

# My Fellowship

*by Kyle Campbell*

Fellowship is an important Bible doctrine and has serious ramifications for our practice as God's children. Fellowship is the state, condition or quality of persons being companions, partners, or sharers together in some action, benefit, or relation which is common to all the participants.

To have joint participation with someone, in and of itself, does not prove anything as to the rightness or endorsement of that participation. Two men may be at opposite ends of an issue and "jointly participate" in debating their differences. It does not mean they are "in fellowship" with one another for there is certainly no joint approval nor acceptance of each other. The fellowship we need to focus on is a working together, mutual acceptance, and approval — a harmony and unity as we serve God.

Christians need to be careful what they show that they are in fellowship with. My posts or "likes" on social media may show that I "approve" of immodest dress (cheerleading outfits or swimsuits), drinking (holding beer or alcoholic beverages), dancing (posting Prom and other dance pictures), gambling (selling raffle tickets or bingo), or unscriptural situations (like adulterous marriages or children born out of wedlock). Now I may not believe that any of these are righteous activities, but how will anyone know as they look on their phone or tablet? But I can't put all the burden on social media. Christians show their "approval" of these aforementioned sins in many ways other than just online. One of the reasons why being a Christian is difficult is because we always have to take heed that we are being "lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15).

Regarding our fellowship, Paul sternly warned, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:8-11). David, the man after God's heart, said, "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way" (Psalm 119:104; cp. v. 128). If we think it is important to be like Christ (and it is, Romans 8:29), then Hebrews 1:9 says, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." You need to really think — do your daily actions show that you hate everything that is false and wicked? We are under direct command of God and the example of Christ Himself to "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Someone might counter that Jesus ate with sinners, therefore we can be in the general company of and show our agreement with people in sin. Yes, Jesus did eat with them (Matthew 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32), but He did so to "call ... sinners to repentance." He did not do it to primarily be their friend, but to present Himself as the Great Physician, teaching and admonishing them to change their lives. Weak Christians make no effort to teach — they just "agree" and "approve" by virtue of what they publicly and privately convey. These Christians need teaching and growth (Colossians 1:9-11; 1 Peter 2:2). Hebrews 5:14 declares that the mature are "those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." They understand the consequences of what they communicate publicly and privately.

On the other hand, it is good to see strong, conscientious brethren who demonstrate their fellowship with righteousness by “liking” scriptural quotes and godly articles on various Bible topics. Furthermore, they express spiritual, virtuous thoughts to both saints and sinners. Such people ensure that the Lord’s church will be strong and faithful in the years to come. May their tribe increase!

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## Avoiding The Truth

by H. E. Phillips

*"Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31).*

The above statement from John 9 was made by a man who had received his sight by a miracle of Christ. The man was born blind and seems to have been known by all of that community as a blind beggar. When the neighbors first recognized him as the blind man, now having his sight, they did the very natural thing of asking how his sight had been restored. He told about the man "called Jesus" who had anointed his eyes with clay and then told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. He said, "I went and washed, and I received sight." Now the matter comes before the religious leaders who must do something to discredit the powerful miracle that confirmed the truth that Christ was the Son of God.

The procedure of the Pharisees to avoid the truth demonstrated by this miracle is being followed in principle by religious leaders today. Every conceivable plan has been used by denominationalism to avoid the truth of the gospel. Some of these plans follow the same line as that of the Pharisees on this occasion.

1. Show contradiction. The Pharisees ignored the fact of healing and its infallible proof, and tried to prove that Christ was a sinner because he healed on the sabbath day. It was their own rules of the sabbath keeping that were being violated by the works of Christ, but this made no difference to them; their sabbath was more sacred than the truth demonstrated in the miracle. Those religious leaders today who do not want their laws in religion violated use the same method of showing truth to be contradictory. The man who teaches "faith only" salvation seeks to show that obedience in baptism is a contradiction of verses that attribute salvation to faith: setting one verse against another such as John 3:16 against Acts 2:38.

2. Refuse facts. The Pharisees refused to believe that this man had been blind and was now seeing. They called his parents to try to prove their point. Today one can read a clear, complete, and plain statement from the word of God and it will be refused by the one who does not want to believe the truth. This can also be proved by the "salvation by faith only" advocates. Watch them reject the facts clearly stated in Mark 16:15,16 and I Peter 3:21.

3. Intimidate and threaten. The Pharisees had put fear in the hearts of the people by threatening to cast out all who confessed Jesus. The Jews did not want to be cast out of the synagogues so they would seek to please the religious leaders. This fear caused the parents of the blind man to refuse to answer their questions about how their son had received his sight. There is no doubt but that multitudes of people close their eyes to the truth because of intimidation from their religious leaders. This has become true even among members of the church in some sections. Will you be

denied a true search for the truth and accepting of the truth by the intimidation of preachers and other religious leaders and teachers?

4. "The Big Lie". One of the methods of promoting communism is to continually repeat a lie until the people accept it as truth. The Pharisees simply said Jesus was a sinner. To say this long enough and loud enough is to convince some people. The miracle was ignored. Jesus was a sinner because the Pharisees said so. Today a certain thing is true or false just because the religious leaders say it. Catholicism demands that people receive what it says as the infallible truth regardless of what God's word says. Lying is a great weapon in the hands of influential religious leaders to avoid the truth of the gospel.

This man who had been blind refused to accept anything but the truth as he knew it. None of these plans worked with him. This should serve as an example to us today. Seek the truth of God and hold it.