

The True Meaning of Fellowship

by Zac Poonen

The true meaning of fellowship is a divine relationship with God, where we give up our old boyfriends (worldly attitudes) and are entirely God's.

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Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:3

Topics: "Church Fellowship", "Body Of Christ"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of true fellowship with God and with one another, highlighting the need to move beyond mere names and titles to experience genuine fellowship. It discusses the significance of honesty, integrity, and commitment in building a church that reflects the body of Christ. The breaking of bread is explained as a symbolic act of proclaiming the Lord's death, signifying a fellowship in the body and blood of Jesus Christ and a unity within the body of believers.

Transcript

In 1980 and 81, we were building our first building on Wheeler Road extension in Dacosta Square and those days we were known as Christian Fellowship Center and we had the name on the front and while I was watching that construction, somebody who lived in that area said, what is this building for? I said, see the name there, it's for Christians and it is for them to have fellowship and this is a center where they come together for that. Now the question I've had through the years is, is that only a name, Christian Fellowship Church or do all of you who want to be a part of CFC forgotten what the F in CFC stands for? It's fellowship. In the world they talk about evil as an F word.

For us it is fellowship and if you don't have fellowship it's an empty word to say I belong to CFC. You know if you read through the whole Old Testament, the word fellowship never comes even once in terms of fellowship with God, not even once because there was no fellowship possible in the Old Testament. Friendship yes, you read about friends.

In Proverbs you read about a friend that sticks closer than a brother. Friendship is a worldly thing. There are many worldly people who are friends.

Jonathan and David were such good friends but fellowship is an altogether different thing. Jonathan was even willing to give up his position as king and never wanted to harm David. It's amazing.

Jesus said there's no greater love that a man can have than he lay down his life for his friends. People are willing to lay down their lives for their friends and in the military particularly, in many cases of people who have risked their life to save others it's a tremendous sacrifice for friendship. But fellowship is an altogether different level.

Friendship is a human thing. Fellowship is divine, it's godly and in the Old Testament they could not rise to the level of a godly life and that is why in our church from the beginning we have emphasized the New Covenant. The Old Covenant was established by Moses with Israel and Jesus when he died and rose again established a new covenant which was sealed on the day of Pentecost with the sealing of the Holy Spirit and there are many many aspects of this new covenant.

It's a new agreement that God has made with man and we have spoken about it so many times in this church. It's not enough to know about it intellectually but we must know about it and experience in our life. For example, one of the most prominent things that we have spoken about in relation to the New Covenant is the ability God gives us to overcome sin in our life and we have spoken so much about that in these last 42 years.

In the Old Covenant they only had forgiveness of sins. I want to make this so clear for many here are new and you haven't heard these things in other churches. They had forgiveness of sins.

Psalms 103 verse 3 says bless the Lord who forgives all your sins. David said that 1,000 years before Christ. He was looking forward to the coming of Christ but he could not say bless the Lord who saves me from my sin.

No, he couldn't be saved from even adultery and murdering Bathsheba's poor husband. He couldn't be saved but he repented and he was forgiven. You read Psalm 51 what a tremendous prayer of repentance it was.

Bless the Lord who forgives all your sins but he can't save you from your sin. But in the New Covenant the very first promise as soon as you open Matthew's Gospel is chapter 1 verse 21. You shall call his name Jesus because he won't forgive people's sins.

He will save them from their sins. There's a lot of difference between being forgiven of your anger and being saved from your anger. A lot of difference being forgiven of your lustful thinking and saved from your lustful thinking.

You know the difference. Many people live in this endless cycle of repentance, forgiveness, repentance, forgiveness. Repentance is an Old Testament message.

All the prophets preached repentance and the greatest prophet John the Baptist of the Old Covenant preached repentance and forgiveness is an Old Covenant message. But salvation is not an Old Covenant message. The Old Covenant they were only saved from their enemies, from their Moabites and the Egyptians and the Syrians who attacked them.

They were not saved from sin. But in the New Covenant we don't have earthly enemies. We only have spiritual enemies in the devil in the flesh, the lust of the flesh.

And salvation is from sin. If Jesus only forgives us, he's not our Savior. He's our forgiver.

When he saves us we can call him our Savior. And we are saved from sin and finally saved from hell and separation from God. So that's one aspect of the New Covenant message.

The other is as we read in Hebrews 8 that the under the law people tried and tried to keep God's commandments. The Old Testament law and the Ten Commandments was thou shalt, thou shalt not, thou shalt, thou shalt not or in modern English you shall, you shall not. You shall not take the Lord's name in vain.

You shall not worship idols. You shall keep the Sabbath day holy. You shall honor your father and mother.

You shall not commit murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not bear false witness.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife etc. But in the New Covenant in Hebrews 11 Hebrews chapter 8 verse 11 is God says I will write your law, my law in your heart. I will put it in your mind.

I will forgive your sin and I will not remember it anymore. And I will be a father to you and you will be my sons and daughters. It is God doing it.

