

A Deeper Fellowship

The Father's need and our need

Whatever need we have and whatever need God has, it is all answered and fulfilled in the Person of the Son. Whatever thing in our experience is a need, it just means one thing — a deeper fellowship with the Lord Himself. This is the Father's need. The Father's need is His Son. Can you believe it? He created everything for His Son. He created it through His Son and unto His Son. When the Father created the universe, He did not do one thing apart from His Son. In fact, John 1:3 says that apart from Him not one thing came into being that has come into being. So the Father did everything through His Son. He handled everything with His Son. He planned the ages and He planned the universe with His Son (Heb. 1:2). He did not touch anything apart from His Son. When He spoke out of the heavens and the disciples heard Him, His utterance was very brief. It was all focused in His delight over His Son (Matt. 3:17). This is the Father's perspective.

So should we take any other perspective? Obviously our deepest need is to know Him and to enjoy an increasing deeper and richer fellowship with Him. That is our

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greatest need. It is a deeper fellowship with the Lord Himself. Whatever exists in your experience this moment — whatever is bothering you, troubling you, causing anxiety, causing question marks, perplexity — whatever it may be, whatever is existing there, your need for that is a deeper fellowship with the Lord. It is not just to get an answer. It is not just to have your problem solved. Our greatest need is an ever-increasing, deeper fellowship with Him.

The apostles said, “Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3). And the nature of the eternal life that has come into our being, what eternal life expresses moment after moment, is fellowship with the Father and fellowship with the Son. “This is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). That is what eternal life is. God’s life in us is a life of fellowship. So when that life comes into us, there begins a fellowship, an intimacy, an openness to the Lord, a fellowship whereby we are participating in His very life. This is our one and only greatest need, ever and always. It is a deeper fellowship with the Lord.

The apostle Paul was in dire straits in his experience. John was in the same kind of straits at the end of the Bible, exiled on the island of Patmos, suffering persecution and

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all kinds of environments. All these brothers experienced many things. But when you look at their testimony, when you look at their lives, you see that everything just led them into a deeper fellowship and knowing of the Lord. So what comes out of the New Testament is verse after verse, sentence after sentence of God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Spirit, flowing together, expressing God, enjoying God, participating in God — always and ever a deeper fellowship with the Lord.

A call for a deeper fellowship

This is the theme of our life. It is the Lord always going deeper and deeper in our experience. So in the church when we pass through various stages, environments, problems, and conditions, it is only a call for a deeper fellowship with the Lord. The phrase God's economy describes the way the apostles handled everything in the New Testament churches. They handled everything with God's economy, which means they led brothers and sisters into God. They led them into fellowship with Christ. They opened up God's heart and always brought them a notch higher. Where the saints were interpreting things on a lower level, they brought them to a higher level.

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When the New Testament ministry touches any kind of a problem — a personal problem, a corporate problem, whatever it is — it is touched not in a mere natural way, not in a cure-all way, not with a “how-to” book, but always by sinking the saints deeper into God, deeper into knowing the life that was dwelling in them, deeper into knowing ourselves and knowing one another in the new creation. There is always that kind of fellowship in whatever situation in the New Testament letters. With every epistle and every problem, chapter after chapter, watch how the New Testament ministry handles everything — personal sin, fleshly problems, worldliness, division — things taking place in the church. Just watch it happen and just watch over and over again how the ministry leads people into God.

If I or any other brother stands here and speaks and leads you into something other than fellowship with Christ in your experience and does not lead you into a deeper knowing of the Lord Himself, you have been cheated. You have been cheated from the New Testament ministry which leads us into a deeper participation of Christ.

Now let us look at 1 Corinthians 1:9: “God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” Paul says this at the

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beginning of the letter to the Corinthians. In Corinth there was a myriad of problems, one of which in the first chapter is a kind of division existing in the church. There were cleavages and gaps in the Spirit between the saints because they were preferring Paul or they were preferring Cephas or they were preferring Apollos. There was a cleavage, there was a break in the flow of an organic relationship of God between them. It came because of their preferences over the different apostles. These were legitimate apostles, yet the way the believers were holding those apostles was from the wrong source. It was from their self, from their flesh.

