

# Back to the Basics

## Fellowship with Jesus (2)

Memory Verse:  
1 John 1:6

In lesson ten, we established from the scriptures that spiritual fellowship begins first with one's fellowship with the heavenly Father. If a person is in fellowship with God, then he is in fellowship with other Christians. However, if one has left the fellowship of the heavenly Father, then he is not in fellowship with faithful saints.

The apostle John wrote, *"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth."* (1 John 1:6) This single passage should make every Christian take notice of the fact that they could lose their fellowship with God. While the Bible does not teach once saved, always saved, I am afraid that some Christians live their lives in a way that proclaims the false doctrine. When a Christian lives in sin, but assumes he is in fellowship, he then lives the life of "once in fellowship, always in fellowship." However, as seen in 1 John 1:6, to walk in darkness is to depart from the fellowship of God.

### When is Spiritual Fellowship Broken?

Knowing that it is possible for a Christian to be severed from the fellowship of the heavenly Father, it is prudent that we establish from the scriptures what leads to such severed fellowship. Let us begin by looking again at 1 John 1:6. John wrote, *"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth."* As is quite clear, if a person walks in darkness and says that he is in fellowship with God, then that person is lying. One cannot walk in darkness and maintain his fellowship with God. Walking in darkness is the opposite of walking in the light. To walk in darkness is to live a life engaging in sin and being unwilling to repent and turn away from those sins. It is the unrepentant man who has rejected faithful service to Jesus, who is no longer in fellowship with God.

Walking in  
Darkness

If that unrepentant man will confess his sins to God and repent, then God will forgive him. John wrote, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."*

us.” (1 John 1:8-10) Without repentance, one remains in darkness and, therefore, out of fellowship with the Father.

If a Christian ceases to abide in the doctrine of Christ, then he has been severed from the fellowship of the heavenly Father. In 2 John 1:9-11, we read, “*Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.*” Take notice of the phrase “does not have God.” John made this statement in reference to those who transgress and do not abide in the doctrine of Christ. Fellowship with God cannot exist if one “does not have God.”

**Does Not Abide  
in the Doctrine  
of Christ**

Another way in which one will be severed from his fellowship with God is through being unequally yoked with unbelievers. In 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, the apostle Paul wrote,

*Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.” Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.”*

**Unequally  
Yoked with  
Unbelievers**

What does Paul mean when he says not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers? To be unequally yoked with unbelievers means to partner with someone or something in an action that is opposed to God and His standards. Consider the opposites illustrated by Paul.

- Q For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? (v 14)
- Q And what communion has light with darkness? (v 14)
- Q And what accord has Christ with Belial? (v 15)
- Q What part has a believer with an unbeliever? (v 15)
- Q What agreement has the temple of God with idols? (v 16)

To avoid being unequally yoked with unbelievers, Christians must come out and be separate from the world. The apostle Paul wrote, “*Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.’*” (2 Corinthians 14:17-18)

What did the apostle Paul mean when he wrote, “*Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.*”? Was Paul saying that Christians are to have no association or participation with the people of the world? Should Christians move to a remote place and live away from the world? The answer to these questions is a simple, “No.” Following his statement to “Come out,” Paul also told Christians, “*Do not touch what is unclean.*” While Christians must live in the world, they are

not to participate in the sinful deeds of the world. (A perfect example of Paul's instructions regarding not being "unequally yoked" would be 1 Corinthians 10:14-22.)