In the Old Covenant it was man's response. You shall, you shall, you shall and they tried for 1,500 years under the law and everyone failed. Why did God give the law? To teach man.

You can never in your entire life come up to my standard by your struggle. The amazing thing is people haven't learned it even today. So the Lord poured out the Holy Spirit on all those 120 people in the first church.

That was the first church 120 people praying and they had been they had spent their life struggling, struggling, struggling and they failed. And then they were filled with the Holy Spirit and they suddenly found they had a power to do this. It's the difference between pushing a car and getting inside and driving the car.

It's a lot of difference. It's another picture of the Old and New Covenant. Old Covenant is push, push, push the car and sometimes with the brakes on it's quite a job.

But getting inside and driving the car it's some other power that's moving you from one place to another. These are pictures but they are very accurate pictures of life without the Holy Spirit's power and with the Holy Spirit's power. And I know in my own life I was born again 58 years ago but for the first 16 years I did not know how to overcome sin.

I knew how to be forgiven. I did not know how to overcome discouragement. I did not know fellowship.

I had friendship. I never knew fellowship. So I may have spoken and sung about fellowship but I didn't know anything about it until God filled me with the Holy Spirit.

Just like on the day of Pentecost. He's just the same today. The God who lived in the time of Peter, James, John and Paul.

It's just the same today. And what he did for them he'll do for us and the amazing thing is the Bible teaches that what God the Father did for Jesus he will do for us because of that wonderful promise in John 17 23 that he loves us as much as he loves Jesus if we are his disciples. You can't claim that promise and say Lord do everything for me that you did for Jesus if you are not wholehearted like Jesus was.

There's a condition. Jesus said in John 17 10 all that I have father is yours and so all that you have is mine. Remember that.

All that I have is yours father and so all that you have is mine. Then it goes to verse 23 the father loves us as he loved Jesus. Many people have tried to claim that promise and it doesn't seem to work.

They get worried in terms of difficulty even though the father cares for us as he cared for Jesus. It's because they have not gone through John 17 10. They haven't said to the Lord all that I have is yours and so all that you have is mine.

It's a wonderful exchange. I've often used the example of a beggar woman sitting with her tin can. An ugly beggar woman sitting with a tin can with probably one rupee or two rupees coins inside it.

That's a picture of me as a sinner and then this handsome rich prince comes driving by in the Mercedes Benz and gets out and says I'd like to marry you to this ugly beggar woman. That's Jesus Christ coming and inviting me to be married to him but I have there's a condition. I'll give you all my millions of rupees but you got to give me everything you have too and this beggar woman looks at her two rupees inside her tin can and says I want to pray about it.

Can you imagine anything more stupid? That is exactly like many Christians who hesitate to give their all to the Lord. Exactly. I cannot think of a more perfect picture.

They keep praying should I give everything to the Lord or not? Should I say Lord you plan my future. I give up my ambitions. I'll give up.

What is your two rupees? Your ambitions for the future? Your plans for the future? All the things you can do for the Lord? You think you can do for the Lord? Two rupees. The Lord is willing to give you his billions and saying to the beggar woman let's have a joint account. I'll put my billions and you put your two rupees then you can draw as much as you want.

I can draw as much as you want. Say I want to pray about it. I want to see if there's any I'm being cheated in this process.

I want to tell you every one of you sitting here this if that is your attitude that is the main reason why you grumble, why you complain, why you cannot give thanks in everything, why you do not rejoice always, why you are anxious and why you cannot overcome sin and why you are not filled with the Holy Spirit or you don't have or you may be once you were filled with the Spirit but you're continuously filled with the Spirit and that's the reason for all the tension in your home and I would even say that's the reason for your perpetual being perpetually in debt and for all your unusual financial struggles. It's one thing you have not said to the Lord all that I have is yours. John 17 10 and so the Lord has not said to you all that I have is yours.

You give 10% to God, God says I'll give you 10% too. You may not even get 10%. I don't want 10% from God I'll tell you.

I don't want a marriage where my wife is 10% mine and 90% somebody else's and Jesus does not want a marriage where you are 10% his and 90% your own ambitions in the world and so many other things and so I want to say to you my dear brothers and sisters I'm trying to show you not the highest form of Christian life no no no no the only form of Christian life there is no highest Christian life which you can

choose if you want and there's another option to choose a second class like in a train you don't go first class you go to second class no there's no such thing in the Christian life there is only one and that is not God's highest that is God's normal the normal Christian life is where a Christian comes to the Lord and says Lord all that I have is yours that is the normal marriage you

think that's very demanding supposing before a marriage this bridegroom asked the bride I want to know one thing are you going to be hundred percent mine or I know you have had boyfriends in the past you know all of us spiritually speaking we didn't follow Jesus in the past life that is we had old boyfriends that is our worldly attitudes were our boyfriends our love of money was a boyfriend our craze after sex was a boyfriend and all the other things in our life for all our boyfriends our anger and our bitterness and the Lord says I know you had boyfriends in the past are you willing to give up all of that and be entirely mine every day of the year 24 hours a day seven days a week are you going to be mine and if that wife says well I want to think about it so let's postpone the marriage

