

I JOHN: TRUE SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

IV. Knowing We Are In True Spiritual Fellowship With God

(1 John 2:3-6)

I. Introduction

- A. When the Apostle John wrote 1 John around A. D. 90 ("Introduction To The First Letter Of John," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, p. 1770) he implied in 1 John 1:3 that a significant number of his readers were not enjoying spiritual fellowship with the Apostles, with God the Father and with God the Father's Son, Jesus Christ!
- B. That lack of fellowship with God in John's era certainly occurs in many believers today, for Christ predicted this would be the case in Revelation 3:14-22 in His message to the Laodicean Church. We thus continue our study of 1 John in 1 John 2:3-6 on knowing we are in true spiritual fellowship with the Lord (as follows):

II. Knowing We Are In True Spiritual Fellowship With God, 1 John 2:3-6.

- A. John wrote that he was about to describe how we can "be [currently consistently] knowing" (*ginoskomen*, present tense) that we "have come to know" (*egnokamen*, perfect tense) the Lord, 1 John 2:3a. (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 814; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 888)
- B. Since the goal of this epistle is **not** to introduce the unsaved to Christ that they might believe in him to be justified, but rather to inform those who are **already saved** how to **fellowship** with God (1 John 1:1-4), by "knowing" God, John in this context alluded to **experiential fellowship** with the Lord. (Ibid.)
- C. John thus clarified that we believers can currently, consistently know we have come to experience spiritual fellowship with the Lord if we "are keeping" (*teromen*, present tense) God's commands (1 John 2:3b), and the root verb, *tereo* means far more than merely obeying a rule, but heeding a command with heartfelt devotion:
 1. This *tereo* verb carries the general sense of "to preserve," "to protect," "to guard" specific objects (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. VIII, p. 142).
 2. Applied to the 1 John 2:3 context, John meant "keeping the . . . commandments as a sign of vital Christianity," observing God's commands with a high level of devotion to the Lord, Ibid., p. 143.
- D. This attitude of devotedly obeying God's commands goes far beyond dead legalism practiced by the Judaizers of John's day, for the Judaizers outwardly paraded themselves before men as those who obeyed God's laws while departing in heart from the very intent and purpose of the directives themselves, cf. Matthew 23:23-24.
- E. John then claimed that if one said he had come to know (*egknoka*, perfect; Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.) God, that he had come to fellowship with the Lord, but he did not "keep" (*teron*, present participle of *tereo*; Ibid.; The Analyt. Grk. Lex., 1972, p. 403) God's commandments, he was a liar, and the truth was not in him, 1 John 2:4.
- F. However, he who keeps (*tereo* again, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.) His [God's] word, truly the **love** of God "has come to be perfected" (*teteleionai*, perfect passive tense of *teleoo*, "fully developed"; Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 402, 401) in him, 1 John 2:5a. In this we know that we are "in Him," the same sense reflected in John's record of Jesus' John 15:5-6 reference to His disciples' spiritual fellowship with Him as the Vine and they as the branches that remained "in fellowship" with the Vine. (Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T.)
- G. In summary, John added that he who claimed to remain in Christ as the branch is to remain in the Vine in fellowship with Christ back in John 15:5-6 must order his life or "walk" as Jesus walked, 1 John 3:6.
- H. This whole 1 John 2:3-6 instruction reflects Christ's words back in the Gospel of John 14:21, 23 (as follows):
 1. Jesus taught that the believer who had His commandments and "kept" (*tereo* again, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 389) them loved Christ, and he that loved Jesus would be loved by Christ's Father, and Jesus would love him and manifest Himself to that believer, John 14:21.
 2. In John 14:23, Christ expanded on this thought to add that if a man loved Him and "kept" (*tereo* once again, Ibid.) His words, Jesus and the Father would love him and come unto him and make their "staying, tarrying" (*mone*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 529) with him. The Father and Jesus would **consistently display** their **involvement** in that believer's **daily life** in **blessed fellowship**.

Lesson: *We believers in Christ can currently, consistently know that we have come to fellowship with the Lord by our devoted obedience to His Biblical commands, for obedience with such devotion brings a deep-seated love of the Lord along with God the Father and God the Son's regular involvement in our daily walk that is both moving and deeply gratifying for both us and for the Lord Himself.*

Application: *May we fellowship with the Lord in truth, departing from sin and obeying God with wholehearted devotion to enjoy ongoing, moving, deeply gratifying fellowship with our God.*