

11. However, if every believer practiced the Royal Law, there would be far more fellowship among believers. This word “fellowship” is the noun **κοινωνία (koinōnia)** and it denotes participation in a thing shared.
12. Among Christians, it is the Word of God that develops this participation so that diverse personalities may bond from a common inventory of ideas.

The Doctrine of Fellowship

A. True Fellowship

1. True fellowship among believers is difficult if not impossible to attain until each develops personal love for God and occupation with Christ.
2. True fellowship refers to a level of thinking based on doctrine that enables each person to function under the ten problem-solving devices so that discord is suppressed regardless of the circumstances.
3. Therefore, God emphasis must precede people emphasis. Orientation to the principles of divine guidance is imperative if the believer is able to maintain fellowship regardless of the situation.
4. Fellowship with every believer is impossible to maintain—“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”—without the doctrinal ability to do so.
5. Therefore, a believer has to get right with perfect God before he can get right with fallen people. It is a high inventory of biblical principles that enables a believer to maintain soul decorum when interacting with others.
6. Fellowship with our invisible God requires the believer to acquire the thinking of God and then adjust his thinking to line up with His.
7. This requires each believer to become a dedicated enrollee in the Divine Academy of Grace Didactics so that relationships with fallen people become possible.
8. If a grace mental attitude is not maintained, then situations will emerge where a believer does not respond with doctrine, but reacts from the cosmic system.
9. Therefore, if a believer is to have meaningful, beneficial, and enjoyable fellowship with people, he must first acquire the spiritual skill of personal love for God from which he develops unconditional love for other believers.

B. Fellowship with God vis à vis Fellowship with People

1. Fellowship with God is the result of virtue love. Love has virtue toward God when the believer recognizes that the Object is perfect based on His righteousness and justice.

2. When these two attributes are combined they form the Integrity of God that is certified by His Omniscience and functions under His policy of Grace.
3. The true love of the believer must acquire this same virtue love on the human level. He cannot acquire all the righteous standards of God or learn all the details of His perfect justice.
4. However, He can acquire a significant inventory of each from which he is able to develop Christian integrity.
5. The integrity of God represents the attributes that define the love of God. When biblical principles accrue in the soul of the believer so that he applies divine standards revealed in Scripture, he is able to mentally edit his decision making from his understanding of justice.
6. The function of God's justice is to defend righteous standards and discipline violations of them. When believers engage in a relationship with others, decisions they make may violate an establishment or doctrinal standard. But the justice of God is the attribute that will deal with that violation, not you.
7. Therefore, volition instructs the injured party not to react, but to allow the justice of God to deal with the issue.
6. For example, if the Bible says that you are to "love your neighbor as yourself," then that love must be developed from your ability to follow biblical guidelines which enable you to relate to that person with personal integrity.
7. Justice functions in the soul of the believer through his volition. Situations may arise that call for him to evaluate another's behavior. Since personal virtue is to govern the response, then volition requires him to reference a standard from divine righteousness.
8. At that point, volition references personal justice for guidance on the proper response based on a righteous standard. That response is to be guided by the mandate, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
9. The love of God is the integrity of God. The integrity of God is the love of God. For the believer, his unconditional love depends on his personal integrity. His personal integrity requires him to "love his neighbor as himself."
10. Righteousness demands righteousness. Justice demands justice. Whatever righteousness demands, justice must execute.
11. Therefore, the love of the believer is the expression of the righteous standards resident in his soul in concert with justice that informs and regulates his volition.

12. It is through this system, copied from the integrity of God, which enables the believer to have fellowship with other believers.
13. Principle: Consistent execution of the Royal Law is dependent on spiritual growth which gradually enables believers to have meaningful fellowship with others.

C. Fellowship with the Trinity.

1. Fellowship with the three Members of the Trinity is appropriated by the confession of sins to the Father for forgiveness. When the believer's soul is filled by the Holy Spirit, doctrine can be recalled and applied, and be ever enhanced by the consistent study of the Word under a local pastor or with an electronic contrivance.
2. This enables fellowship with God the Father to occur when the believer applies principles from Word of God to life and circumstances.