till you decide being born again is being married to Christ and exactly the same demand you expect from your wife or you sisters expect from your husband the Lord is not expecting anything more less or more than that from you would you like your wife to go fool around with some other man one day in a year or one hour in a year the Lord also doesn't want us to fool around with sin even for one hour in a year oh you see that's a very high standard well then you're making a very high standard for your husband and your wife why don't you allow her to go fool around with one man for one woman for one day one hour in a year it's not too much is it you see we expect so much from the Bible says Christ is the head of man and man is the head of the wife but you expect total devotion from your wife

the Christ expects total devotion from you see that is human nature is such I want others to do their part to me I don't want to do my part to Christ now the reason I'm saying that is I believe that many of you have a very unsatisfactory Christian experience if you're honest you have to admit you don't have a type of Christian experience that the New Testament speaks about always in triumph and free from anxiety and rejoicing and being able to love those who hate you and bless those who curse you and forgive everybody and never murmur or complain most of you don't have that and the reason is you have not said to the Lord all that I have is yours your life will be completely changed and you'll suddenly rise up to a far higher level and your struggle with sin also will become very much less

I'm not saying there won't be a struggle with sin Jesus prayed with loud crying and tears but he was like in the PhD class struggling with a subject whereas most of us are in the kindergarten struggling with mathematics and altogether different level there is a struggle with mathematics at every stage you struggle with maths in the first standard second standard and all the way to PhD as well and beyond so Jesus also struggled with sin but he wasn't struggling all the time with anger and sexual lust no no don't misunderstand it you get past it you get past it till those things don't pull you anymore you can come to a life where you never get offended you never get angry you never lust after women you may what a life that is and little by little you it's like saying you go from second

standard to third standard you have learned addition but the kindergarten student says oh boy addition is so tough but how is it is not tough for you it's exactly what some people say oh brother overcoming anger is so tough but there are people who can say it's not not for me it's over it's because the person who pursues you know education with a passion learns these things the casual person who goes to school just for fun does not learn addition even after many years so if we really seek God wholeheartedly you can come to a very satisfying Christian life and a very satisfying Christian marriage and in that atmosphere you

can bring up your children in a really godly way and you can be a very effective useful member of this church even if you don't know how to preach one sentence preaching

is not the main thing in this church that is a gift God has given to a few it's a gift and the Bible says he does not give the same gift to everybody just like different members of the body have different functions but you will have some function if you integrate in into the body and become one with it it's very very important when we talk of becoming a member of this church it begins not with friendship it begins vertically with fellowship with the Father you know there's a great significance in the two arms of the cross vertical speaks of our fellowship with the Father horizontal speaks of our fellowship with one another both are necessary there is no single stick cross you can't have a cross with just one vertical bar or one horizontal bar it needs both and that's symbolic that there

must be a fellowship with the Father and with one another for true Christianity that's why we call us as Christian fellowship church fellowship with the Father and with one another and the other thing to remember is the vertical arm of the cross is always bigger than the horizontal arm teaching us that fellowship with God is much more important than fellowship with one another one comes out of the other the first commandment is not love your neighbor as yourself the first commandment is love God with all your heart with all your strength all your mind that means my whole life must be passionate in loving Jesus Christ if you don't begin there you can't have a cross so it's not the reason why fellowship with your wife or husband or with other believers breaks down is not because of that

other person as you always know he's a difficult person my wife is a difficult person my husband is a difficult person those are all silly excuses you make because your vertical bar is not right your relationship with Jesus Christ is not what it should be that's the reason for all fellowship horizontally problems so if you turn with me to 1 John in chapter 1 I always look at John's letter turn with me to 1 John in chapter 1 there are people who studied history who say that John wrote his letter after he wrote Revelation it's quite likely in which case 1 John may be the last of the 66 books written of the Bible but I can imagine that because he saw the condition of the churches around him and we see the condition of seven of those churches in Revelation 2 and 3 five of them were so

terribly backslidden planted by the Apostles in 60 years 60 or 70 years 60 years they had gone from the faith and love that they started with even Ephesus was such a wonderful church you read that in Ephesians but he'd read in the second letter to the Ephesians which is Revelation chapter 2 you find that they're backslidden so badly that the Lord says I'm going to go away from this church I'm going to remove the lampstand means I'm not going to be in your midst anymore you 500 people will still have your meetings and your songs and all but Jesus won't be there it was so bad just about 30 years after Paul left Ephesus or 35 years it had backslidden so badly and the church in Sardis only had a name the leader even the leader he had named that he was alive maybe he was a great preacher but

his life did not correspond to his word and Laodicea was so bad that the Lord said I'll spit you out of my mouth and told that church I'm standing at the door can you imagine a church where Jesus is outside the door and saying can I please come in and they were singing songs to Jesus inside the church that's just like the Pharisees who crucified God outside Jerusalem and then went into the temple of Jerusalem to worship God can you imagine something so stupid they'd already killed the Son of God outside and then they go into the temple to worship the same Jesus that's what a lot of Christians are like that Laodicea was like that Jesus was outside the door saying I stand at the door knock and inside the church they're singing songs and it happens to a lot of Christians they pray and Jesus

