

GOD'S WORD ON FELLOWSHIP

S36R (REF. T-50) (AGAIN AS S169R)

WED 8/26/2020

(Matt. 12:49-50):

“And pointing to His disciples He (Jesus) added, "See here are my mother and my brothers. To obey my Father who is in Heaven—that is to be my brother and my sister and my mother." (Disciples are believers and followers). Jesus was explaining to a crowd of His followers, whom they should keep close fellowship with, just as He did by His own living example for us to follow in our life.

True Christian fellowship is a vital Truth, yet many times a neglected Truth among professed Christians. Our development, growth, and progress in the Christian life, depends on how we walk with God in this matter. Some people in Bible times lost their lives because they rejected the teaching of God's Word on this vital Truth of keeping Scriptural fellowship (such as Elimelek and his sons, or the twenty four thousand Israelites who kept close fellowship with the Moabites, after God forbade them to keep fellowship with Moab).

The fellowship question should not be settled via human opinions (nor by our own thoughts on the matter), rather, should be settled by teaching given in God's Word (as everything else in our life). (Prov. 4:20-23) My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to a man's whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. That Proverb is confirmed by (Rom.8:4) For our lives (Christian lives) are regulated not by our earthly, but by our spiritual natures. (or, what attitude is really in our heart?, for that is what God sees.) (Is our attitude disobedient to God's Word on keeping Scriptural fellowship?, (and so, “regulated by our earthly nature, instead of by our spiritual nature.”

The Scriptures teach that a true Christian is the one whose truly surrendered heart has been cleansed by the Blood of Christ, and made righteous and obedient to God's Word by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor.6:9-10) Do you not know that unrighteous men will not inherit God's Kingdom? Cherish no delusion here. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor any who are guilty of unnatural crime(secret vices), nor thieves, nor avaricious (means greedy) people, nor any who are addicted to hard drinking, to abusive language or to greed of gain,...will inherit God's Kingdom.

The apostle gives us stern warning (1 Cor.15:33) “Do not deceive yourselves: "Evil companionships corrupt good morals. Wake from this drunken fit; live righteous lives, and cease to sin; for some have no knowledge of God: I speak thus in order to move you to shame.”

(Verse 11) describes what that sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit has done (and will do) for the one who has surrendered and consecrated their life to doing God's will... (on the fellowship question and all other issues in their life).

(vs.11) And all this describes what some of you were. But now You have had every stain washed off: now you have been set apart as holy: now you have been pronounced free from guilt; in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ and through the Spirit of our God.

That verse actually declares fulfillment of the promise that God gave us through the prophet Ezekiel, for the one who truly surrenders their heart to do His will in their life. (Ezek. 36:25-27), Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

If we have not walked in God's statutes and kept His judgments, then we have not allowed ourselves

to be guided by His Holy Spirit, Who wants to guide us into all Truth (as we are told John 16:13). So, we must repent and re-consecrate our life to doing God's will (on fellowship and in every other issue), instead of following our own will (to our own destruction).

If we willfully persist in sin after having received the full knowledge of the Truth, by not coming out from among unbelievers (who have turned their back on God's Truth) (as we are instructed 2 Cor.6:14, 17), then(Heb.10:27 warns), There is nothing but a certain awful expectation of judgement, and the fury of a fire which before long will devour the enemies of the Truth. Some who had knowledge of the Truth, and have since turned their back on the Truth (only to mock and criticize it), have indeed become enemies of God's Truth as a result of unbelief. We surely do not want to be devoured along with the enemies of the Truth, rather, God's Word says to come out from among them (and to pray for God to bring them to repentance).

We are given some clear teaching and instructions on the issue of 'fellowship' (as apostle Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor.6:14-15) "Do not come into close association with unbelievers, like oxen yoked with donkeys. For what is there in common between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what partnership has light with darkness? Where can harmony between Christ and Belial be found? Or what participation has a believer with an unbeliever?

(Or that could be said), what can those who accept the faith, have in common with those who reject it? How could keeping fellow- ship with someone who has rejected the faith, be of any benefit to our spiritual condition, or that of our children? (both of which should be our primary concern in this life).