Paul was meeting this kind of an environment and at the beginning of it he just says, “God is faithful,” indicating there is a realm where God is faithful. God is faithful to operate and to do in us beyond what we can ask or think, and it is in a certain realm. Then he says, “God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ.” That is the call. It is a call into the fellowship. So when we sit down together and we are fellowshiping, we open up our heartaches and talk about what really bothers us and what is on the surface of our being, the faithful fellowship in that kind of situation is always one saint calling another into the fellowship of His Son — “Let’s open to the Lord. Let’s call upon His name.

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Let's drink God. Let's right now participate in His life.”

The nature of fellowship is participation

Participating in His life is the nature of fellowship. The Greek word *koinonia* means sharing something in common. It simply means actually participating together in something common. The word fellowship is rightly understood by the word participation. The nature of fellowship is participation in the very life, nature, thought processes, reactions, tendencies, attitudes, of the Lord Jesus Himself. It is a participation in His life, not as a slogan but as a living Person, alive as the Spirit. I am joined to this Person in my deepest part, the part that is regenerated. When I am born of God and I receive Christ, my spirit comes alive and I am joined to another life. There is a part of me that I can take the initiative with. I can pray. I can call. I can open. When I do, I activate that indwelling life in me to actually participate in the springing up and the welling up of His life where divine love flows, divine reactions and divine determination flows, a loving of righteousness flows, a hating of iniquity flows, a denying the self as the source of my life flows. It is a participation in the very life of the Lord Jesus. That is the Christian life.

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We are not called to live the Christian life. You are not and I am not. Don't try to live it. Don't you dare try to live it. You will just find out you cannot. Try putting into practice Matthew 5, 6, and 7, for example. Try going the second mile, turning the other cheek, living without lust, living without any reaction of derision toward people. Just try and you will find out that in you dwells no good thing. We are not called to live the Christian life. We are called not in that realm. We are called to participate in the life of Christ. That is another realm. That is altogether another realm. We need to realize that Christ is our life and that we are joined to Him, and our life is made up of a constant and continuous and ever-deepening participation of His life.

That is why the Lord says, "I am the living Bread. Eat Me. I am the living water. Drink Me." He uses terms that help us to see, "I am not telling you to imitate Me. I know. I am the pattern. My life is the pattern. But it is not that I am here and you are there, and you are reading about Me and you are trying to be like Me. That's not it. It's Me. It's Myself. I was processed through death. Then I was raised. Then I became a life-giving Spirit so that now I'm reducible. I'm reducible to now be able to actually get inside of you and live in you and produce in you My very life, nature, reactions, feelings, tendencies, inclinations.

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You're going to feel the way I feel. I'm going to sneak up on you. I'm going to get into your spirit and you're going to start changing. You're going to start loving certain things. You're going to start getting feelings of distaste toward other things—things that you used to live in. You wallowed in the mud like a pig. You lived a pig's life. You loved the mud, the dirt, the filth. That's what you just enjoyed. You're going to watch yourself now. As My life is surfacing and manifesting itself in you, you're going to find such a distaste and move fifty yards away from the mud puddle. It's going to be in you. It's not somebody over you saying, Don't go there. Don't do that. Don't go to the mud. No. You just don't like the mud anymore. You just walk away from the mud. I'm going to write My laws on your heart. And I'm going to impart it into your mind. It's going to be in you." How could that happen? It is participation. It comes by participating in the very life of the Lord. That is why fellowship with Him is so utterly critical.

Participate in Him when you are being bugged

Fellowship is always just a fresh opening to once again participate in Him. For example, something bugs you and you cannot get the bug out of you. It just bugs

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you. Okay, what do you do? Well, man's idea is to rearrange your thoughts, change your environment, do something different. Take a walk. Smell the roses. In other words, man's thought is to somehow fix it in an outward way. Something bugs you. But God has something deeper in mind than just getting rid of that thing that bugs you. God wants to use that thing that bugs you to change and transform you into His image. So rather than using these human means, what bugs you is only a call, it is a call into the fellowship of His Son. It means a fresh opening over that feeling of being bugged about this person, something that just gets under your skin about them. You cannot seem to throw it off. That just means a fresh participation in His life.