is not in their heart he's not in their life he's not in their home and so John saw all this and that must have been the condition of he's written about seven churches and revelation that must have been the condition of many churches because the Apostles planted many many churches and many of them had come to that terrible state by then and so he's writing with the burden in his heart from the Holy Spirit to sort out this situation in the churches and what does he say please turn to 1 John chapter 1 he says what we want to speak to you about is fellowship that which was from the beginning what was that the Word of Life the life verse 2 was manifested an eternal life which is the life of God which is from the beginning when nothing else existed you know John always goes back to the

beginning even in his gospel he says in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God the Word was God he goes back beyond Genesis chapter 1 to the real beginning and here also he says in 1 John 1 about the beginning John was really burdened to bring Christians into that life which was there from the beginning eternal life not a religious life see a lot of Christians have a religious life it's not that eternal life which God had right from the beginning in that eternal life there was perfect purity it was perfect love and there was perfect fellowship between father son and Holy Spirit you know there are people who say we have three gods no we don't have three gods we have one God in three persons see God had to be more than one person I'll tell you why God had to be more than one

person right at the beginning because God is love and you cannot love unless there's one other person minimum so if you're only one person there's no such thing as love you just love yourself and there's no such thing as fellowship we are only one person so that is why every religion that talks about one God with no persons is a false religion that cannot be the true God God is love and so it says that which was from the beginning which we have heard he's talking about Jesus we heard this life speaking to us in the in a human form we saw with our eyes how he lived and we've looked and we've touched that life not just touch this body we touch the life when we touch Jesus and that is the life that was manifested on earth we have seen it and we testify to that we are witnesses about that

life we are not witnesses about a doctrine saying you must be baptized in water sisters must cover their heads the tribulation comes before the rapture no no no no it's all doctrines I appreciate all of them but it's a life that we testify to that eternal life verse 2 which is with the Father and which is manifested to us in the person of Jesus Christ that was the first body of Christ and the church is called the body of Christ because it is supposed to manifest the same life that was manifested in Jesus so that people who come in touch with you and me should be able to say we've also heard something different from all the other people in the world we've seen and looked and touched another type of life not just they heard a doctrine from your mouth but they've seen there's a man we have

seen who's always calm not in a panic at any time there's a woman I've seen who's never complaining or grumbling there's a man and woman I've seen in my life who seem to be so heavenly not like these sannyasis and monks who lock themselves up in a monastery always and never talk to anybody and say we are talking to God that is a vertical bar without a horizontal one and that vertical bar is fake Jesus was not a monk he never expected any of his children to be monks and nuns locking themselves up in monasteries and convents no we had to mingle with others that otherwise how do you manifest that life if you lock yourself up in a room and say I have fellowship only with one or two people who will agree with me now wonderful no you got to live in the midst of wicked people and manifest that

life the light is needed in darkness you don't need the torch in sunlight you need the torch where there's darkness the world is full of darkness and that's where the Lord has told us to be the light this is our calling

brothers and sisters not just to tell people I'm a Christian and to give out tracts and books no but to manifest a life and John writes this because he says those churches if they had concentrated on that they would not have ended up as such backslidden churches and those Christians would not have ended as backsliders if they had always concentrated on that life and he says we have seen that and we have heard it verse 3 and we proclaim that life to you not a doctrine and the purpose is by proclaiming this life you can have fellowship see that wonderful word which never

comes in the Old Testament with us and we can have fellowship with the father and his son G through his son Jesus Christ and with his son Jesus Christ and that is why we call ourselves Christian fellowship church church is the body of Christ which manifests that life in other words we are seeking to manifest a fellowship with the father and a fellowship with one another which is more than friendship which is more than religion very different but it's easy to have a name Christian Fellowship Church sounds wonderful but to manifest it so that we are not actors hypocrites claiming ourselves to be Christian Fellowship and our standard is just like that of other human beings that's wrong let me show you a verse in 1 Corinthians where the Holy Spirit rebukes the Corinthians you know for what 1

Corinthians and chapter 3 verse 3 listen carefully 1 Corinthians 3 verse 3 you are still fleshly because there is jealousy and strife, strife means you argue and quarrel with each other is that jealousy anybody here jealous of somebody else anybody here please examine yourself don't examine other people are you jealous of anybody else in this church for any reason jealousy usually comes because you feel he is more gifted than you or he's more blessed than you or he's got more money than you or his children are better than yours or his wife is prettier than yours or some stupid reason like that jealousy and strife, strife need not be fighting and hitting each other it's pure quarreling, quarreling with others you know all our quarrels are about earthly things what do you quarrel with your

