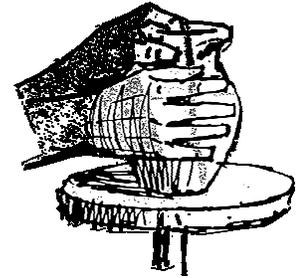


His Workmanship Westside

*"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10*



Vol. XXIII

March 16, 2014

No. 11

Isaiah 64:8

Fellowship of the Body, Part 3, The Danger to Fellowship from material by John McA-

To review the last two weeks, the basis of fellowship is salvation. The nature of fellowship is togetherness.

3. The danger to fellowship. What is it that fouls up the fellowship? What is the real danger to fellowship? SIN! Since God is holy and cannot look upon iniquity, Hab 1:13, sin violates our relationship with Him.

A. The EFFECTS of Sin on the Fellowship.

(1) It Restricts Personal Joy. When we sin, our relationship with God is violated. In fact, when a believer is in sin, he doesn't want to get anywhere near the things of God. When sin comes in, he completely loses communion with God. Usually he stops praying, he stops reading the Bible, he drifts away from other Christians and their fellowship because he does not want to be confronted with God. If believers sin willfully and for a long time, then we have purposely broken trust with God, we have willfully spurned His love, and we have destroyed our fellowship with Him. The principle is obvious. If God is light and sin is darkness, then when we sin, fellowship is lost. The principle, of course, is God's holiness. *"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.*

For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.' Therefore 'Come out from among them and be separate,' says the Lord. 'Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,' says the LORD Almighty. Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God," 2 Cor 14-18, 7:1. The principle is obvious: light and darkness don't go together. Believer and unbeliever don't go together. Righteousness and unrighteousness don't go together, so naturally if I'm entertaining sin or doing the deeds of unrighteousness, I have then lost my partnership with God. We are light, we are children of the light, we walk in the light, Eph 5:8; 1 Thes 5:5; Jn 8:12. We are in fellowship with God. Sin is the danger to that fellowship. Sin in my life breaks into the light, and I can have no pure joy in my fellowship with God. Sin is deadly to

the joy of fellowship. Sin causes fear and guilt, not joy, see Gen 3:7-13.

(2) It Retards the Service of Spiritual Gifts. When we sin, our sin affects everyone in the fellowship. This is because sin prevents us from exercising the spiritual gift(s) that the Holy Spirit has uniquely given each one of us to minister to the body. *"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness," Rm 12:4-8. The reason we are given spiritual gifts is so that we can use them to serve our fellow Christians and thereby the unity of the body, the fellowship. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all...But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For*
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“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.” —Ephesians 5:11

by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many,” 1 Cor 12:7, 11-14. The purpose of our gifts is to serve one another and thus make our fellowship and unity stronger. But sin prevents us from using our spiritual gifts; it retards service, and thus destroys unity and fellowship.

The word communion is the same word *koinonia*. It means fellowship, partnership. The symbol of our fellowship is the Lord's table. “The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread,” 1 Cor 10:16-17. In other words, when we're in communion at the Lord's Supper, both with God and fellow Christians, we're experiencing our fellowship and symbolizing it in the bread and the cup. “But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrificed, they sacrifice to devils or demons, and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons,” 1 Cor 10:20. Why? “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons,” v. 21. The “cannot” is not the *cannot* of impossibility, but the *cannot* of incongruity, not fitting. Paul was saying, “You can't mean that. I can't believe that you're coming in here as believers celebrating communion with God and then walking out of here and fellowshiping with demons.” But that's exactly what the Corinthians were doing. “Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?” v. 22. The only excuse for doing that is if you think you are stronger than the Lord. “Are we stronger than He and not afraid of Him?” How could Christians do it? How could we

possibly gather around the communion table and celebrate our fellowship with God when in fact we were actually with the enemy fellowshiping with demons? That makes a mockery out of the cross. That's blasphemy. So we must be very careful about keeping this fellowship pure. “Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

Sin destroys fellowship with God and other believers; it shatters the unity of the body. Your sin affects me because it limits my fellowship and the use of our spiritual gifts in service to others.

For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body,” 1 Cor 11:27-29. How does God judge a believer who does not truly commune with God and his brothers in Christ? “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep,” v. 30. Some of the Corinthian believers had even died because of their misuse of the Lord's Supper. We must never trivialize the Lord's table, for it is the common symbol of our fellowship through the cross, which brought us into communion with God and His people. Sin is so much a danger to fellowship, to the purity of fellowship, to the joy of fellowship, that a believer in sin is not even to partake of the symbol of fellowship, the communion of the Lord's Supper, but rather to examine himself lest he make a mockery out of that symbol.