Maybe you are in a situation where you cannot pray outwardly, but inwardly you are having this kind of fellowship: "Lord, I give this to You. I can't get rid of this feeling of being bugged by this person. They do certain things. They bother me. Lord, I can't do it. I can't make it. But I thank You, Lord, Your life has already made it. I trust You now." Interact with Him. That is participation. It is a call to participate in His life. But what happens if we are ignorant and the enemy has done a number over us, then that bugging in us will be seized upon by the devil and a flood of condemning thoughts will come in: "You're

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no good. Look at you. You're just filled with reaction. You'll never be any different." You begin to turn in on yourself. You feel discouraged about yourself—"I can't really live this Christian life. I'm not that different. Look at me. I've got the same reactions I used to have even before I was saved." So the enemy dupes us.

Participation means to abide and remain with Him

But we have to realize we cannot do anything. "Without Me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Get it? "Without Me, you can do nothing." That means N-O-T-H-I-N-G. Give me a cheer. Amen! NOTHING! Say it! NOTHING! Say it again! NOTHING! Again! NOTHING! Amen! Isn't that a washing? That is a real washing of our being. "Without Me, you can do nothing. So don't do it without Me. Stay in Me." That is participation. Participation means to abide. It simply means to stay. Don't try to get in. Don't struggle to get in. You are already in. You don't join yourself. He joins you. "But of Him are you in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:30). So it is God who did it. It is God who joined us. So we are in Him. Now we learn to abide.

The word abide in Greek means to remain. It just means remain. So in fellowship with the Lord, you and

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I just learn how to remain. When the bugging comes, you want to go out and meet it, think about it, wonder how it could change. Don't go out. Go in. Remain. Just remain. You don't have to work anything up. Just remain. "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, neither can you except you abide in Me" (John 15:4). That means fellowship with the Lord is very practical. It is at those junctures, at those moments when you are feeling yourself going out and going back into that old record that you used to play. They keep playing again and again. It is a scenario. It is a pattern. It is that same old story again of defeat and discouragement and hopeless feelings. When that begins to happen, remain. Just remain. It is just a little "Jesus." Speaking His name instantly slaps you in the face, straightens you up, and brings you to attention so that you are in alignment with His life. And He flows and imparts His life and nature. This is participation. "Abide in Me. Remain in Me. Just stay there. Don't leave. Don't leave Me."

Participation triggers resurrection life

Many times when things enter into us and there are problems, the temptation is to leave Him. Don't leave Him. Remain in Him. Just stay with Him. That is what

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this life is all about. It is a call into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. And God is faithful in that sphere. God will operate because in the fellowship of the Son from our spirit there comes the dynamic of resurrection life, which is programmed from the heavens that our whole being could be changed and transformed into His image. It is programmed to deal with stubbornness. It is programmed to break down a resistant will. It is programmed to change thoughts that are alien from God into a mind that is subdued. It is programmed to work in emotions that are inordinate, attached to this and that in excessive ways. Things that people cannot break, the life in you is programmed to deal with that, subdue that, and make you an even-keeled, cool person. Amen! In the spirit He is able to do it. This is the life. He is able to do beyond what we could ask or think according to the power that is operating and working in us.

You are pulling the trigger of resurrection life to go to work on your insides. It is like a workshop for Him. He is the Carpenter. He is just going to clear the place out and He is going to remodel it and remake it and refashion it. And every time you just remain, just remain, don't leave Him. Say "Jesus." Put a tape in if you cannot say it. Let the tape say it. Let the singing tape say it. And then pretty soon you are going to say "Jesus." You are going to say

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“Jesus” also. Pick up the Word. Get a good writing, something that will feed you. Call a sister. Call a brother. Go fellowship in the front room. Don’t stay in your bedroom and wallow in your misery. Walk out the door and sit down with the brothers. Sing together around the piano or with the guitar. Let a participation happen at that moment.

