

## **The Practice of Fellowship (1)**

### **THE MEANING AND LIFE OF FELLOWSHIP**

*Scripture Reading:*

*1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:3, 6-7; Phil. 2:1; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 4:24*

I would encourage all of us to sing the chorus of hymn 396 two times in a very prayerful way, in a way of pray-singing. I hope this is our prayer: “Lord, higher ground; Lord lead us all to higher ground.” May the Lord use these messages to bring us to higher ground. First, I do want to say it’s a delight and privilege to still be able to have fellowship with you all, even in spite of any restrictions that are upon us so that we cannot be together in person. That would be our delight. But here we are and the word of the Lord is not bound. Thank the Lord that we can still be together in this manner. Maybe to some extent we have a kind of broader blending because there are more saints with us who would not be with us under normal circumstances.

In these days there is a strong awareness that we are at the consummation of the age. I believe many of you have entered into the speaking from the Memorial Day conference in May and through the summer training. Even many of the brothers were with us for the messages to the leading and responsible brothers last week. I believe through that speaking the Lord is opening His heart to us and letting us know how much He wants to return, how much He wants to wrap up this age. We can see that He is working in the world situation. The thrust of the fellowship over Memorial Day weekend was to see the world situation from the viewpoint of God’s economy, and that the Lord is working. The Lord is always actually working for His economy in history. Whenever there is something significant in world history, you can see that the Lord is behind it; and His move is going on even in a secret hidden way. We believe that’s what’s going on today.

We can see what a privileged time we are in when we look at the matter of the Lord’s return. When we look at the scripture we can see from Matthew 25 that in order to be ready for the Lord’s return, He gives us two parables: the parable of the 10 virgins and the parable of the talents. He speaks this to us because His heart is that we would be ready for His coming. Some from among God’s people must be prepared, must be ready for his coming. In Matthew, we see that there are two aspects that all of us will have to answer to the Lord when we meet Him. The first aspect is the aspect of life; the second aspect is the aspect of service: life and service. We have to be ready in life. The parable of the virgins shows us that we have to have the fullness of the Spirit. We have to buy the extra oil; we have to pay the price. We want to take the time to read through those verses. I believe most of us are familiar with this portion. If you’re not, I would encourage you to read the first 30 verses in Matthew 25. In the first 13 verses, there is a parable on the ten virgins, but five were prudent and five were foolish.

What a what a mercy that we have such a portion in the Scripture. It’s as if we are going to have an exam and the teacher tells us ahead of time exactly what’s on the exam. It’s an open book exam; praise the Lord. We have an open book that shows us the answers to the exam. He wants us to be ready; He needs us to be ready. But the most important principle in this first parable is that we need to have more Spirit. We have not only to have the Spirit in our lamp. The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah and the oil in it is the Spirit of Jehovah. But we need extra oil in our vessels, which means we need the saturation of the Spirit in our whole being. Actually saints, this is telling us that we need the growth in life; we need more life.

Then the second parable focuses on the matter of service, that we need to be faithful in our service for the Lord. The four main messages of this conference focus on the matter of life. Actually,

the flowing of the divine life is fellowship. So the title of the general subject of the conference is *The Practice of Fellowship*. So my deep burden is for us to together look into this matter of fellowship with the Lord, and even to have some practical talk over how to deepen our personal fellowship with the Lord so that we may have the growth in life; the genuine growth in life; the daily, normal growth in life. Also it is that we might have the proper service because our service is linked to our experience of life. Basically our service in the Lord as believers is to minister the divine life to those around us. The basic element of our service is not all the practical things. Those things are the vehicle for the service. In taking care of the children or the young people, in properly preparing the meeting hall for for the meeting, or in all other outward activities, we need to be ministering life to all those around us, whether it's to the saints in the church to build a church more or to unbelievers. We need to have the outflow of the divine life to share the gospel. But how can we flow out if nothing is flowing in? We need the inflow and the outflow; that's my burden. How can we practically have more of the inflow of the unhindered, unrestricted, divine life? Actually the Lord's recovery is a recovery of life. The central point in the Lord's recovery is the dispensing of the Triune God as life in Christ into His chosen people. Through the dispensing they issue something forth, the church, His body, His bride, ultimately, the New Jerusalem, which is a city of life. So when the Lord Jesus came, in Him was life and the life was the light of men (John 1:4). He also said that He came that we might have life and might have that life more abundantly (10:10). Probably all of us in this gathering tonight have life, but do we have life abundantly? We might be able to say "sometimes". I believe all of us could at least say "sometimes", but how can we have the experience of the abundance of life in a more regular and normal way.

Romans 1:17 says that the just shall have life and live by faith. We have life and it should issue in a kind of a living. Romans chapter 5 talks about the believers reigning in life. We can have so much life that the life is flowing out of us to reign over every situation. Have we been reigning in life? That requires an increase of life in our experience—the abundance of life, the flowing of life.

First Timothy was written in the backdrop of the degradation of the church. Paul charges his younger coworker to lay hold on the eternal life. He even says, "Lay hold on that which is really life." We need such a life in the degradation of this age. Second Timothy says that in the last days difficult times will come. How much in these days, in these difficult times, do we need to lay hold on that which is really life. We need to lay hold of more than the doctrine of life that is in the books. What's in the books has to become our experience.

First John 1:3, 6-7 reads, "*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 His Son Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth; <sup>7</sup> 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.*" Here John is talking about the fellowship. First he says that we saw the One who is the Word; He is the life. We need the flow of this life, which is the fellowship, so that we can enter into this experience of the Triune God.

First John goes on to talk about three barriers or hindrances to the flow of this life: sin in chapter one, the world in chapter two, and the idols in the last verse in chapter five. These things in our life obstruct and interrupt the flow of the divine life. We have to admit that these things still hinder us: sin, the world with its many manifestations, and even idols as we saw in Jeremiah in the summer training. We have to admit that we still we still can have idols in our hearts. The two great sins for which the Lord rebuked His people are that we have forsaken Him, the fountain of living waters and have hewn out for ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns which hold no water. What are those? Those are just the idols, the replacements of Christ in our lives.

How can we deal with these three categories of things? This has to do with our personal fellowship with the Lord when we give the Lord the ground day by day, even morning by morning to spend times with Him. I will probably be repeating a few times this weekend that we need higher quality in our personal time with the Lord. The burden deeply on my heart is that the quality of our time with the Lord could be increased, so that He has the ground to deal with sin in our lives and to deal with the world that may unconsciously be not only defiling us, but trapping us and occupying us. The world occupies God's people and enslaves God's people. Sometimes it's so hidden in our lives that we don't even realize we are enslaved. We need that life which has the light to shine on us in our time of fellowship with the Lord that we could be released from the barriers, from the things that enslave us. There is also the matter of idols. We may not realize that idols have just gradually come into our lives. Maybe even things that were so positive before, even things given to us by God, even successes in our service or work for the Lord can become replacements, can become idols. It's so subtle saints; how can we know, how can we avoid being deceived? When we face the Lord, we do not want to have the experience of those in Matthew chapter 7 who will come to the Lord and say, "Lord, Lord, open to us. Did we not do this in Your name? Didn't we do that in Your name?" He doesn't deny that they did all those things. But what does He say? "I never knew you" or "I never approved of you." We don't want to hear those words in that day. It's much better if we would hear those words tomorrow morning when we're with the Lord, or in our church life in our interactions with the saints, or in our interaction with our spouse or with our children. It is much better that the Lord would shine on us in our fellowship with Him in all these areas.

This line of life continues through the New Testament. The book of Revelation is full of this matter of life. In chapter 2, it mentions the tree of life that's given as a prize to the overcomers. Actually, the tree of life is emphasized, especially in chapter 22. That was to the church in Ephesus. The Lord mentions to the church in Smyrna that the overcomers have a crown of life. They're so full of life that it becomes a crown and expression, an overflowing of life to swallow up all the death around them. Our longing is that all the saints would enjoy life as a crown. Even we have hymn 1191: "Lord, I treasure the sweet flow of life. At your coming may life be my crown." I hope that is our prayer. "Lord, may life be my crown; at Your coming may life be my crown." Later on in Revelation, the Lord is the Lamb Shepherd who leads us to the springs of water of life.