husband and wife for is usually in some earthly thing which is going to disappear when the Lord comes what do you quarrel with porters in the railway station about or auto rickshaw drivers is always some earthly thing or with neighbors always some earthly thing and he says that proves you're fleshly and says you are just walking like ordinary men ordinary human beings and you say is it a crime to behave like an ordinary human being absolutely aren't you walking like ordinary men if you call yourself a born-again Christian it is a crime to behave like ordinary human beings an absolute crime that's why I wanted you to see that verse because you are claiming to have fellowship with the father and his son Jesus Christ and it's not true you're not manifesting that eternal life as which is with

the father from all eternity before any angels or any universe was created there was father son and Holy Spirit having wonderful fellowship with each other loving each other this is the God we worship one God how to explain that with our mind we cannot understand just like a dog cannot understand geometry I'm not surprised if I can't understand the Trinity if the dog can't understand geometry I can't understand Trinity that's not surprising that's a dog I can understand geometry but I can't understand Trinity because that's above me and much more above me than I'm above a dog so I don't try to explain the Trinity I believe it so I say it is wrong for us to live on earth like other human beings if you're a Christian then you must say I'm not born again I'm just pretending to be a Christian

I'm just like anybody else and what is it that makes the difference it's the Holy Spirit I have to say my life was completely changed and God filled me with the Holy Spirit but I had a hunger and a thirst and a longing for it for many years and I prayed and cried and longed for it because I wanted it more than anything else on earth and I'll tell you something those of you are not sure or don't experience this

wonderful life spiritual life the day you want it more than anything else on earth God will lead you into it you shall seek me God says and find me when you search for me with all your heart I'm sorry that is the price you say it's too expensive you can't get it forgiveness of sins that's free come and take it it's like a lot of things kept on the table take it take it all

everything is free but fullness of the Spirit and living in the fullness anointing of the Spirit there's a price for it and the price is not that it's not money it just means you have to give everything it's like saying I cannot occupy your whole house unless you give me the key to every door isn't that a reasonable request the Holy Spirit saying you want me to come and fill your life I cannot come and fill your life if you don't give me the key to every door or you don't open doors of certain rooms I'm sorry I can't come in so think about that so I want to encourage you this today to value fellowship fellowship with God pursue it and say Lord I don't want just to be just a word I don't want CFC to be a slogan I want that middle F fellowship to be real in my life not any type of not

earthly fellowship Christian fellowship I want to be part of a Christian fellowship church I want to live in Christian fellowship with God and with my fellow believers and he says our fellowship was three is with the father and his son Jesus Christ and I want you to have fellowship with us John was such a great Apostle it probably lived an overcoming life for 60 years and he's telling these ordinary believers you can have fellowship with me you may be born again yesterday I've been born again 65 years ago John says but we can have fellowship as equals because we are both children of God John did not feel I'm superior to you you know even when he writes Revelation see how he addresses him and Revelation chapter 1 I like this Revelation 1 verse 9 I John your brother he was an Apostle but

that was function but in relationship he was a brother it's like you may be an engineer or a nurse or a teacher or a doctor that's not what you you when you've seen fellowship in the church you don't say I'm a nurse or an engineer or no no no no I'm a brother I'm a sister so Apostle prophet that is function like engineer doctor it's a job it's a job in the church like that is a job in the world so all these people who call themselves Apostle and pastor and prophet they don't have a clue of what it means it's not a title reverend right reverend Bishop Metropolitan Pope what about John your brother learn from him this great Apostle who had walked with God for 65 years I John your brother the reason why Paul called himself an Apostle at the in his letters was because he was not one of the

original twelve Apostles and so he had to convince people that Jesus had made him an Apostle from heaven that's the only reason why he says Peter an Apostle so that people know who he was today we recognize it but during the first century they would not they would say you're not one of the twelve he says I'm not but Jesus appointed me that's why he calls himself an Apostle otherwise all these people they wanted to be known as brothers their function was Apostle but they were brothers there is no brother in CFC who is superior to another there may be one who's more spiritual there may be those who are more gifted and different functions but we are all brothers and sisters in Christ we must we never choose any title other than that and so John says I want you to fellowship with us we

fellowship as equals under the headship of Jesus Christ just like in this body every member is equally important there are visible members there are invisible members like the heart liver kidney all are important in a church of Christian Fellowship Church there are some who are very visible like me and some of the elders here more visible because we come up to the pulpit that's because that's our gift it is not because we are superior to any of you I honestly say I do not consider myself superior to a single person sitting here not even to someone born again yesterday you are a sinner saved by grace I am a

sinner saved by grace and when we get to the throne of God the only thing that will give us entry into heaven is recognizing that we are sinners saved by grace that we are damned but