Participation and operation in Philippians 2

That life in us operates and is triggered in the fellowship. This is what Paul knew. Look at Philippians chapter 2. Paul says in verse 1, “IF there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions,” if there is any of that, if I can appeal to that among you, if there is some fellowship of spirit, if there is this encouragement in Christ, then he can right away go on and say in verse 2, “make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing.” Then in verses 3-5 he says, “Doing nothing by way of selfish ambition, nor by way of vain glory, but in lowliness of mind considering one another more excellent than yourselves; not regarding each his own virtues, but each the virtues of others also.

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Let this mind, or this disposition, be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

What you have in verse 1 is participation — fellowship of spirit, encouragement in Christ. And then what happens after that is the dynamic working of a change in your disposition and in your motives and in your attitude toward the saints, that you could think the same thing. You could even be joined in soul, having one heart, one mind, and letting that disposition of Christ be in you. And you could see that it is actually working and it is operating. Then he gives the example of the Lord Himself who became of no reputation. Then he picks up the same thought in verse 12 of the same chapter: “So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it happens to be God who operates in you both the willing...” That means He is going to work on your insides and He is going to give you an inclination inwardly, a willingness. He is going to operate a willingness in you and “the working for His good pleasure.” So it is going to be all Him in His grace doing this. It is God operating.

So handle yourself with care. Just stay in that fellowship. Just participate and then watch that life operate in you. And you are going to come to junctures in your

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experience. Verse 14 says: “Do all things without murmurings and reasonings.” What is going to happen is that you are going to be tempted to murmur. You are going to be walking into the closet and things are not put away the way you think they should be put away, and you are going to be murmuring under your breath. You are going to start feeling, “Why didn’t they do it this way? Why am I neglected?” This is murmuring and reasoning. Reasonings is the thinking. Reasonings is building cases, surmising. Oftentimes things happen in our daily life and we surmise. We create a whole picture. We have the whole scenario down to a tee. All that reasoning is going on and murmuring. Whenever you find yourself in that mode of reasoning or murmuring, realize you are not participating in God. So you just turn that “Why?” into “Jesus!” It started out as a “W” and it turned into a “J.” “Jesus!” Amen! Right away you remain, you remain in Him. And you participate in Him.

Then it is God who is at work in you. What happens is that you get changed. You get transformed so that you become like a lemon scent in the atmosphere. You just become a fragrance of Christ. Your disposition changes. You are easy to be around. People are not walking on eggshells around you because your mind is so active about everything. Even your mouth is open and murmur-

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ing. But after a while you let God operate. You just remain. Your disposition is all out of whack. I mean cranky, ugly. You have had father/mother problems. You were related to them in the wrong way. You have been abused. I mean you have all kinds of problems. We are all cut in different ways out of Adam. We have different histories. We are different kinds of sinners. Fallen flesh comes in many ways. But it is all out of the same thing. Your problem and my problem are the same. It just manifests itself in different ways.

But there is one Savior. There is one Christ who handles it all, who did it all. So whenever those kinds of things are in us, regardless of what they are, you just learn one little lesson — “Remain in Me. Abide in Me. Just stay with Me. Don’t struggle to get in. You’re already in. I’m your righteousness. I’m your sanctification. I’m your redemption. I’m everything to you. Now let Me be everything. Just abide in My love as I abide in My Father’s love. Just stay there as the object of My love. Yes, you’re ugly. Yes, you’re this. But guess what! I chose you and I love you and I’ve made you the object of My affection. And I put you in My Son. You cannot be in a greater place. You’re dead center in the middle of a freeway of the love of God. Amen! Abide in Me. Stay in Me. Fellowship with Me.” In the realm of fellowship,

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everything takes place. So we could see this from Philippians 2. It is a participation in Him.