1 John 1:6 If we say we have fellowship with God and yet keep on walking in darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth. (NET)

3. Fellowship with Jesus Christ is also possible according to:

1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (NET)

4. Having fellowship with Jesus Christ is not possible unless positive volition toward Scripture is top priority in one's spiritual life.
5. Fellowship with the Holy Spirit occurs inside the evanescent bubble in which doctrine is acquired, retained, and applied.
6. Acquisition occurs under the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit:

John 14:26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

7. The Holy Spirit has two significant ministries that relate to the fulfillment of the plan of God related to the two Christocentric dispensations: (1) His sustaining ministry of the humanity of Jesus Christ during the Incarnation and (2) His glorification of Jesus Christ during the Church Age.
8. With regard to believers, the Holy Spirit's overall ministry is to glorify God the Father:

John 7:38 “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’²

9. The Holy Spirit is the Member of the Trinity Who provides the believer with instruction so that he may understand divine thought and the power to grow in grace.

John 16:13 “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak, and He will disclose to you what is to come.”

D. Biblical View of Christian Fellowship

1. The biblical view of Christian fellowship is the believer’s relationship with all three Members of the Trinity. If this relationship is not a part of one’s spiritual life, fellowship with fellow humans is a charade.
2. Doctrinal churches stress fellowship with God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit which is aggrandized through the consistent inculcation of divine viewpoint acquired inside the evanescent divine power system.
3. Far too many pastors emphasize fellowship among members of their congregations, but to encourage this without the necessary biblical inventory to do so effectively results in no more than a social gathering.
4. When these believers gather together in a church environment, the tendency is to behave oneself while there, carry on small talk, gravitate to those with whom they are already comfortable, and then dismiss without blood being spilled.
5. The prerequisite for true fellowship among believers is established fellowship with the Trinity. Fellowship with visible people without fellowship with invisible God means, at best, a cordial social life with other believers.
6. Failure to produce spiritual growth by inculcation of righteous standards from consistent Bible study means the believer will never enjoy fellowship with God. God is absolute integrity. The believer cannot acquire integrity except by learning His standards by which to function.
7. True fellowship among fellow believers is based on personal integrity among those who also are pursuing that same objective. Although all may be positive to doctrine, not all are at the same level of the advance.

² “Behold, He struck the rock so that waters gushed out, and streams were overflowing” (Psalm 78:20a, NASB).

8. Therefore, there must be the development of a relaxed mental attitude especially among mature believers to demonstrate how fellowship can encourage the less advanced.
9. This requires unconditional love which is applied under the Royal Law. A truly advanced believer rarely gets out of fellowship over the behavior of the less advanced.
10. This level of Christian fellowship can be uplifting provided there are no legalists involved. Nevertheless, if there is a choice between the two, let fellowship with the Lord be come first and let that with others come later.
11. One of the major drawbacks of having fellowship with other believers is the intrusion of human viewpoint into one's understanding of a principle, a passage, or a doctrine.
12. The proper approach to Scripture is to assume the status of a student under the tutelage of inerrant Scripture. Believers do not have the authority to impute personal opinion into the clear presentation of biblical revelation.
13. To do so is a form of arrogance unrealized by the person who does it. This is often motivated by the lust patterns of the sin nature.
14. We have recently studied the several lust patterns that emerge from the sin nature and when facilitated in the soul of an individual, they often manifest themselves in contradictory ways.
15. The person makes a biblical application one day and then, spins on a dime, and makes a cosmic application the next. This is the rock and roll of being in fellowship and then out. Out of fellowship and then in.
16. Whether fellowship with other believers is detrimental or grace oriented is not dependent upon the fellowship itself but on the integrity of the people involved.
17. Fellowship with others must be based on the Royal Law. When someone insults you, gossips, maligns, judges, or otherwise gets out of line, the Royal Law demands that you remain inside the evanescent divine power system under soul virtue and allow God to manage the aggressor.
18. Fellowship is fine, but its impact on the spiritual life can go from pleasant to volatile based on whether those involved are doctrinally stable. In such a case, fellowship can turn into an environment of inordinate competition driven by power lust.
19. It takes spiritual self-esteem to endure and remain copacetic while applying the Royal Law.

(End JAS2-17. See JAS2-18 for continuation of study at p. 171.)