If Paul was teaching the position that "come out" means to have nothing to do with the people of the world, then he would have contradicted his inspired words found in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11. Paul wrote, "*I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner— not even to eat with such a person.*"

The Bible does not forbid Christians from having friendships and associations with the people of the world. It does, however, forbid Christians from engaging in sinful activities with the people of the world. Consider the example of Jesus. Did not Jesus eat with the hated tax collectors and sinners? (cf. Matthew 9:10-11; Mark 2:15-16; Luke 5:29-30) As Christians, we must live in the world; however, our behavior cannot be that behavior which separates the sinful world from God. Our righteous actions must separate us from the sinful behavior of the world. As Paul wrote, "*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*" (Ephesians 5:11)

In other words, Christians are not to engage in sinful activities with the people of the world. As Christians, we can eat with the people of the world, as long as it does not involve some type of sin. We can be their friend, as long as the friendship does not call upon us to violate the word of God. If a Christian is married to someone who is not a child of God, then that Christian must not allow the relationship to pull him away from the Lord and lead him into sin. If at any point our friendships, relationships, or contacts with the people of the world begin to pull us and influence us away from faithfully serving God, then we must either sever that relationship or gain control and say no to the sinful influences.

Fellowship with the heavenly Father can be severed when a Christian has fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. In Ephesians 5:8-11, Paul told Christians to "*walk as children of light.*" (v 8) This command would correspond to 1 John 1:7, which reads, "*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.*" Then, in verse 11, Paul wrote, "*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*" (Ephesians 5:11) In order for a Christian to walk in the light, he must stay out of darkness. He must not engage in the "*works of darkness*" or live a life given wholly to sin. When a Christian begins to have "*fellowship*" with the works of darkness, he is no longer in fellowship with God. As John wrote in 1 John 1:6, "*If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.*"

**Fellowship with  
Unfruitful Works  
of Darkness**

Being unwilling to repent of a sin against a brother in Christ will sever one's spiritual fellowship. In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus gave instructs on how to address a situation where a brother has sinned against another brother. The brother who has been wronged must go to the guilty brother. If the guilty brother repents, then the situation is settled. However, if the guilty brother refuses to repent and continues his refusal, the congregation must treat him as a sinner, as someone of the world.

**Unwilling to  
Repent of a Sin  
Against Another**

Jesus said, “*And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.*” (Matthew 18:17) The treating of the guilty brother as a “heathen” is clear evidence that spiritual fellowship has been severed.

If a brother is a fornicator, covetous, an idolater, a reviler, a drunkard, or an extortioner, the church is to recognize that spiritual fellowship no longer exists with the guilty brother. In 1 Corinthians 5:5, Paul told the brethren in Corinth to deliver the immoral brother to Satan. Paul wrote, “*deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*” (1 Corinthians 5:5) Delivering the brother to “Satan” shows the rejecting of the spiritual fellowship. Once the brother began to live the immoral life, he lost his fellowship with God for he was walking in darkness. (1 John 1:6)

A Fornicator,  
Covetous, an  
Idolater, a Reviler,  
a Drunkard, or an  
Extortioner

As a result, the congregation bore a responsibility to acknowledge the severed fellowship by delivering the sinful brother to Satan. The purpose of the discipline process was to save the brother “in the day of the Lord Jesus.” In other words, the goal of the discipline is to provoke the brother to repent and to return back to the fellowship of the heavenly Father.

Continuing in 1 Corinthians 5, we read in verse 11, “*But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner— not even to eat with such a person.*” (1 Corinthians 5:11) Again, the action of not keeping company with the guilty brother shows the absence of spiritual fellowship. It is important that all the brethren in the local church honor the requirements and restrictions of this form of discipline. If someone gives solace to the unrepentant brother, then he will hinder his brother’s repentance. It is just as important, however, to point out that when the brother repents, you are to receive him as one who is in fellowship with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 2:3-11)

One who causes divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of Christ has been removed from spiritual fellowship. In Romans 16:17-18, Paul wrote, “*Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.*” Take notice that Paul said to “note” (mark) and “avoid.” Paul is telling the brethren to identify those who threaten the congregation with divisiveness and to stay away from them. Such a divisive and selfish person is no longer in fellowship with the Father, for he is walking in darkness.