In Revelation 14 we have the first fruit and the harvest. What is this saints? The first fruit are the living overcomers. This show us the maturity in life. To meet the Lord, we need the growth in life. At the beginning of the New Testament, the Lord comes as the sower. We see this in Matthew 13; the sower comes forth to sow the seed. In First Corinthians, Paul says, "I planted, Apollos watered, God gives the growth", so you see the growing of the seed. In Revelation 14 you have the harvest. All our days are just for the growth of this life within us. May every day be a day of unhindered growth. I hope we even would pray, "Lord, I want to grow in you every day. Jesus Christ grow Thou in me." We need to pray that our growth would be daily and unhindered.

For a little seed to grow there needs to be sunlight, there needs to be water, there needs to be nutrients in the soil, and there needs to be the removal of competing things. Those are the weeds. How can we have all these things: the light, the water, the nutrients, and the dealing? All of these are in our personal fellowship with the Lord. I hope we all would pray for these things. Then the Bible ends with life, a city of life, where there is the tree of life with the river of life, and there's a call to drink. For His return, we must be men of life, we must be persons full of the divine life.

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*Scripture Reading:*

*1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:3, 6-7; Phil. 2:1; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 4:24*

With that little introduction we come now to the outline and we come to this matter of *The Meaning and Life of Fellowship*. Actually, it's a two-part message titled *The Meaning of Fellowship*, what is fellowship, and *The Life of Fellowship*. Maybe when some of us see this title and see these outlines, we might think that this is somewhat elementary. I admit, yes, but I would say that we never stop growing in the divine life. Verses which we enjoyed very much in the Jeremiah training were chapter 17, verses 7 and 8 that say, "*Blessed is the man who trusts in Jehovah / And whose trust Jehovah is.*"<sup>8</sup> *And he will be like a tree transplanted beside water, / Which sends out its roots by a stream, / And will not be afraid when heat comes; / For its leaves remain flourishing, / And it will not be anxious in the year of drought / And will not cease to bear fruit.*" He who trusts in Jehovah and whose trust Jehovah is is like a tree transplanted beside waters which sends out its roots to a stream. Then the effect is that it's not afraid when the heat comes. It's not afraid and it's not anxious in the year of drought. What is the sending out of the roots? That's the growth in life, but that's the growth that is hidden. We need growth in the Lord that is hidden. When you have a tree, of course, what you see is the trunk and the branches and leaves. That's the growth you can see. But very often the growth underneath the soil that you cannot see matches the growth that you can see. We need to grow and we need to go deeper. So all of us can pray, "Lord deepen this flow of life in me."

First Corinthians 1:9 says, "*God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*" We start with this matter: God is faithful. For all this fellowship that we will release in these messages, I hope none of this becomes a kind of a heavy burden on any one of us or becomes a set of laws or requirements. I hope we don't take it as law, something to do something more that I need to do. But I do hope that we would open to the Lord to allow Him to shepherd us point by point into the reality and even into the practice of these points. He wants to do this; even I would say, He needs to do this in us. He is the one who initiated this calling into the fellowship of His Son. He is calling us into this fellowship; He is the faithful one and He will work it out.

First John 1:3, 6-7 read, "*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 His Son Jesus Christ....*"<sup>6</sup> *If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;*<sup>7</sup> *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.*" Then Philippians 2:1 talks about *fellowship of spirit*. If we are going to talk about fellowship, we have to talk about the Holy Spirit and especially our human spirit. The fellowship that we experience in the Lord is made real to us in our spirit. We must exercise our spirit to have this fellowship with the Triune God. Then Second Corinthians 13:14 has this phrase *the fellowship of the Holy Spirit*. Where is this divine life who is the Triune God? This life is in the Spirit. When we touch the Spirit in our spirit, there is fellowship; that's the flow of fellowship. The most crucial verse is John 4:24: "*God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truthfulness.*"