Participation in the body and blood of Christ

Now we go to 1 Corinthians 10 where Paul was speaking about the Lord's Supper. In verse 16 he says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?" So what he is saying is that there is a real participation in the blood and body of Christ. At the Lord's table, the bread that we break has two significations. The first is the body of Jesus Christ. It is the very physical body of Christ. It is that humanity that lived for 33-1/2 years, then went to the cross, was put into the tomb, resurrected, ascended, and now as the last Adam in resurrection became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). This bread signifies His humanity. It is the body of Christ. It is the physical body, the very life and person and manhood of the Lord. He was not only Son of God, but Son of Man. And that manhood is fully preserved. Not one thought in His humanity has been dropped. Not one decision in His humanity has been obliterated. Everything in Himself in His humanity has been preserved and kept in order that He might give it

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away to us and impart that very humanity into us.

So when we eat this bread at the table week after week, this signifies and this testifies that we are actually participating in the life of the Last Adam, that glorified body of Christ with His humanity that is available today as bread and as food for us to eat and enjoy and participate in. That means we are declaring that we are living by Another life, just like we live by food. Obviously if there is no intake of physical food, after a certain point we are gone. We do not live. So we can really say we live because of food, because of nourishment, because of what we take in, because of participating in prime rib, participating in oatmeal, participating in string beans and participating in boysenberry pie. You participate. When you eat, that is participation.

Incidentally, that is what this meeting was this morning. It was just one grand participation of the Lord Jesus in all of His loveliness as He is in our midst to be enjoyed. We dine with Him and He with us. So we are in a grand participation of this life. We are enjoying this life, eating this life, participating in this life, and then we live because of this life. The greatest need in your life is not to overcome your problem, but to change your diet. The greatest need you have is not to overcome your besetting sin. That is not your need. Your need is to have a diet

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change. You have been reading *Life* magazine. You read *Reader's Digest*. You read computer magazines. You spend so many hours in these magazines. That has been your diet. And you are living by that. I can tell because when I come to you, the first thing you talk about is 8 megabytes of RAM and 12 megabytes of RAM. You understand what I mean.

But give me a brother or sister who has a lot of problems and yet has a diet of Christ and is in the Word and enjoying the Word and is eating Jesus. Somehow the only essence around them is Christ. We become a different person by participation. That is why the church in the New Testament, on the first day of the week, came together to break bread. Every Lord's Day they were together breaking bread. "As often as you do this, you declare the Lord's death until He comes," with all that it means, all that it signifies. What is happening here week by week at this table is a declaration to the whole universe that on this earth there are people that have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and we are testifying and declaring that we are living by another life, and that is the life of the Lord Jesus as our bread. So in 1 Corinthians 10:16 Paul says, "The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?" Is it not a participation of the body of Christ. That is one aspect of the bread in this verse.

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One bread, one Body

The next verse brings us into a further revelation of the bread. It is seeing that there is *one* bread, signifying “we” who are many are “one Body.” Now wait a minute. We were talking about the body of Christ, the physical body of Christ as one bread. But then immediately Paul’s thought changes from the physical body of Christ to the spiritual Body of Christ which we are. So what we have in verse 17 is, “We who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.” Now we are eating Christ together and participating in Christ together. We are the Body of Christ, spiritually speaking, organically joined to one another. The main point of this verse is about the oneness of this one bread. Even though we break the bread and it is in many pieces, and all the pieces have been distributed to each of us, it is still one bread. For example, if we could regurgitate all the individual pieces and they would all come back, it would still be one bread. Thus, partaking of one Christ together is the reality of enjoying the one Body. We are one Body by participation and eating this one bread.

The Body of Christ is not merely a doctrine. But give me a group of people anywhere on this earth assembling together, that are eating Jesus together and partaking of

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that one bread, and what you have is an expression of the one Body of Christ where He Himself is expressed in His oneness. This is where all the solving of all the problems takes place. It is in the fellowship, in the participation of Christ, in our enjoyment of Him in ever deeper ways.

