

I JOHN: TRUE SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

V. The Vastly Contrasting Relationships And Effects Of True And False Fellowships (1 John 2:7-11)

I. Introduction

- A. When John wrote 1 John, he implied in 1 John 1:3 that a number of his readers did not enjoy spiritual fellowship with the Apostles, with God the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ!
- B. Such a lack of true fellowship occurs in many believers today, what Christ predicted for our era of Church History in Revelation 3:14-22. We thus continue our study of 1 John in studying 1 John 2:7-11 on the vastly contrasting relationships and effects of true and false fellowships (as follows):

II. The Vastly Contrasting Relationships And Effects Of True and False Fellowships, 1 John 2:7-11.

- A. John asserted that a test of true versus false fellowship is whether one obeys a command that was not new, but old in the sense that it was given by Christ, 1 John 2:7. However, it was also new in the sense that it reflected the coming Kingdom era that replaces the present dark age, 1 John 2:8; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 889.
- B. Since John then wrote of loving fellow believers in 1 John 2:9-11, the "old" command he was repeating as "new" is identified as Christ's John 13:34 call that His disciples love one another as Christ had loved them.
- C. However, in 1 John 2:9-11, John added stunning insight on the vastly contrasting relationships and effects that true and false spiritual fellowships that involve love or its absence have on the believer (as follows):
 1. If a believer claims he fellowships with God, that he lives in alignment with Scripture, but he "hates" his brother in Christ, he is in darkness, out of fellowship with God and misaligned with Scripture, 1 John 2:9.
 2. The Greek word for "hate" here is *miseo*, and it can carry the definition of not only being full-blown hatred, but also "the modified sense of indifference to or relational disregard for" another party. (Abbott-Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, 1968, p. 293)
 3. In contrast, the believer who loves his brother in Christ and is not indifferent toward him nor does he have a relational disregard for his brother is in fellowship with God and aligns with Scripture, 1 John 2:10a.
 4. Furthermore, one's hatred of or indifference toward or relational disregard for a fellow brother in Christ has a great, vastly contrasting long-term effect on his own spiritual welfare, 1 John 2:10b-11:
 - a. When a believer loves his brother in Christ, there is no *skandalon*, no "stumbling-block" in him, 1 John 2:10b. (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 815; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 760)
 - b. A "stumbling-block" in Scripture is often a fault in one that leads **other** people to stumble in sin, but the content of 1 John 2:11 implies that the "stumbling-block" in 1 John 2:10b is an **internal** fault in one that causes **himself** to stumble in sin! (B. F. Westcott, The Epistles of St. John, 1974, p. 56)
 - c. Thus, if a believer hates his brother, **internal** problems in **himself** lead to his **own harm**, 2 John 2:11:
 - i. Hating or having a relational disregard for or an indifference toward another believer indicates one is in darkness, out of fellowship with God and out of alignment with Scripture, 1 John 2:11a.
 - ii. Also, hating or having a relational disregard for or indifference toward a fellow believer indicates one is **continuing to live** ("walks") in darkness out of fellowship with the Lord, 1 John 2:11b ESV.
 - iii. Furthermore, hating or having an indifference toward or relationally disregarding another believer causes one not to be aware that he himself is **departing further from God**, for "going" in the phrase "where he is going" is the verb *hupago*, to "go **away**," 1 John 2:11c ESV, NIV. (Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 844) The spiritual darkness of being out of fellowship with God and out of alignment with Scripture in not loving another blinds one to the fact that **he is STILL going FURTHER from God**, a drift that can only lead to a **shocking, disastrous** end, 1 John 2:11d with Isaiah 8:20-22.

Lesson: *If failing to fellowship with God in alignment with His Word in loving other believers produces an internal stumbling-block to one's own welfare, causing him to be blinded to his own increasing drift from God that can only end in shocking disaster, but if staying in fellowship with God in full alignment with His Word in loving other believers guards one from eventual spiritual disaster, we need to fellowship with the Lord in loving other believers!*

Application: *(1) May we stay in fellowship with the Lord, loving fellow believers! (2) If we or another believer displays a relational disregard for or an indifference toward another believer like trying to manipulate another with disregard for that person's personal liberty, feelings or value in Christ, or ignoring a believer's plight in some way, that believer is in darkness and must repent. (3) If we face believers who have a false spirituality seen in the loveless ways they relate to us or to others, 2 Timothy 3:5 directs that we withdraw from them for our own welfare!*