

THE EPISTLE OF FIRST JOHN

"Ways To Maintain Fellowship"

1 John 2:2-6

Introduction

1. Fellowship can be hindered; fellowship can be experienced; fellowship can be maintained! Don't play havoc with eternal truth.

2. There is no question about it; since fellowship with God is the most desirable experience for a believer in Christ, it ought to be maintained.

3. How fellowship is maintained may be learned from the Word. Take the following suggestions as a starter:

1. Accept PROPTIATION. v. 2.

Here is a doctrine which is:

- a. Defined. Primary reference is to the person who has been offended. To appease or render someone favorable is the true idea. A one word equivalent may be satisfaction. It is a critical doctrinal term in the Bible.
- b. Refined. All that the term implies is found in Christ! He, Himself, is the propitiation. Both His Person and His work are involved.
- c. Confined. In the text, the matter of propitiation is confined to sins. But sins which touch both saved and unsaved. Hence, here is a satisfaction of the holiness of God which has been offended. It is adequate for the entire universe.

2. Assent to SUBMISSION. vv. 3-5.

This topic includes:

a. Salvation. v. 3.

There are three "we's" in this verse and each one is significant:

- 1) We do know---evidence.
- 2) We know Him---experience.
- 3) We keep---expression.

No sense ever talking about submission without salvation. The perfect tense of the second verb "know" connotes an established relation.

b. Dedication. v. 4.

Here are some echoes from 1:8, 10. If one makes a claim to have gotten to know the Lord (perfect tense), but does not maintain (present tense) His commandments, there is a spiritual fly in the ointment! No stronger statement in the Bible to indicate that salvation issues in a dedication to the Word of God! Let's not try to gloss over the implications of this text!

c. Perfection. v. 5.

What a blessed truth---maturation, for that is what the word "perfect" means. "Keepeth" is present tense and notes continuity. Both subjectively and objectively the love of God is matured in one who relates regularly to the Word. Here is a key to fellowship.

3. Attempt IMITATION. v. 6.

At this heading, one should give attention to:

- a. Determination. To be "in Him" means to have found in the Lord the ground of our

very being for spiritual need. But there is an advance here for John uses the verb "abide." The concept of personal involvement and effort is therefore introduced. Fellowship does not come without this!

- b. Obligation. Salvation is received without debt, but once life is owned, there is a debt to be paid! Does this sound like grace? To some no, but to Biblical Christians, it is a debt of love! The imitation of Christ is not a burden, but a desire born in the soul by the Holy Spirit. It is a part of the will to live found in the new life! No constraint.

Conclusion

God moves progressively in this section. First, one is to know (v. 3), then he is to be in Him (v. 5), and finally, to abide in Him (v. 6). He who declares a position in Christ is morally bound to act up to his declaration! Furthermore, to live up to it, under the power of the Spirit of God, will bring about a deep settled communion and fellowship with the Lord. Do you personally know what this is all about? If not, why not?

NOTES: