

The University Heights Messenger

March 14, 2010

Fellowship With God And It's Effect On Man's Relations

Robert Turner

"Fellowship" (*koinonia*) means sharing, and Moulton and Milligan say it was used by the Greeks for "*the closest of all human relationships.*" When God is the "partner" it consists of our sharing His characteristics--as Thayer puts it, "*partakers in common of the same mind...*" The *ideal* will only be realized when we dwell with God in eternity, but it sets standards by which our present relationships are measured with God and with man.

Note what God says. "**Be ye holy, for I am holy**" (1 Peter 1:15-16). "**Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure**" (1 John 3:3). God is love and therefore we are to love (1 John 4:7-11, 19). We must "**walk in the light**" to have fellowship with Him who *is* Light (1 John 1:5-7). God is Spirit and our worship must be a communion in spirit (John 4:23-24). Finally, "**Be ye therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect**" (Matthew 5:48).

The *means* of such a relationship is Jesus Christ. He died for us so that a just God might forgive us of our sins (Romans 3:23-26); and in His role of Prophet, Jesus delivered the message by which we are informed of God's will and are finally judged (Hebrews 1:1f; John 12:48-50). His declarations, commands, and invitations are to "all the world," but acceptance and appropriation of redemption is on an individual basis, and fellowship with God is contingent upon our living, obedient faith. John wrote, "**That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, i.e., with the Father and the Son...**" (1 John 1:3).

In a practical sense, man's fellowship with God is possible only as man is taught, hears, learns, and comes to Him (John 6:45). Faith is the result of an objective approach to revelation (Romans 10:17), and must not be equated with mystical "feelings" or emotional "inner warmth." *This* is the place for the

"relative knowledge" argument. The "grace-fellowship" fellows, who are uncertain about fellowship among men because doctrinal knowledge differs with our background, etc., must acknowledge the same *here*, where fellowship with God is at stake. Pursuing their present course, some will eventually accept (some now *do* accept--AL) the evangelical conclusion that God directly and immediately operates upon a sinner's heart. "Proof" of fellowship with God will be "heart-felt" in the best mourner's bench tradition.

Of course man's knowledge is less than perfect, but the sincere truth seeker has reason to be confident. 1) God, who made man, delivered truth is a way suited to man's capacity (Ephesians 3:2-6; 5:17); and 2) God knows our thoughts (Hebrews 4:12), our inner spirit from whence we serve Him (Romans 1:9; 2:29). Since fellowship between God and man is on an unequal basis by its very nature, man's part is at best his sincere endeavor to be God-like. In fact, "godliness" is more a "Godward attitude" that motivates our doing. If I fail to have fellowship with God it is my fault, not His.

Jesus said, "**If any man wills to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine...**" "**If a man loves me he will keep my words...**" (John 7:17; 14:23). Do we really believe these words?

How does this effect our human relations? Several questions are in order.

When does one become a Christian? When one conforms to the requirements that Christ has given (John 14:21-24).

Who determines this conformity? God judges His servants, in keeping with declared standards (John 12:47-f). Individuals answer to God (Romans 14:21).

When may I recognize another as a Christian? When, by my understanding of God's Word, I see one has done the bidding of Christ (Matthew 7:15-23).

Is not the most honest appraisal related to my understanding of truth? Certainly! Truth is not "relative." God knows who

is His, but *I also know* in keeping with my grasp of revealed truth (Acts 18:24-26).

Could I be honestly mistaken, my understanding of truth at fault? Yes! I do not consider my level of understanding to be equivalent to the divine standard (2 Corinthians 10:12-f).

Then how can I justify being positive about anything? God requires honest conviction of me (Romans 14:5, 22-23; 2 Corinthians 4:13). To the extent I believe God's Word is truth (John 17:17) and am honest in my study and conclusions; exactly to that I extent I must conclude that contrary teachings are erroneous (2 Timothy 4:1-f).

Is not this sectarianism? No, it is not! Sectarianism chooses certain doctrines and builds a "party" with them as boundary--refusing to consider anything else "truth." I refuse to consider my level of understanding as final, contending only that I must teach and act in keeping with honest, objective consideration of God's standard in order to be true to myself and to God. The "flipside" of sectarianism, and equally bad, is the irreverent and faithless conception that each man is accountable only to himself, so that there is NO standard of absolute truth.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Esmeralda Agustin is struggling spiritually.

Sister **Glenn Kimberlin** is shut in.

Rachel Crawford's aunt, Gail Stein, is in the midst of her treatments for breast cancer.

Bill Morelan's mother passed early last week.

Taylor Osterling had a tracheotomy and remains hospitalized on a ventilator.

Shannon Gilbert is receiving treatments for breast cancer.

Rachel Knollman's continues her cancer treatments and is feeling some better.

Kendra Albertson is struggling with an eating disorder. She is improving and has starting eating more regularly.

Robert Brundige, Richard's brother, is in Parkside Manor in Cynthiana dealing with some issues. **Sarah Brundige**, Richard's mother, is in Cambridge Place Nursing Home and in need of our prayer.

Let's also remember **David Day and his wife, Michelle Oxendine, Ron Catchen, Chuck McDavitt, and David Blakeman.**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Our meeting with Wayde Miller is the 21-26. Invitations are in the back. Also, a meal list has been posted in the back.

There will be a men's meeting today at 3:30 PM. We will be speaking to Jay Dixon at 5. Men, please make your plans to attend.

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE FOR 1/7-13:

Sunday: Ex 29-30, Ps 39, Luke 3

Monday: Ex 31-32, Ps 40, Luke 4

Tuesday: Ex 33-34, Ps 41, Luke 5

Wednesday: Ex 35-36, Ps 42, Luke 6

Thursday: Ex 37-38, Ps 43, Luke 7

Friday: Ex 39-40, Ps 44, Luke 8

Saturday: Lev 1, Ps 45, Luke 9

SERMON TOPICS:

Sunday AM. **The Eldership 4**

The Qualifications

Sunday PM. Angry Words 1

CLASS INFORMATION:

Lesson 12, I, G (Ephesians 6:10-18)