God instructs us to be earnestly diligent (2 Pet.1:) all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things you will never fall, and will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

However, if we choose for companions, those who reject the true faith and the Divine authority of God's Word, or, those controlled by Satan (the god of this world, and 'the spirit that works in the sons of disobedience'(Ephes.2:2),... then we will part company with God, because God cannot have fellowship with those who reject His will (as it is revealed in His Word). But God will enter into definite fellowship with all who accept His good, acceptable, and perfect will (in all things in their life). Jesus said,(John 14:17), That Spirit the world cannot receive because it does not see Him or know Him. You know Him, because He remains by your side and is in you.

(2 Cor.7:1 encourages us) Having therefore these promises, beloved friends, let us purify ourselves from all defilement of body and of spirit, and secure perfect holiness through the fear of God.

There is no true spirituality apart from a truly surrendered and obedient heart, one that sincerely wants to do God's will. For one to be a Christian in the true Bible sense, we must allow nothing to come between us and God's will (as is revealed in His Word). Neither husband, wife, children, houses, lands, father, mother, nor even life itself can come between us and God's Word. He cannot be a disciple of mine (Jesus said Luke 14:26),(if we put anything ahead of Him in our life) True Christians in Bible times walked a pathway of surrendered self-will, and walked in perfect obedience to God's will, because they believed that His Word is true and faithful.

Abraham believed God's Word and he made his choice to obey and follow it,... even though it meant leaving his homeland and his possessions to obey God, and to start out on a journey to an unknown destination, in a land that God would show him. God enabled him to step out in faith, just as God's Holy Spirit will enable any true believer today to step out in faith (on the promises in His Word). Indeed, Abraham had to make a consecration of his life to God.

However, God still tested Abraham to see if he had truly consecrated his life to Him, and to see if Abraham would allow his family to come between him and God's Word. (Gen.22:2), Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

S169R GOD'S WILL ON FELLOWSHIP 8 26 20

Again, Abraham obeyed God's Word, because his heart and his will were fully surrendered to do God's will. As a result of his full surrender to God's Word, God stopped Abraham's hand after he had raised a knife over his son (in order to perfectly obey God). Abraham's actions corresponded with his faith, and God pronounced Abraham a true Christian, renewed His covenant with Abraham, and promised him blessings of Heaven above and of the earth beneath. (Gen. 22:18, God said), "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

That is the same pathway of perfect obedience that Jesus Christ walked, and He did so through meeting the circumstances of this life in God's way. We are told that if we are in Him, we should walk as He walked, and the Holy Spirit has come to enable us to walk that walk of faith, and righteousness by the Spirit, as the Master did (1 Cor. 2:12 says) But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which comes forth from God, that we may know the blessings that have been so freely given to us by God.

We are promised the mind of Christ, that will enable us to decide correctly in circumstances we meet in our life, (and who we should keep company with), for our lives are to be regulated,... by our spiritual nature.(says Rom.8:4). We need the mind of Christ for all details of life, that we may see things from God's viewpoint, and meet things as His Word and His Spirit directs us (spiritually, physically, financially, and with fellowship).(1 Cor.15:33 warns) Do not deceive yourselves: "Evil companion-ships corrupt good morals."

Jesus kept on-going companionship with His apostles and other disciples (followers) of His. Jesus example of keeping Christian fellowship is one that we should want to follow. If we want to keep our 'spiritual interests' and eternal welfare,.. first...in our life, we will not continue with worldly companionship (or keep anything in our home that is not for our best spiritual interests'). Jesus (our only Savior), told us (John 14:12), In most solemn truth I tell you that he who trusts in me--the things which I do, he shall do also; (and vs.23) If any one loves Me," replied Jesus, "he will obey My teaching; (also follow His example), and my Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

To have God and Jesus come to make their home with us, is quite a reward for coming out from among unbelievers, and, to keep close fellowship only with others in the faith (who have also made a place for the Holy Spirit to abide in their heart). (1 Cor.6:19) speaks to believers, who are made righteous by the indwelling Holy Spirit), Or do you not know that your bodies are a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is within you--the Spirit whom you have from God? We would not want to defile that sanctuary of the Holy Spirit, with smoking, drinking alcohol, etc. that is so common among unbelievers.

God's Word to us through Jesus, speaks to us many times in words (and by examples of Bible Christians), on the importance of keeping 'scriptural fellowship',... as well as on the 'spiritual dangers' of 'un-scriptural fellowship'. (1 Cor.6:9) Do you not know that unrighteous men will not inherit God's Kingdom?