One Who  
Causes  
Divisions and  
Offensives

Another person whose fellowship with God no longer exists is the person who does not abide in the apostles doctrine and teachings. In 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15, Paul addressed this subject with the Christians in Thessalonica. Consider first verse 6, “*But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.*” (2 Thessalonians 3:6) As Paul continues in the context, he again issues the instructions to withdraw from the sinful brother. Paul wrote,

*“And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.”* (2 Thessalonians 3:14)

The evidence of the severed spiritual fellowship is quite clear in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 and 14. Fellowship among faithful brethren is a direct result of their individual fellowship with the Father. Once fellowship with the Father is severed, then fellowship with the brethren is likewise severed. At this point, the church is to “withdraw” themselves from the erring brother.

Again, it is important that all the brethren in the local church honor the requirements and restrictions that comes with this form of discipline. All faithful brethren must withdraw themselves from the erring brother. Then, when the erring brother repents, the whole congregation is to receive him as one who is in fellowship with the Lord. (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:3-11)

The last type of person from whom God has removed His fellowship is the divisive man. The apostle Paul wrote, *“But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition.”* (Titus 3:9-10) Why must

One Who is  
Divisive

Christians reject the divisive man? The divisive man will harm the local congregation. As the word implies, one who is divisive is attempting to divide. He is attempting to turn one brother against another brother. He is factious. Such a selfish man is no longer in fellowship with the Father in heaven. Again the evidence for such a conclusion is seen in the simple fact that the church is so ordered to reject the divisive man. The Bible does not authorize the church to reject or avoid one who is in fellowship with the Father. The Bible only authorizes the church to reject or avoid the one who has severed his fellowship with the heavenly Father.

Now that we have shown from the word of God how one can sever his fellowship with the Father, we must ask the following question: Does spiritual fellowship require sinless perfection? The answer to this question is, “No.” If God required sinless perfection, then none, but Jesus, would be in fellowship with the Father. The Bible teaches us that if we sin, if we will confess our sin to God and ask Him to forgive us, then God will forgive us and our fellowship with Him will not be lost. (1 John 1:8-10) This is the very reason Jesus serves as our advocate. John wrote, *“My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”* (1 John 2:1-2)

Consider Christ’s words to the church in Ephesus as recorded in Revelation 2:1-7. Jesus told the Ephesians they had left their first love. Yet, their candlestick had not been removed. However, Jesus warned the Ephesian brethren to repent or else their candlestick would be removed. When a Christian is guilty of sin, he must repent or face losing his fellowship with the Father in heaven.

Unrepentant sin is one of the biggest dangers faced by Christians. Sin will sever one’s fellowship with the Father if that sinner possess an unrepentant heart, attitude, and action. Some Christians have fallen so far that repentance is virtually impossible. (Hebrews 6:4-6) This person is not in fellowship with the Father for he walks in darkness. (Cf. 1 John 1:6) So, while God does not require sinless perfection to maintain fellowship with Him, He does require repentance of any and all sins committed, lest one’s heart becomes hardened.