A deeper fellowship in finer things

Ten years ago there were some pretty raw things in your life, and the Lord touched you. You were maybe in the world in a fleshly way. And you found another life by abiding, staying with Him. Now ten years later there are other feelings in your life. They have gotten finer. They have to do with your attitude. They have to do with your opinion. They have to do with you being in the driver's seat, calling the shots about anything. It has to do with letting Him live in you and through you. So now, it is the same thing as ten years ago. Ten years ago it was some big dealing. You came out of the world. You came out of an affair. You came out of pornography. You came out of things of that nature. You said, "Amen, Lord," and God manifested more life in you and through you. Now today, ten years later, it is down to the little teeny things, as in Ephesians 5. He is going to take every spot and every wrinkle, everything that has a little wrinkle in it in us, and

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purify the church for His coming back. He is coming. We are running into the year 2000 now. Jesus is coming. The Lord is coming. The kingdom is coming. The church is being readied. We are being prepared. We are not just whiling away time here. There is an administration in this universe. God's government is among us and with us, and the church life expresses that government. It is all happening by a participation in the life of His Son.

God wanted to get this one thing across so desperately that He decided that when He wrote the Bible, He would sign off or close with this one thing. At the end of the Bible, Revelation 22:17 says, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And whoever wills," listen to this, "let him come and take the water of life freely." That means the Bible ends with utter simplicity — Drink water. That is how the Bible ends. What does that mean? That means to participate in the Spirit. That means to drink, to have intake, to have God become everything in you. This is a great thing. Many of us could testify that our lives were changed the day we shifted from living the Christian life to eating the Christian life, to participating in this Person. This is glorious.

When we get into a deeper fellowship with the Lord, we find ourselves very jealous over our intimate, personal time, when there is the heart fellowship, that deep open-

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ing of everything to God to let Him work and operate in us. And when we are in His presence and we have a deeper fellowship with Him, it is a fellowship participating in Him and it is a fellowship in the light. When we are in the fellowship with the light, our eyes are upon Him. It is not fellowship that is introspection. It is not morbid introspection, taking yourself apart and beating your breast, in that kind of sense. Fellowship is beholding Him, being occupied with Him, and being in His light.

Fellowship in the light

The way it feels is the way John expresses it in 1 John 1. John begins, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us).” Verses 1 and 2 are exclusively occupied with Him. We see Him. We hear Him. We handle Him. It is Him. We are occupied totally with Him.

Verse 3 says, “That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with

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His Son Jesus Christ.” Here the “fellowship with us” is simply a realm that we are enjoying, and that is fellowship with the Father and with the Son. So that indicates the church today cannot be organized. It cannot be manufactured. And it cannot just fit the way you think it should work. The church is not like that. The church is the degrees of fellowship existing in our hearts with the Father and with the Son. Let me ask you, this last week, you had all kinds of environments — maybe personal problems, outward environments — how about your fellowship with the Lord? Amen. You see? I meet you and immediately there is fellowship. This does not mean you had a perfect week. But this means in all your failures this week you were just interacting, participating, drawing, telling the Lord how ugly you are, but how much He is, laying it upon Him, expecting from Him. It becomes a fellowship with the Father and with His Son and with one another.

You cannot make people fit you. The only way it can happen is with fellowship. When you fellowship with the Father and with the Son, there is an automatic circulation of fellowship in the church. And if you do not have fellowship with the Father and with the Son, this is what will happen to you. You won’t like us. Or you will feel that you are neglected. This is what happens. Your

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feelings of self-centeredness and how everybody is looking at you and feeling about you are calls into the fellowship of His Son. These symptoms are telling you that if you are left to yourself you will be this kind of suspicious thinking person the rest of your life. You will be in your own little cubicle, your own little world, thinking that everybody is against you. No. If you fellowship with the Father and fellowship with the Son, it will renovate your personality so that you will find fellowship with one another.