When we touch the matter of fellowship, we are touching the matter of our spirit. Our spirit has three functions. I think many of us know this. We touched upon this when we were together two years ago when we spoke of *The Heart and the Spirit in God's Economy*. The Spirit has three

functions and one of them we call *fellowship* is based on this verse right here. But we also have the conscience, which is the main part of the spirit, and the intuition. These three functions work together to bring us into the practical fellowship with the Lord. So as we develop this matter of the practice of the fellowship, I do hope we realize this is not just a matter of outward practices. We will talk about some of the things, particularly tomorrow and in the following sessions, but please don't focus so much on anything external. The burden that we have is that we would learn how to exercise the functions of our spirit, especially the fellowship of our spirit. But we will see that this has a lot to do with both the conscience and the intuition, or you might say the anointing. These three functions work together to bring us into union with the with the Triune God.

I want to make it clear that my burden is not, either tonight or in any of the sessions, particularly to cover the outline, but rather to convey a burden. So we may go quickly through some points and some points we may skip over and just leave it for your reading. But we will touch upon the main outline points. Don't be bothered if we don't cover all the points.

**I. Fellowship is the issue of the eternal life and is actually the flow of the eternal life within all the believers, who have received and possessed the divine life—1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:6-7:**

Actually fellowship is the flow of the eternal life within all the believers who have received and possess the divine life. So fellowship is the issue of the eternal life. We see this especially in First John chapter one. First we have the eternal life, then we have the fellowship of this life, the issue of this life. Eventually that flowing of life brings us into light; it shines on us and shines on all our unrighteous. When we confess our sins, what's the issue? The issue is more life. So we have this wonderful, very experiential, cycle of life in First John chapter one. The apostle John's fellowship in his epistle is to bring us into the fellowship and that we might be maintained in the fellowship.

A. All genuine believers are in this fellowship—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:6-7.

B. Fellowship is a mutual flow; something flows into us from God, and something flows from us to God; at the same time, as God's people something flows mutually among us.

Fellowship is just like the picture of our circulatory system, the blood, in our human vessel. There is a flow of blood and that flow brings in something positive. When we inhale, we're taking a supply, something new is being brought into us. It is bringing something to every cell, every fibre, of our being. But at the same time something is being discharged, something is being taken out. Something negative is being extracted and expelled in our breathing. So we need to breathe in and we need to breathe out. In fellowship always something positive comes in and something negative goes out. We need such fellowship with the Lord so that we can be healthy in Him.

C. To live in fellowship means to live in God's presence.

Many Christians talk about the presence of the Lord. In the Old Testament, we love verses where, for example, Moses prays in Exodus, "Lord, if I don't have your presence, if Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us there", and the Lord promises that My presence will go with you. But what is the Lord's presence in a very practical way today? The Lord's presence is that fellowship that we have with Him. His presence is in the fellowship. His presence is in our spirit, in the mingled spirit. He is one with us in our spirit. So the more that we have the free, uninterrupted fellowship with Him, the more we sense His presence. Of course, the Lord is always with us; that's His promise. He's always with us, but we have to admit that we don't always sense His presence. It's as if we lose His presence, or we might say that we lose His smile. It's very possible for that flowing of the divine life to be interrupted by sin, the world, or the idols, and then we need to restore the fellowship. Our burden is how we can practically restore our fellowship in our times with the Lord.

## **II. Fellowship is carried on by the Spirit in our regenerated spirit; hence, it is called “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit” (2 Cor. 13:14) and “fellowship of [our] spirit—(Phil. 2:1):**

### **A. God being the Spirit..John 4:24:**

1. The strongest and highest life in the universe is the Spirit of God.
2. The God whom we contact is not physical; He is invisible and untouchable, yet He is full of life, very living and strong.

### **B. Man having a spirit—Job 32:8a; Prov. 20:27; 1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 4:12:**

*Job 32:8 “But there is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.”*

1. Man’s spirit is his inward organ for him to contact God, receive God, contain God, and assimilate God into his entire being as his life and his everything.

