

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

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Basis of Fellowship

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Introduction

Fellowship is one of those things that seems to have multiple meanings in our cultural, historic, churches. The word is used for anything from a pot luck meal in the “fellowship hall” to a church sponsored football party in a member's home. Churches even put on their signs “come fellowship with us on Sunday”. Are these the true meaning of the way fellowship is used in the Bible. Or have we once again brought a spiritual function from its proper place and purpose and moved it into the world system and allowed it to take on the attributes assigned by the world instead of those assigned by God? What is the biblical basis for fellowship—its central tenet? Without a biblical basis can we have biblical fellowship?

Beginning Point of Fellowship

The Scriptures make it clear where fellowship begins and the end result of fellowship as designed by the Lord.

1 John 1:1-3 NASB

- (1) What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life--
- (2) and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us--
- (3) what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

The beginning point of fellowship is the Word of Life—what was from the beginning. The Word of Life was with the Father but was manifested, revealed to us. Because we have seen the revelation of the Word of Life, we can testify and declare this revelation to others. How is this done?

It is done by us testifying and proclaiming

1. what we have heard
2. what we have seen with our eyes
3. what we have looked at
4. what we have touched with our hands.

This is done for the purpose listed in verse 3. “ what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us”. So, based on this, where does our fellowship begin? It begins with our experience with the Word of Life—what we have seen, heard, and handled of the Lord.

Believers Without Experience

Our easy believism has brought into being entire churches of people who have no experience with the Word of Life. They have “received Jesus into their heart” but have not seen, heard or handled the Word of Life. They have no personal experience with the Lord and as a result have no basis for biblical fellowship. Without that basis, fellowship becomes a soulish, worldly activity based on the world's criteria for social activity.

However, true fellowship is a function of the spirit and not the soul. It's basis as seen above relates to experience and interaction with the Word of Life. A soulish person can have social interaction but it takes a spiritual person to have fellowship. The traditional churches preoccupation with worldly things has caused us to substitute social activity dressed up in religious terminology for true fellowship, which is spiritual interaction with the Lord and each other.

The goal of our testimony, as verse 3 of I John 1 tells us, is that they might have fellowship with us and with the Father and His Son. So, fellowship brings people together with spiritual interaction between each other and with the Father and Son. We experience the Lord collectively.

Results of Fellowship

Because fellowship is a spiritual function there are quantifiable spiritual outcomes in our lives.

1 John 1:6-7 NASB

- (6) If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;
- (7) but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

It is easy to say that we have fellowship with Him as verse 6 above tells us; but, ***we are unable to fellowship with Him if we are walking in darkness.*** Why? Because He is light and in Him is no darkness at all (v.5). Light exposes darkness and overcomes it. Fellowship brings us into light with the Lord and with each other. Verse 7 seems to indicate that there is an aspect of cleansing of the Blood of Jesus that is only applicable as we fellowship with one another. This probably

has to do with confessing our faults to another [*James 5:14-16*].

Finding Fellowship

The current church environment with its social climate has made it very difficult for those of us who are actually seeking true fellowship to find it. I encounter few people with whom I can share what I have seen, heard, and handled of the Word of Life. I find few who even want to discuss anything about the Word, yet they are quickly ready to argue their denominational doctrine.

We need others with whom we can share what we have seen and heard of the Lord and they need us too. However, finding others who have experience with the Lord is difficult. You can find many who have experience with traditional church but fellowship with them is close to impossible. They tend to be either so entangled with the world system that they can only interact socially or they are steeped in religious doctrine that hinders or blocks spiritual fellowship.

I don't want this to sound arrogant or prideful with what I am about to say but I am sure that many of you receiving this Present Truth Teaching Letter will be able to identify with it. Paul told the Corinthians that he could not speak to them as spiritually mature adults but instead had to speak to them as infants in Christ [*I Corinthians 3:1*]. While this is necessary sometimes, we can grow tired of speaking “baby talk” and need some adult conversation and fellowship.

It is natural that some of those we encounter for fellowship will be infants in Christ but it is not natural that all would be. Where are the more mature? Where are those who are growing in the Lord and being changed into His likeness? Where are those who have experience with the Lord and spiritual things? Have our traditional churches turned into perpetual nurseries?

I am looking for those who are seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. For it is in the Kingdom that we find His subjects and we can have fellowship with Him and His citizens.

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