We have to see that this is the church. When you get into this fellowship, there is something about it. There is a nature, there is an atmosphere, in the deeper fellowship in the church. And the atmosphere is light. God is light. Verse 5 says, “And this is the message which we have heard from Him.” We have heard from Him in the fellowship. In that fellowship this is what we heard “and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin. Now if we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful

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and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”

Now this is the atmosphere of fellowship. It is an atmosphere in the light. And it is God’s light. When God’s light is turned on with 100 banks of halogen lights here, everything in us to the marrow is exposed — our motives, our hidden life, our actions, reactions, whatever. Everything in us is exposed. And not one person here passes the test. If we say that we have not sinned, we are a liar and the truth is not in us. So what is here is an admission under God’s light, not man’s standard, not man’s interpretation, not puny comparisons between this person and that person, and my life and his life. “I’m not like . . .” Forget about that. God’s light exposes us all. So there is a common feeling among us and that is that we are wretched and rotten to the core. But guess what! The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. Amen! We are all here in that same light with that same blood, and we embrace one another, loving the fact that we are all in the process of the dynamic of resurrection life changing us.

So give me space to change, okay? I am washed in the blood. My fellowship is wonderful. I can sing. I can testify with boldness here. But I am still a little cranky.

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But I am learning how to remain. Just remain. Don't go out. Remain. "Jesus!" The best way to remain is just "Jesus." This pulls you right back in. Let Him transmit His life right into you. So this is the fellowship in the light. It is transparent.

When we are protective and when we are self-protecting, that is not a good sign. I love the church here. There is so much transparency. Even anyone visiting, coming for the first time, could not feel a superior attitude. It may be different, I grant you. But stay a little longer and from the testimonies you will realize, "Hey, these people are just like me. They've got the same problems I do." But there is a common thing happening — we are all participating in the life of His Son.

Examples of men with a deeper fellowship

God has His wonderful ways of bringing us into this participation. Let us look at how God takes us on sometimes, especially with the pride in us, Satan's nature, so proud. Here are a number of examples of fellowship in the light: Moses, Joshua, Job, Isaiah, Daniel, Peter, Paul, John. These examples from the Word show us how all these different men were in a deeper fellowship with God.

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Moses

Moses was upon the mountaintop. He said, “Show me Your glory.” And the Lord said, “Nobody can look at Me and live. So I have to do one thing with you. I have to put you into the cleft of the rock. Moses, you cannot exist before Me. There is only One that can exist before Me, that is the Cleft of the rock, that is Christ. That’s the only way you could be before Me and see My glory.”

When you get into His presence, what happens is that you shrink. You find out there is nothing in you. You get flattened. Your mouth is stopped. Excuses stop. Vindication of yourself stops. If you are still explaining yourself away, you have not touched it yet. But when you touch it, everything in you stops and you realize there is nothing in you, but it is His mercy, it is His grace, it is His love. And you feel it. You know it. And because you know it, you know it with other people. You give grace to the saints because you know it in yourself. That is a deeper fellowship. The deeper the fellowship, the more you realize the utter fineness of your corruption and how much you cannot do one thing apart from Him. You need Him at every juncture for His life to be manifested. So this was the case with Moses.

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Joshua

Joshua was going into the land and he was about ready to take over. He was sitting in the driver's seat. And the Man stands before him in the road and Joshua says, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" And the Man said, "I have come as captain of the Lord of Hosts" (Josh. 5:13-14). That means, "I am not for you and I am not for them. I am here not to take sides with anybody. I am here to take over." So when He comes to you and you want to say, "Lord, help me. Oh, help me, Lord!" The Lord says, "I'm not going to help you. I'm going to do away with you. And I want to become everything." Joshua was flattened. The Lord says, "Now take off your shoes. You are on holy ground." This is deeper fellowship. It is when you have to take off your shoes, when there is no more talking, but you are just bowing, worshipping, submitting.

Job

Job was speaking a lot in that book. He had good explanations. Then God began to speak: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" Really, Job's problem was self-righteousness. Sometimes the emphasis in this book has been put on why the righteous

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suffer. It is all on suffering in that way, not realizing that this book is exposing a man who has a hidden self, a subtle confidence in his own righteousness. “I never looked on a woman without pure eyes. When I walked down the street, I gave to the poor.” He had a very wonderful life. He was impeccable. So he could out-argue all his friends. Nobody could convince him. Even the last one, the fourth one, had the Spirit, but he still did not make it.

