



Fellowship

By Jeff Bedwell on October 12, 2022

TODAY'S READING: 1 John 1

Fellowship, we like that word. Many of our church buildings have space called a "fellowship hall." In Baptist world many think that *fellowship* is shorthand for food.

The word *fellowship* means "things held in common." It implies standing together on common ground. The staggering truth out of today's New Testament reading is that God desires to have a close, personal relationship with you, where you and God stand together on common ground. Maybe that sounds too good to be true. John does not think so! In fact, he tells us exactly how this can take place. He shows how close communion and intimate fellowship with the Father can be the normal Christian experience, instead of some mystical thing we only hear about, or see in the lives of others.

The basis of our fellowship is the saving work of Jesus Christ on our behalf. This becomes operative in our lives when we respond to His grace through repentance and faith in the completed work of Jesus Christ. This is the word of life that comes to us through the proclamation of the gospel.

Fellowship is maintained and restored as we deal appropriately with our sin and walk in the light. John tells us that we must:

- Recognize our sin (vv. 8,10)
- Confess our sin (vs. 9)
- Rest in the Lord (vs. 9)

Confession means to agree or to speak alike. We see our sin as God sees it and express our desire to turn from it. We confess our sin out of respect and love for our God whom we have sinned against.

When we genuinely confess our sins there is a gracious promise here: God forgives our sin, purifies us from all unrighteousness, and restores us to fellowship with Him. We need *judicial* forgiveness only once when we come to Christ initially. The blood of Christ delivers us from the guilt of our sin and gives us a right standing before God (justification). We are adopted into His forever family! We need *parental* or *familial* forgiveness whenever we sin to restore and maintain our fellowship with God.

Confession that restores fellowship with our God is not a morbid introspection or a duty to perform, rather it is an invitation to joy – to experience the joy of our salvation. John said, "*And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete*" (1 John 1:4, ESV).

Do not miss the joy! Whenever God graciously makes you aware of sin, quickly and completely turn from your sin and trust in the cleansing, restoring work of Jesus Christ. It really is an invitation to the genuine joy of fellowship.

PRAYER: Father, keep me close and keep me clean. Help me quickly recognize and turn from my sin, trusting in and walking with Christ Jesus, my Lord. Thank You for the joy that comes through a life of walking with You in the light and life of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

TOMORROW'S READING: 1 John 2

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