Jesus died for us it doesn't matter how many years we've been born again that's the only thing that will qualify us for heaven so we have different functions of some are more visible than others but don't think that because you're not so visible you are not important you think the kidneys are not important have you ever seen your kidneys I've never seen mine but if they don't function I'll have a problem there are many invisible members like that in Christian Fellowship Church if they really are willing to be hidden think of a kidney that says to the head I'm willing to be hidden all my life never to be seen never getting any honor do you know there are many human beings who don't even know they've got a kidney because they're not educated I mean if you know you've got a kidneys because

either because you had a problem with it or somebody taught you otherwise you would not have known about kidneys but kidneys not seeking for honor it functions in your life even if you don't know about it even if you don't care about it your heart is like that keeps on functioning never asking for honor never asking that every once in a while you get up and say hey I've got a great heart that works fine no you never probably said that in your life but the heart is not seeking for honor it just keeps on functioning and I praise God for wonderful wonderful unique brothers and sisters of Christ like that who keep on working in the background something like some of your wives do some of your wives they don't people hardly even know them you're the great man who's seen in front but there she's

working working working slogging away at home making life easy for you and if she's a good wife she's not seeking honor it says in Proverbs 31 about this wonderful wife and it says her husband is known in the public place in the church and she not known there are brothers and sisters like that who not seeking to be known but keep on working cooperating high doing things in secret cleaning the toilets picking up the garbage putting it in the trash can doing little little things and helping here and there completely unknown you don't even know their name and they've been here for years do you think the church can function without them impossible do you think you can work without your kidneys and your liver and all the other organs in your body no so don't think that your function is

unimportant but you must have fellowship with God if you want to function those kidneys may be invisible but 24 hours a day they must be in touch with the head obeying the commands of the head the head says come on purify the bloodstream purified purified purified and make sure the chemical balance in the blood is correct absolutely correct point one milligrams or whatever of this very small small amounts of different chemicals and the kidney has to do that it's a very important job but it's never seen never honored and it's a wonderful thing when we have a Christian Fellowship Church with people like that who are willing to do who don't just give their name yeah I volunteer for cleaning and never turn up those are not even members of the body they are hypocrites they want honor they want

to put their name I'm coming for the cleaning team and they never turn up or if for some emergency they can't turn up they don't even send a substitute but they don't inform anybody I don't even I wonder whether such people are even in fellowship with God you can't be in fellowship with God and tell a lie because the only chief liar in the world is the devil Jesus said he's a liar from the beginning and anyone who tells a lie is in fellowship with the devil if you say that you'll come for the cleaning team and you don't turn up my dear brother sister I have to tell you the truth you are in fellowship with the devil not with Jesus Christ Jesus Christ is the truth now it is possible that you can't come because of some reason but then you will inform somebody in a day when everybody has a

phone you didn't play I can't come today or you'll try and send somebody else or maybe you can't send somebody else no I'm sorry I can't come today otherwise don't put your name there nobody's forcing you to put your name say I'm sorry I can't come don't put your name but don't ever ever ever from now on and I hope you will listen to this ever give your name for something and then fellowship with the devil and don't turn up no better not to give your name like we read earlier Ecclesiastes 4 better not to make a vow and make a vow and not keep it to tell a lie in God's house it's a terrible sin it's worse than telling a lie in the Supreme Court so be very careful there's nothing wrong God loves a cheerful giver we don't ask that anybody give money in this church we don't ask that anybody

come and serve in this church no everything is voluntary if you can't do it voluntarily don't do it but don't give your name if you can't do it it's better not to give your name and then come along and help that's much better much much better so I'm just telling you some of these practical things fellowship with God makes us very strict in relation to speaking the truth living truthfully not being a hypocrite those are not impossible things even a prostitute can be truthful if she says I am a prostitute you don't have to be a great saint to be free from hypocrisy do you know the one person Jesus said is completely free from hypocrisy was an unbeliever just like the one person Jesus had had the greatest faith was a non Jew it's amazing sometimes you know we despise some of these

non-Christians but some of those non-Christians are less hypocrites than some Christians turn with me to John's Gospel chapter 1 in John chapter 1 we read about the only time when Jesus said about somebody there is a man who is completely free from hypocrisy hundred percent free from hypocrisy he was not saying he's a spiritual man no no no no he was not spiritual he was not even born again like you know if a prostitute says I'm a prostitute she's hundred percent free from hypocrisy that means no acting no pretending to be something which they are not in John chapter 1 the Lord found Philip in verse 43 and he said to him follow me and there was something wonderful about these early disciples they immediately said hey once I found Jesus I must bring somebody else to Jesus I wish all of

us had that passion I found Jesus I must go and find some friend of mine some relative of mine and bring that person to Jesus too you read that these people always did it you know they found verse 40 for example John someone heard John follow him was Andrew Andrew came first Peter came later Andrew verse 41 first found his own brother Simon and brought him to Christ who brought Peter to Jesus Andrew his brother Peter did not come first Andrew and same way Philip as soon as he found Jesus he said to immediately he goes to find Nathanael was 45 and says we found Jesus and Nathanael despises it and ah there's Jesus I don't want your Christianity have somebody told you like that I don't want your Christianity they're all hypocrites he says please come and see don't give up just because he's