Then God started to talk. He tells about all these animals, the hippopotamus and the creation. Then Job 42:1-2 says, “Then Job answered the Lord and said, I know that you can do everything.” This is what happened to him as he was in a deeper fellowship with God. “I know that You can do everything and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, who is this who hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand.” Oh, that happens to us. We run at the mouth, you know what I mean? Just like Job, I said things I did not understand, “things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.” Then Job says to God, “Listen, please, and let me speak. You said, I will question you and you shall answer Me. I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear.” I have had some knowledge of You. I know about You. I know God. We all say this. “But now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor

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myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” That is what happens with deeper fellowship with the Lord.

In Seattle I had an experience after several years of serving the Lord, when the light shined. It was so intense that I literally had to go to bed. I could hardly make it through a day because of the exposure of things in me that I did not know were there. But of course God did not withhold His fellowship. But when the light was shining, it was like, “God, I abhor every motive, every purpose within my heart, hidden there.” When He shines, what can you do? You do not do anything. You just lie there and you say, “Amen, Lord.” In His light, we see light (Psa. 36:9).

Just be in that light and just acknowledge it. Don’t excuse it. Don’t explain it away. Just say, “Amen. I abhor myself.” There is a deeper fellowship with the Lord. And that deeper fellowship makes you a person who is not so quick to trust himself and make long-range plans for the future and say, “I’m going to go to this city and I’m going to go to that city, and I’m going to buy this and I’m going to do that, and I’m going to secure my future.” You do not talk that way anymore. You say, “Well, I’m planning this if the Lord wills, if the Lord permits.” That is coming as a result of a deeper fellowship in His light. But if any of us are in our pride, just so sure about everything, it indicates that we need a deeper

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fellowship. Look at Paul's characteristic in his later years: "not that we have any sufficiency of ourselves to think of anything as coming from ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. We do not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead." This is the deeper fellowship.

God's dealing with those who walk in pride

In the Bible the Lord even uses a pagan king, Nebuchadnezzar, to illustrate that He wanted a man to see God versus his own proud heart. Daniel 4:4 says, "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace." And he says in verse 5, "I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me." Then he has to get an answer, of course, and Daniel comes in and gives the interpretation of what the dream is all about. Verses 10-17 say, "These are the visions of my head while on my bed: I was looking and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. The tree grew and became strong; its height reached to the heavens, and it could be seen to all the ends of the earth. Its leaves were lovely, its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, the birds of the heaven dwelt in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it. I saw in the

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visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. He cried aloud and said thus: Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, and the birds from its branches. Nevertheless, leave the stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from that of a man, let him be given the heart of a beast, and let seven times pass over him. This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men.”

Here is a proud heart, self-assuming. Nebuchadnezzar. He owns everything. He thinks he is everything. But God has a way to bring him down, to show one thing, and that is that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men. That means God is in the affairs of man. Even governments are under His permission and His authority. Nebuchadnezzar had to learn this. Then verses 28-30 say, “All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon.

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The king spoke, saying, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" Look out for those kinds of thoughts. Be careful how you think about your house, how you think about your possessions, how you think about your job, how you think about your professionalism. Be careful how you hold anything. This is the lesson for us.

Verses 31-35 say, "While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of the heavens till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws. And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is

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from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, What have You done.” There is no defense of God, no explanation of God. When you are subdued this way, who could say anything.

Then verses 36-37 say, “At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride, He is able to put down.” Amen! Oh, what a God we have!

Sometimes we have little Nebby experiences. Have you had your Nebby experience? If you are a proud person, it’s coming! But thank God for every Nebby experience! Because what happens is that our understanding comes back. We are restored. We are made a member of the Body, and God has a way on this earth. Amen! Thank You, Lord. Take us into a deeper fellowship!

— *Bill Freeman*