

Dimension #3 - One must have fellowship with God the Spirit. **II Cor. 13:14**

Our fellowship with God the Spirit primarily has to do with us realizing that our body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19-20) and realizing we are dependent on the Holy Spirit and must live life yielding to the Spirit and not to our flesh (Gal. 5:16-26).

The Holy Spirit is our vital key and link to walking in fellowship with God. We need to depend on the Spirit and walk in the Spirit and by the Spirit and not by the flesh.

Now because God is One God in three Persons, it is impossible to have fellowship with just one Member without having fellowship with the other members.

We must have Sonship with the Father, we must be a servant and friend of Jesus Christ and we must be dependent on the Holy Spirit to have fellowship with God.

One other point needs to be considered here. Fellowship with God means fellowship with all three members of the Trinity and one cannot just maximize One member and minimize another member.

For example, the Jesus movement that tends to over emphasize the Son and the Charismatic movement that over emphasizes the Holy Spirit are not movements that have real fellowship with God.

QUESTION #4 – What is our biggest problem to us having real fellowship with God?

Our biggest problem is our own flesh (Gal. 5:17). Our real fellowship problem is that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all (I John 1:5) and we, on the other hand, are depraved. We have a nature that is anti-God, anti-God's word; it is sinful and self-reliant and it is driven to sin.

We are sinners by nature, by choice and by an Adamic curse and we have a flesh that is not good, and that flesh will stifle fellowship with God. There is a lustful lure of this world that will pull people away from fellowship with God (I John 2:14-17).

There is a Satanic, worldly, fleshly pull against God's people that is trying to move them out of fellowship with God. What makes the flesh so dominant is that we trust ourselves. We certainly would not trust the world or Satan to led us into fellowship with God, but people trust their own flesh to do it.

What I can honestly tell you, now that I am over 71-years-old, is that your flesh and the world's tug of it does not go away. Seeking to bring every thought, every action, every word into fellowship with God is a lifelong struggle and war. We need to be alert every day. We need to fellowship with God every day. If the struggle still existed in the Apostle Paul, 30 years after he was converted (Romans 7:21-24), we may be sure it will always exist in us.

If one gets out of fellowship with God, as Mr. Miles used to say, one is capable of just about anything. **If we are being led by our flesh, we are not being led by the Spirit and we are not in fellowship with God.** It does not matter how religious one pretends to be.

There are five things God's people need to know about their flesh:

- 1) If God's people don't understand their flesh and how it works, they will never have victory. We face three major enemies in having fellowship with God, the world, the flesh and the Devil. The world and the Devil are external, but our flesh is internal.
- 2) Our flesh will never change and it will never get better (Rom. 7:14). Our flesh loves to sin and that is all it can do.
- 3) One cannot ever experience victory in any counseling situation unless one acknowledges the flesh. One could go to counseling and take medications and never have victory or any fellowship with God.
- 4) We must accept the truth about the negative realities of our flesh before we can actually experience God's grace. Victory is not found and will never be found in us.
- 5) It is a huge mistake to think that the flesh is just that which is sensual or sexual because in Galatians 5:19-21, only three of the 15 flesh traits deal with this. Furthermore, in Philippians 3:4-6 we learn that the flesh can be very religious and very dedicated to doing good and obeying the law.

(Outline of flesh matters taken from Essays In Honor of J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Traitor in the Gages: The Christians Conflict with the Flesh*, pp. 128-130).

Now there are things that indicate we are living in the final days of the Church Age. Paul specifically said that in the last days "difficult times will come" (II Tim. 3:1).

Certainly one of the difficult things that will hit will be that of trying to maintain a fellowship with God. There will be these difficult attacks that will come at God's own people.

Now in **II Timothy 3:2-5**, there is a list of things that can and will lure people out of fellowship with God. These are very real threats that can and will tug at God's people. God's people need to be on guard because if these things dominate a life, one is not in fellowship with God, no matter how many church services he/she attends.