So sin is the danger, because it destroys fellowship. It breaks our fellowship with other believers as well as with the Lord. It shatters the unity of

the body. Your sin affects me because it limits my fellowship. It limits the use of our gifts on behalf of others. Sin destroys the whole concept of the body. The sinning Christian may say, “It doesn't bother me; I can do what I want. It won't affect anybody else.” That's not true. Sin in a believer's life causes a crippling of the body, eliminating the fellowship which is so needed. Pride, lust, materialism, failure to minister our gifts, ceasing to pray, spiritual laziness, not yielding to the Holy Spirit, all these and every other sin that is continuous, prolonged, protracted, and made a pattern, destroy fellowship.

3. *It Removes the Possibility of Causing Joy in Others.* When we sin, we lose the joy of our salvation; and if we don't have joy, we can't help to give Christ's joy to someone else, Jn 15:10-11. When we continue in sin without dealing with it, repenting of it, and turning from it, we put ourselves in a situation where we violate the fellowship with God and with other believers. We lose joy in those relationships and the potential for service to one another.

B. The EXCISION of Sin in the Fellowship.

Sin shatters the oneness of fellowship in the body of Christ. This is why a Christian is to repent—because it affects not only his soul but the entire body. Jesus gave us the procedure for dealing with a Christian who doesn't repent: “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the
continued on p. 3



Let your faith be seen in 2014
 "I rejoice to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ."
 —Colossians 2:5

Danger to Fellowship, from p. 2 church. *But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector,*" Mt 18:15-17. If a Christian within the fellowship does not repent, he is to be disciplined. The church can't tolerate unconfessed sin that is not repented of.

When a believer is in sin, is living in a pattern of sin, he is forbidden to participate in the communion with God and fellow Christians. Why? Because his sin had violated all that the cross stands for. His fellowship is a mockery. In fact, it is serious enough to cause death. To exalt the symbol of communion while denying the reality of it is blasphemy. Thus sin robs us of fellowship. In fact, this is so basic that a believer who is in sin can't even participate in the symbol of fellowship. Before we ever take of the Lord's Supper, we must examine ourselves carefully to be sure that we're not at the same time fellowshipping (or having a part) with demons. Now, we all sin daily, but the sins that we commit daily that are open in our lives (that we willingly acknowledge to God)—these sins that do not become the pattern established in our lives—don't affect the fellowship like the continuing, prolonged sin or group of sins which destroy fellowship. If I acknowledge my sin to God and repent in godly sorrow, then my fellowship continues. But when a sin persists, then fellowship is destroyed, 1 Jn 1:5-9.

So repentance is absolutely necessary for our fellowship. Paul urged the Corinthian church to repent: "Now I rejoice,

Discipleship Here At Home

not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: what diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter," 2 Cor 7:9-11. Godly sorrow produced repentance, care, and diligence. Isn't that good? When a believer willingly sees his sin and with godly sorrow acknowledges his sin to God and turns from it, he becomes zealous, diligent, and careful—confession and repentance keep him aware of what's happening in his life. He will be diligent to take care of sin and address it immediately by bringing it to the Lord. Repentance opens the path to fellowship. The danger to fellowship is sin without confession to God and without repentance. As long as the sinning Christian repents and confesses in godly sorrow, then the sin doesn't affect fellowship. Willingness to repent in godly sorrow can repair fellowship.

What then is the danger to our fellowship? It's sin. Because God is holy, our sin destroys our fellowship with Him and with other Christians.

Next week, the responsibilities of fellowship.

REJOICE! *****
 Ed Fink, Letha's husband, was baptized last Monday. Last Tuesday **Leo Land**, a friend of **Gary Boyd**, put on Christ in baptism. We rejoice with the angels in heaven for the good and honest hearts of these men who have accepted Christ's salvation.

Job concerns **Linda Szymanski**
Expecting **Liz Kosik**, early April—blood platelets low; **Christina Adams's** daughter **Kayla**, May; **Lauren Gonzalez**, August 31.