rejected it the first time I love Philip he didn't give up he persisted prayed for him and say you got to come and see this man this is different it's not like all the other dead churches you went to come and see this and he comes and before he meets Jesus listen to this Jesus saw Nathanael coming from a distance and he said there is a man in whom there is no deceit no acting no pretending what a testimony I read that once and I said Lord if you can say that about me there is a man is that woman in whom there is zero acting zero hypocrisy what you see in him in public is exactly what he is at home what you see in him publicly is exactly what he is in his financial matters in his purity matters what you see in him is exactly what he is and this was said of an unbeliever why can't it be

said about you and me much more it should be said about you and me he wasn't saying there's a man who's a great saint no no no no I'm not asking Jesus to say about me oh there is that one is a great saint

no Lord I'm not yet there but can you say about me there's no hypocrisy in him there's no disease he's not acting how many of you will long for this commendation from Jesus forget all the other things spiritual man holy man and I'll leave all that aside that's many years ahead let's start with there is a man and a woman who's no acting that doesn't mean you got victory over your anger no it means that you don't pretend that you got victory over your anger yeah I'm still fighting with it no hypocrisy you're still defeated by anger you're saying honestly yeah I'm brother I'm still fighting

with that there's no hypocrisy I want to tell you this is the first step to fellowship with God and fellowship with one another no acting it is very difficult impossible for me to fellowship with an actor you know like some Hollywood movie where the guy is acting like John the Baptist and in private life he's divorced five times and drunkard so when I meet him I'm not sure whether I'm meeting a drunkard or meeting John the Baptist hey are you John the Baptist or you five times divorced drunkard I don't know because at different times he's different things on during the act and when the movie is being shot he's John the Baptist he goes home me some somebody else are you like that here in the church when the movie is being shot ah you are the holy man when you go home here's somebody else

no I'm not saying we should get up and confess our sins in public that is stupid no you never see people doing that in the Bible the only verse in the Bible where it says confess your sins to one another is in relation to prayer for healing in James chapter 5 confess your sin if the sin is the cause of your sickness and that also in the presence of elders only and he's telling the elders also he's got some sin confess it otherwise your prayer will not be heard Psalm 66 verse 18 says if I regard sin in my heart God won't even pick up the phone I look at the oh this is from somebody I'm not gonna pick up the phone let it ring ring ring have you had that experience where you dial a number and probably he sees your name there I'm not gonna pick it up I don't want to talk to him he's there at

home you know God is like that when there's sin in your life he sees on the dial whose name it is let him keep on ringing you find unanswered prayer like that you find God is not even responding to you you pray and pray and pray and it does look as if he doesn't even pick up the phone see if there's some sin in your life somebody you have not forgiven some sin you have not confessed some fight you had with your husband or wife which you didn't go and apologize for some problem you have with the brother where it was your fault and you didn't apologize for it if it is his fault forget it but your fault I want God to pick up the phone as soon as I ring as soon as when I call him and he said here I am there's a promise like that in the Old Testament you call and I'll say here I am the Lord

says I want that so that'll come if you start with this lesson no acting and it's a great encouragement for me to know that it was spoken about an outright unbeliever who was not even born again at least I'm better than him I'm born again and if Jesus can say that about an unbeliever why can't he say Lord I want to be like that I want to encourage all of you sitting here my brothers and sisters you want to have the first step of fellowship with God and with one of the first step where you come to the next step where you say Lord all that I have is yours before you get there start with getting rid of hypocrisy don't pretend before God don't say words to God that you don't mean and everybody is singing all to Jesus I surrender be quiet and say Lord I can't say that yet I'm not gonna sing it

you will God will honor you for that he listened to you and he won't listen to the other people singing all to Jesus I surrender because they're telling lies he'll listen to you where you say to him Lord I can't surrender everything imagine God listening to you saying I don't surrender everything and not listening to all those other people who say all to Jesus I surrender this is the God we believe in one who appreciates honesty

I've always believed honesty is the number one thing God wants from us then we can move on to giving our all to him then we'll come to this fellowship with one another I want to say this to you in the Old Testament they could not be a body it was a congregation a pile of members there are different illustrations we can use of that like a pile of stones a pile of

stones is not a house this building was once pile of stones but now it's a building that was a congregation this is a church that's the difference those same stones are put next to each other cemented and joined in a way that they cannot escape it's more convenient to be in a pile of stones you can get up and walk where you like go where you like and walk away if you want stones here can't walk away like that because there's one stone on top another stone underneath another stone to the left and right it's a little inconvenient to be in a church because you have authority elders on top of you like a stone on top but that stone on top protects the stone underneath from being stolen that's why God puts a stone on top you're in that pile of stones anybody can walk off with you any day

there's a protection in the church when you become integrated with the body and don't live as a lone member visiting here once in a while and not really interested in being integrated with the body that is a congregation we are building a church it's not a congregation the other and sometimes you can have a good friendship and you call that a church it's not it's a club a club is where you come together some people come together because they want to play cards some people come together because they want to play golf some people come together as a club where they drink and they say here is a club where they be study the Bible it's not a club club is different from a body a club you come and go when you like when you have time you come and you don't have time you don't come a body is not