- 1) There will be a flesh/lure to love yourself and put yourself first above God and His word.
- 2) There will be a flesh/lure to love money.
- 3) There will be a flesh/lure to be proud and boastful of own abilities and skills with no humility.
- 4) There will be a flesh/lure to think and speak lightly and loosely of sacred things (reviler).
- 5) There will be a flesh/ lure to be disobedient to parents and those in authority.
- 6) There will be a flesh/lure to not be thankful for all you have and all God has given.
- 7) There will be a flesh/lure to get involved in unholy things - things profane and impure.
- 8) There will be a flesh/lure to be unloving to one's own family member.
- 9) There will be a flesh/lure to be unforgiving, to hold grudges, to not reconcile.
- 10) There will be a flesh/lure to gossip and run your mouth to talk about and slander people.
- 11) There will be a flesh/lure to not remain disciplined, to lack self-control and self-restraint.

- 12) There will be a flesh/lure to act in a brutal, uncivilized way.
- 13) There will be a flesh/lure to hate that which is good - people, teaching, worship, things.
- 14) There will be a flesh/lure to be a treacherous traitor to God and His word and will.
- 15) There will be a flesh/lure to live and think in reckless ways not Biblical, prayerful ways.
- 16) There will be a flesh/lure to be conceited and puffed up with pride, full of oneself.
- 17) There will be a flesh/lure to love pleasure more than God - flesh pleasure lures will intensify.
- 18) There will be a flesh/lure of religious spirituality that has no power to it.

These things will intensify as we near the end and these things are all designed to lure God's people away from close fellowship with God. So it is imperative in these days to maintain a fellowship relationship with God because not having fellowship with God can be very costly.

Now the potential of having fellowship with God is a staggering possibility for the believer. In these times it is a paramount necessity. Getting out of fellowship with God during the end times is a serious threat because as we near the end the world, the flesh and the Devil will all tug at the believer trying to prevent it.

QUESTION #5 – What are the prerequisites for having fellowship with God?

There are several key prerequisites for having fellowship with God:

Prerequisite #1 - There must be a real conversion and regeneration. **John 1:12; 3:3-8**

A person must be born again by receiving Jesus Christ and believing on Him. There is no possible way one may have fellowship with God apart from this. To have fellowship with God, one must honor the Son in his/her life (John 5:23-24).

Prerequisite #2 - There must not be a continual walk in darkness. **I John 1:6**

People may say they are in fellowship with God, but if they are continually walking and living in darkness, they are not in fellowship with God no matter what they say. If a believer persists in that which is sinful and lustful, they do not have fellowship with God.

Prerequisite #3 - There must be a continual walk in light. **I John 1:7**

What this means is that there must be a continual focus on the word of God and truth of God and a real application of it to our lives. If we want real fellowship with God, we must allow His word and Spirit to expose any dark areas and we need to get rid of them.

Notice carefully the text says, "walk in the light." The important point here is that we live our lives continually in the word of God, allowing the Spirit of God to cleanse us and guide us out of any dark area.

C. I. Scofield made an important observation on this matter. “Walking in the light is explained in vv. 8-10; Eph. 5:13. Through the Word of God the indwelling Holy Spirit shows the Christian that he (1) still possesses an old nature (v. 8); and (2) needs forgiveness for his sins (vv. 9-10). The blood of Christ is the divine provision for both. To walk in the light is to live in fellowship with the Father and the Son. Sin interrupts fellowship but cannot change relationship. Confession restores fellowship and immediate confession keeps the fellowship unbroken” (C. I. Scofield, *The Scofield Study Bible*, NASV, p. 1708).

Prerequisite #4 - There must be a continual sin admission. **I John 1:8**

Believing in Jesus Christ does make one a new creation and gives one a new nature, but it does not eliminate the old nature. If a person says they have no sin or sin nature, they are deceiving themselves and they are living a lie that is not consistent with truth.

J. Vernon McGee said when you get to the point where you don't think you have any sin, it is “worse than being a liar.” Because “there is no truth in you at all” (*How To Have Fellowship With God*, p. 7).

This verse does not mean one never believed the truth; it means the truth is not the controlling force in the person. Often this person is very religious and appears very pious.

Every now and then you will run into someone who actually thinks they can or have reached sinless perfection and what you may know is that person does not have real fellowship with God.

Dr. McGee is eloquent on this point: “My friend, whom do you think you deceive when you say you have no sin? You deceive yourself, and you are the only person whom you deceive. You don't deceive God. You don't deceive your neighbors. You don't deceive your friends. But you sure deceive yourself. And John says that the truth is not in a man like that because he can't see that he is a sinner and that he has not reached the place of perfection” (*Ibid.*, p. 8).

Prerequisite #5 - There must be continual specific sin confession. **1:9**

To have fellowship with God, one must continually and habitually confess their sin when they sin. The Greek verb “confess” is an iterative present, meaning to confess as a practice for each sin. There is to be an interval of confession after each moment of sin.

Now the word “confess” means to enter into conformable agreement about the sin we committed (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 318). There is an article “the” before the noun sin, which means we must specifically confess the sin in total agreement with what God says about it. There is no point confessing unknown sins because that is not fellowship confession.

This is not some generic prayer that says forgive us of our sins if we have sinned. This is a very specific prayer that pinpoints the sin so one may maintain fellowship with God.

If one is willing to confess the sin, then God will be faithful to His word and will “forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

God knew who you were when He elected you. He knew your background, your personality and He knew your failure and sins. **Everything in our relationship with God hinges on our honesty and integrity before God, in sin matters.**

He chose you as a gift to give to His Son and He desires to have fellowship with you all the way through life. The problem is we are sinful and He is not, so He has made this marvelous grace provision that you may maintain fellowship with Him. But honest confession, He will cleanse you and maintain fellowship with you. God wants to have fellowship with us, but He will not come down to our level; we must go to His and if we will confess our sin “He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Prerequisite #6 - There must never be a continual sin denial. **1:10**

Any person who says they have not sinned as a believer is a liar and the word of God is not doing a work in them. That one has no fellowship with God ever. They may go to church service after church service, but they have no fellowship with God.

It is an amazing possibility to actually have daily fellowship with all three members of the Godhead. By actually applying these things, that possibility becomes a reality.

QUESTION #6 – What are concrete evidences that one is in fellowship with God?

There are things that one may tangibly look for in one’s own life to determine whether or not one is in real fellowship with God. This has nothing to do with what a person projects himself or herself to be at church. There are at least six tangible evidences one may look for in one’s own life:

Tangible Evidence #1 - One will personally and privately talk to God. **John 14:12-14**

There is no possible way to have fellowship with God if one does not personally talk to God.

Tangible Evidence #2 - One will have a desire to know, hear and obey God’s word.
John 8:47; 14:15, 21, 23

The fact is all truth pertaining to fellowship with God is found in the word of God. If one is not serious about the word, one cannot possibly have fellowship with God.

Tangible Evidence #3 - One will actually love God and not love the world. **I John 2:15**

This comes down to an either or choice and life pursuit.

Tangible Evidence #4 - One will not be living life controlled by lusts of the flesh but by the Spirit. **Gal. 5:16-25**

Our flesh is opposite of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. The point is one's habitual practice in life. If one is continually practicing flesh things, they are not led by the Spirit and not only do not have fellowship with God, they will lose a great inheritance they could have had.

Tangible Evidence #5 - One will love the family of God and not hate the family of God.
I John 2:10-11

There is no possible way that one may have fellowship with God without the church family and one's connection to the church family. If one habitually forsakes gathering together, one does not have fellowship with God (Heb. 10:25).

Tangible Evidence #6 - One will obey Christ and abide in Christ, not pursue sin. **I John 3:4-6**

If one pursues that which is sinful, one does not have fellowship with God.

QUESTION #7 – What if a believer chooses not to pursue a fellowship with God?

Result #1 - One will miss out on a wonderful relationship with God.

Result #2 - One will miss many blessings in life from God.

Result #3 - One will miss being greatly used by God.

Result #4 - One will risk chastising judgment from God - weakness, sickness, death.

Result #5 - One will lose rewards in heaven.

Psalm 139:23-24 is a very wise fellowship prayer:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
And see if there be any hurtful way in me,
And lead me in the everlasting way.”