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Letha Fink's husband **Ed**—prostate cancer; current treatment for brain tumors
Mina Gonzalez—back & neck pain, stiffness
Connor Boyd—daily headaches after concussion in fall at school 3/5 when 2 boys tripped him
Tyler Huelsman's teacher, Mr. Hitchens—father is dying of cancer; **Noah Hadders's** teacher, Mrs. **Bauers**—recovering from brain surgery
David Hull, a friend of **Randy Reames**—stroke last week; leukemia relapse; pray open to gospel
Randy's mother, **Una**, in her 80s—cancerous colon tumor removed recently
Megan Aki's friend **Christine Martella**—recovering from liver tumor surgery
Sandra Perry's new granddaughter, **Naia Amae**—born 3/5, 6#, 15 1/2 oz; sister, **Sharon Rupinen**—upper GI tests; surgery expected
Judy Sartin's aunt **Vallie Ek**, age 87—uterine cancer, heart, kidney failure; hospice; pray she returns to Lord in her last days; also **Judy's** cousin's wife, **Lynne James**, breast cancer
Josh McDonald, a friend of **Kory Tope**, and daughter **Casey**—unwanted divorce
Mark Campbell—unstable health and housing situation due to addiction; **Forrest Corray**, Jordan's brother—addiction

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; **Rocco Sangellino Jr**;
Addison Tope; **Pat Wilkes**—asthma
Bill Dennis—heart issues
Autumn Hadders—epilepsy; celiac disease
Jonathan Hadders—RA
Danielle Huelsman—vertigo, CV syndrome
Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; needs help around his house
Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak; **Virginia**, macular degeneration; high BP
Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes
Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia
Nell Free—pacemaker, heart; back pain
Judy Sartin—spinal stenosis; severe arthritis
Judy Sartin's grandson **Tristen**—autism
Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung weakness

Traveling Several couples are in TN for a marriage seminar this weekend: the **Howells**, **Kenny Boyds**, **Corrays**, **Topes**, **Reingrovers**, and **Hadderses**. **Mina Gonzalez** will join her father, **Vernon Hawkins**, for a gospel meeting in Mexico City 3/18-24.



Exposing current thoughts & trends

Footnote to last week's article

Romeike Case Suggests Fed'l Schooling, by Bob Unruh

As a result of public outcry over the Romeikes' impending deportation, President Obama changed his mind 3/6. An administrative decision by the Department of Homeland Security put the case on deferred status, which means members of the German family will be able to remain in the US indefinitely and not be returned to face the persecution of homeschoolers in Germany, which includes removing the children from home, by force if necessary and by means of search and entry of the parental home.

While we thank God for this result, the precedent in the courts suggests that the government (not parents) knows best what education is appropriate for children and can require them to attend a school that violates their religious beliefs. Michael Farris, founder of the Home School Legal Defense Foundation, representing the family, warned, "Once the dangerous ideas [latent in this case] are unmasked, it becomes apparent that they pose real threats to the principles of freedom that virtually all Americans would have believed were solidly established." The government "contended that forcing parents to have their children attend a school that violates their religious beliefs [is not offensive]. Hence, the first dangerous rule to emerge from the Romeike case is that governments may order children to attend schools that violate the family's religious beliefs." Second, he said, the arguments in support of that conclusion are equally alarming. The Obama administration relied on a foreign court decision. Germany's Fed'l Constitutional Ct found: "The general public has a justified interest in counteracting the development of religious or philosophical 'parallel societies' and in integrating minorities... Integration not only requires that the majority... does not exclude religious or ideological minorities, but [also] that these minorities do not segregate themselves and... close themselves off to a dialogue with dissenters and people of other beliefs... The learning and practicing of this in the sense of experienced tolerance is an important lesson right from the elementary school stage. The presence of a broad spectrum of convictions in a classroom can sustainably develop the ability of all pupils in being tolerant and exercising the dialogue that is a basic requirement of democratic decision-making process." Thus the German court was promoting every kind of tolerance. World Net Daily Editor Joseph Farah wrote that we need to understand "the Romeikes are victims of a Nazi-era law that has never been overturned." Hitler had said in 1937: "The youth of today is ever the people of tomorrow. For this reason we have set before ourselves the task of inculcating our youth... This Reich will give its youth to no one, but will itself take youth and give to youth its own education and its own upbringing." The 1938 law eliminated exemptions for homeschoolers under Nazism's compulsory education laws.



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Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 246-8810
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning:

- **Adult Bible study, "Come out from among Them"** Series, **2 Cor 6:17**: "Withdrawing from the Unfaithful," Larry Campbell

- **Sermon:**

"Laborers in the Vineyard," Larry Campbell

Sunday afternoon theme for March—**CONNECTION**

- **Sermon:** "Made to Fit," Larry Campbell

Gospel Meeting April 18-20 with Scott Kercheville. Building work day April 12.