like that you're permanently connected to through the head not because we spend time with each other those who spend time with each other only are a club in the body we are connected through the head that means my fellowship with you does not depend on my spending so many days with you every year I may not have time to spend with you in 10 years but you're connected to the head and I'm connected to the head we love wonderful fellowship every single day it's different this is the difference between a congregation and a club and a church it's very important to understand that because these things are not taught clearly in many churches in the new covenant we not building congregations we're not building a club we're building a church so I hope these things will sink deep into our hearts I

want to say one more thing before we finish and that's in 1 Corinthians what does the breaking of bread mean it means two things 1 Corinthians remember the two arms of the cross the this is only bread and only grape juice but it is a picture of the body and the blood of Jesus Christ we are not like some old time denominations which teach that this becomes the body and the blood no it doesn't I mean you got to be honest when it when you eat it it still tastes like bread not like meat so it's crazy to believe that this is the body like I don't know how these people say this becomes the body I asked them what does it taste like when you eat it you're deceiving yourself or what there are Roman Catholics and some other churches that preach that this becomes the body of Jesus and I said when

you drink that have you ever tasted blood when you drink that grape juice does it taste like blood this is absolute hypocrisy pretending we don't believe that I see this is bread this is grape juice it symbolizes the body the blood of Jesus Christ so in 1 Corinthians 11 it says verse 26 as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes so what am I proclaiming when I eat this bread and drink this cup Jesus died for my sins as a result of which I'm in fellowship with God so when I'm taking that bread I'm not just admiring it I'm not admiring Oh Jesus Lord what a wonderful sacrifice you made for

me and you don't want to go that way then when the bread comes to you and say oh what lovely bread and pass it on don't touch it but we take that bread

and eat it we take that cup and drink it saying I want to be one with Jesus in this death to this old life I lived I want to be in fellowship with Jesus because the only way to get out of the old life into this life of fellowship with God is through death I have to die to one life to get into another life and that's that's what not preached in many places people are just being told to sign a form and say I've accepted Christ or repeat some words like some mumbo-jumbo no it's not like that there has to be a death to my old life I don't want to live the way I lived so far I want to die to that and then the Lord will give me a resurrection through the Holy Spirit so that I can have fellowship with the Father that's the first thing I testify in the breaking of bread the second thing I testify

1 Corinthians 10 previous chapter see here it's very clear about the body and blood what exactly it is we're 16 1 Corinthians 10 see the cup of blessing which we bless is not the blood of Christ let me repeat the cup of blessing which we bless is not the blood of Christ the bread which we break is not the body of Christ what is it it is a fellowship that's the word in some translations are sharing a fellowship in the blood of Christ a fellowship in the body of Christ I'm fellowshiping with Jesus in his death on the cross and not only that I'm also fellowshiping remember the horizontal bar of the cross with the others who are in the body because there are other people sitting here we're also taking part in the same bread and drinking from the same cup it may be poured into little cups

but it comes from the same jar and so we all partake of one bread why we're 17 because we are all one body I mean this little finger doesn't walk off sometime and saying well I'll see you later it never says that to me it's with part of this body forever this is what commitment to Christian Fellowship Church means commitment to Jesus Christ and commitment horizontally that is why I say think before you do it just like you think before you get married once you're married that's it there's no divorce but it's not like that in the church I mean if you discover after some time that the standard is too high you're welcome to leave instead of continuing to be a hypocrite here being part of CFC is not like getting married you can leave anytime but don't sit here and pretend to be committed and

not be committed that's all I'm saying when you say I can't go by these standards be honest and say I'd like to leave I don't agree with you something or I find it's too difficult to live by these standards I don't want to be a hypocrite brother sister we love you and if I see you on the street after that I won't turn my face away from you I'll greet you and say I hope you are following Jesus I have never in 42 years ever asked anybody to be a member of CFC never and I'll never do it that is that person's choice he has to choose whether he wants to be a part of CFC I invited people to be a member of Jesus Christ give your life to Christ but I never asked people come and join our church if they choose it they must realize they themselves have chosen it that is how we want to build

Christian Fellowship Church and that is what we testify to when we break bread and I hope whenever you break bread in future you'll remember this always it speaks of the vertical and horizontal fellowship in the breaking of bread and let me not be dishonest or a hypocrite in future let's bow our heads in prayer Heavenly Father as we bow before you please help us all to understand these very simple but important truths blessed truths and Lord we know this is impossible without the power of the Holy Spirit and I pray in everybody's heart here you'll create today a thirst for the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit we know we cannot do it any other way and I know that anyone who's heard this challenge today will realize this is impossible for man but it is possible through the power of the

Holy Spirit to live this life of fellowship with you and fellowship with one another and I pray therefore that that thirst will be created so that we can respond to your invitation where you said if any man thirst let him come and drink from me and from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water we want everybody here everybody Lord we want everybody here to experience that type of fullness of the Spirit where they're always fresh like a flowing river even if there have been multiple failures in the past I pray there'll be a new beginning here for many people and that people will not give up but persist until they are actually filled with the Holy Spirit and live in that fullness every day we thank you father in Jesus name Amen

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