## Ten Questions

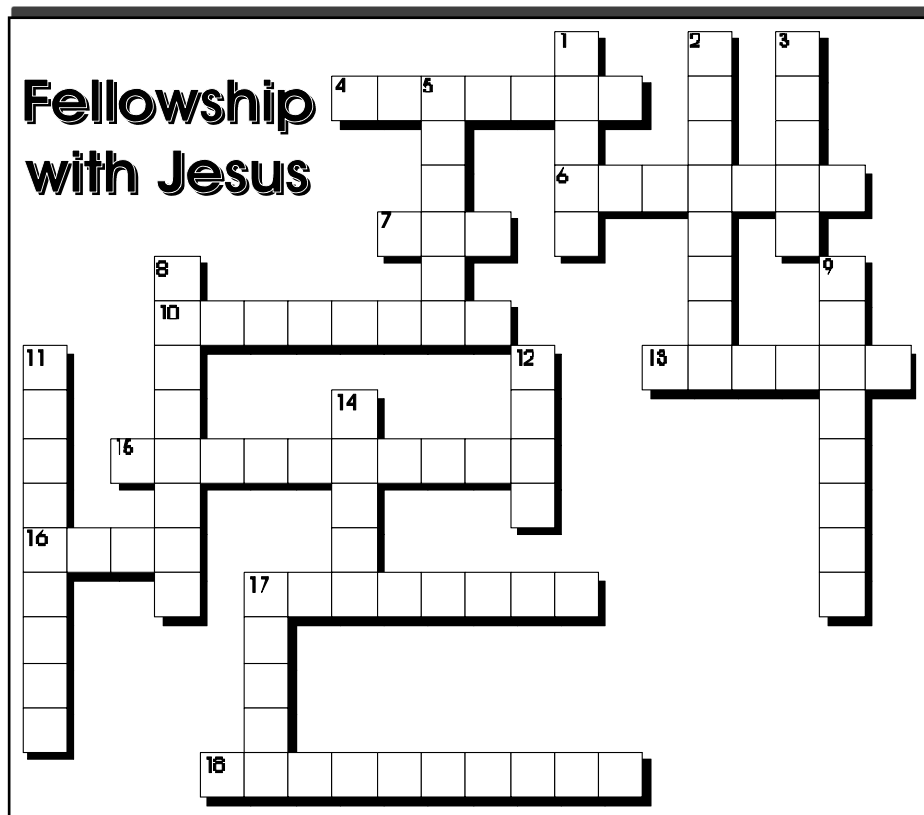
1. Who wrote, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth."? \_\_\_\_\_
2. According to 2 John 1:9-11, who does not have God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What \_\_\_\_\_ has righteousness with lawlessness?
4. What accord has \_\_\_\_\_ with Belial?
5. Christians are to have no what with the unfruitful works of darkness? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Being unwilling to repent of a sin against a brother in Christ will sever one's \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Regarding the unrepentant brother, Paul told the church in Corinth, ". . . Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_."
8. Paul told the saints in Rome to \_\_\_\_\_ those who cause divisions and offenses.
9. Paul told the saints in Thessalonica to "\_\_\_\_\_ from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us."
10. Paul told Titus, "Reject a \_\_\_\_\_ man after the first and second admonition."

## True or False

1. T or F : A Christian can walk in darkness and maintain his fellowship with God.
2. T or F : "He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son."
3. T or F : Christians are not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers.
4. T or F : The apostle John wrote, "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord."
5. T or F : Having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness will sever one's fellowship with God.
6. T or F : Paul wrote, ". . . deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, . . ."
7. T or F : The church is to note (mark) those who cause divisions and offenses.
8. T or F : The church is not to withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly.
9. T or F : Paul told Titus to reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition.
10. T or F : John wrote, "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin."

## A Little Fun

(Use the lesson text to answer these questions.)



### Across

4. "Do not touch what is \_\_\_\_\_."
6. ". . . note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be \_\_\_\_\_."
7. "If we say that we have no \_\_\_\_\_, we deceive ourselves, . . ."
10. "And if anyone sins, we have an \_\_\_\_\_ with the Father, Jesus Christ . . ."
13. "\_\_\_\_\_ a divisive man after the first and second admonition."
15. "And have no fellowship with the \_\_\_\_\_ works of darkness, . . ."
16. "And He Himself is the propitiation for our \_\_\_\_\_, . . ."
17. ". . . that you \_\_\_\_\_ from every brother who walks disorderly . . ."
18. "If we say that we have \_\_\_\_\_ with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth."

### Down

1. ". . . deliver such a one to \_\_\_\_\_ for the destruction of the flesh, . . ."
2. "Therefore 'Come out from among them and be \_\_\_\_\_, says the Lord . . .'"
3. "Do not be unequally \_\_\_\_\_ together with unbelievers."
5. "And what accord has \_\_\_\_\_ with Belial?"
8. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in \_\_\_\_\_, we lie . . ."
9. "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ does not have God."
11. ". . . note those who cause \_\_\_\_\_ and offenses, . . ."
12. "But if we \_\_\_\_\_ in the light as He is in the light, . . ."
14. "And what communion has \_\_\_\_\_ with darkness?"
17. "My little children, these things I \_\_\_\_\_ to you, . . ."

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