound like the Lord is engaged in fellowship with us when we pray: **Prov. 15:8** "the prayer of the upright *is* his delight."

(5) The Christian will have fellowship with his God and Savior in the victories of the latter day, when the scenes of the judgment shall occur, and when the Redeemer shall appear, that he may be admired and adored by assembled worlds.

■ See **2Thess. 1:10** - "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

■ See **Rev. 3:21** "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."