Fellowship with unbelievers (or those who have been led astray from the Truth, and willfully persist in sin after having received the full knowledge of the Truth.), is spiritually harmful and dangerous to someone trying to live a true Christian life, because it can effect our 'eternal welfare' (if it is not repented of).

When someone turns their back on the Truth (that Jesus gave us via Word and by example), and instead, are following 'man-made plans of the self-life' (some indulge in worldly activities, evil habits, hold malice and spite), they have rejected Christ's teaching. They are grieving the Holy Spirit of God, which the Scriptures forbid (Ephes.4:27-32) "and do not leave room for the Devil. He who has been a thief must steal no more, but, instead of that, should work with his own hands in honest industry, so that he may have something of which he can give the needy a share. Let no unwholesome words ever pass your lips, but let all your words be good for benefiting others according to the need of the moment,

so that they may be a means of blessing to the hearers. And beware of grieving the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you have been sealed in preparation for the day of Redemption. Let all bitterness and all passionate feeling, all anger and loud insulting language, be unknown among you— and also every kind of malice. On the contrary learn to be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ has also forgiven you.” (5:1) “Therefore, be imitators of God, as His dear children.”

The Holy Spirit can not abide in an unclean heart. We should come out from among them (as Apostle Paul was inspired to instruct), instead of seeking the company of someone who is grieving the Holy Spirit by following the plans and activities of the world.

Jesus confirmed that instruction, telling His disciples to get away from people who refuse to listen to His Message, as you leave that house or town, shake off the very dust from your feet. (Matt.10)

Jesus also warned that we cannot let even our family come between us and Him. Any one who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and any one who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and any one who does not take up his cross and follow where I lead... is not worthy of Me.

That is Scripture (to be obeyed), because it came from Christ Himself,.. that we should seek Him and His approval first, instead of the approval of family members or friends, by trying to hold onto their friendship, ahead of following God's Word.

God holds us responsible for every unScriptural act committed by those with whom we fellowship. We are equally guilty with them and shall suffer the plagues that will come on them. (Rev.18:4), Then I heard another voice from Heaven, which said, "Come out of her, My people, that you may not become partakers in her sins, nor receive a share of her plagues.

Even sinful mankind recognizes the principle of being guilty by association. If a man is found in company with thieves, he is equally guilty with those who have committed the theft or crime.

Elimelek and his family are an example of the terrible results of rejecting God's will on fellowship,... and walking a path that is controlled by our own thoughts regarding circumstances that we face in our life. He and his wife Naomi accepted the suggestion Satan put in their minds, that is, if they wanted to be sure of the supply of their needs, then they must move down to Moab. However, God had forbidden the Israelites to have anything to do with the Moabites,.. so their desire to go down to Moab was in direct opposition to God's Word. Regardless of the plain command not to go there, they went anyway. As a result, Elimelek and his two sons died a premature death as the direct result of forbidden fellowship.

However, as soon as Naomi expressed a desire to repent and go back to Judah, God began at once to bestow His blessings upon her, (spiritually, financially, in her home, family, and otherwise). (Mal.3:7) Return to Me, and I will return to you," Says the Lord of hosts. Naomi's reward for leaving wrong fellowship was that God returned to her. The Holy Spirit can abide in a repentant heart. (That is quite a reward for putting God's will first in your life).

Wrong fellowship can lead to 'spiritual pitfalls' (of various forms). If someone is led to follow plans of the self-life (via accepting medical attention, purchase property, lay up treasure, seek financial security and protection, accumulate unnecessary material possessions, desire for position in this life, or avenging themselves of mistreatment, etc.), then they are not following Christ, and not obeying the Scriptures. There is no middle pathway to walk, in regard to finances, insurance, healing, avenging wrongs, laying aside self-efforts, and wrong fellowship. A person is either following Christ in faithful obedience, or they are not. No man can serve two masters: Jesus stated (Matt. 6:24). (Acts 20:29-32) as Paul departed he called the Elders, to warn against unscriptural fellowship. I know that when I am gone, cruel wolves will come among you and will not spare the flock; and that from among your own selves men will rise up who will seek with their perverse talk to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert; and remember that, night and day, for three years, I never ceased admonishing every one, even with