Not just unbelievers, I believe even many of the Lord’s children have the thought that God wants us to revere him. Actually, the spirit of man is for man to worship God. But God not only wants us to worship Him in an objective way, He wants us to worship Him by drinking Him. That’s the revelation in John chapter 4. Verse 24 is in the context of that story of the Lord meeting the Samaritan woman. In the preceding verses the Lord begins the conversation talking about drinking. Actually, the revelation of this chapter is that we worship God by taking Him in, by drinking Him. The way to drink Him is to exercise our spirit, and one way to exercise the spirit is to confess our sins. Confessing our sins is an exercise of our spirit. How we need this matter of the human spirit when we talk about this matter of the fellowship with the Lord.

2. The spirit of man is for man to worship God (John 4:24), to be regenerated by God (John 3:6b), and to be joined to God (1 Cor. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:22) that man may walk and live in an organic union with God (Rom. 8:4b) to fulfill God’s purpose.

### **C. Our fellowship with God is the mutual fellowship between the human spirit and the divine spirit; therefore, for man to contact God and fellowship with God, he must be in spirit and exercise his spirit—Phil. 2:1; 2 Cor. 13:14.**

### **D. Fellowship is sensed in our spirit—Rom. 8:6b; 2 Cor. 3:17.**

How crucial it is for believers to exercise the spirit; we must exercise the spirit to contact God!

## **III. The Christian life is a life of fellowship—Acts 2:42; Phil. 2:1:**

### **A. Whether we live a Christian life in reality depends on whether we are living a life in fellowship with God or are independent from God:**

We are dependent on the flow of blood in our being. We are dependent on our life. This life that is within us depends on the circulation. If our circulation is interrupted, we are rushed to the emergency room. I don’t know that we have that same sensitivity when it comes to the divine life, the flow of the divine life being interrupted. But whenever we are independent of the Lord, whenever we make a decision, not in oneness with the Lord, not contacting Him, not checking with Him, not speaking to Him, we are independent from God. Check, “Lord, how do You feel about this?” It could be the smallest thing such as, “Lord, which tie should I choose for this meeting today?” I practice this; as I was putting this tie on before the meeting, I realized that I just grabbed one. I caught myself and said, “Lord, I didn’t ask You; I just did it because I was in a little rush because I needed to pray with the brothers. Forgive me, Lord.” Even this tie; I don’t know if it’s the right one; I don’t know if it matches okay or not; but even this tie brought me into more fellowship with the Lord this

evening. I hope that in all our daily life, we would practice not being independent of Him. When we are independent the flow is cut off and that sense that of life is gone. Actually, it's a sense of death that something is wrong, something is not satisfying, something is not happy inside. That's a warning to bring us back to the flow of life. It's mercy that we could experience that.

1. Being independent from God means that we have broken our relationship with Him and have lost the mutual flow with Him—1 John 1:6; cf. Gen. 3:8.

For any new ones, please do not misunderstand, our relationship with God is eternal. As an illustration, it is like a child with his parents. His human parents are always his parents; that's a life relationship. However, the communication could be interrupted. Sometimes the child may do something and be naughty. Then they are bothered in their conscience; they don't want to see the parents. Yes, the fellowship is interrupted, but the relationship of life always exists. So don't misunderstand what we are saying here.

2. A believer who is separate from God is a Christian in name and position only, but he is no longer a Christian in his practical living—cf. Rev. 3:1.

So we want to be believers in life in a practical living. In all our daily living we want to have fellowship with the Lord.

3. The principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is according to the principle of independence from God—living without God, without needing God, without having God, without depending on God, and without contacting God—Gen. 2:16-17; 4:3-5, 16-24.

It's actually very easy and spontaneous to live our life, to converse with people, to respond, to react to situations, to things in the news, or to something coming on our phone through social media. It's very spontaneous to have an opinion, to react to things at home between spouses or with children apart from God. We speak things so quickly. We speak things, then it's very possible that the next day when we're spending time with the Lord it's not as sweet as it had been earlier in the week. We might blame it on many other things, but it's very possible that it goes back just to that one point we were independent of Him. The flow was interrupted just at that moment. How we need to have such a sensitive spirit. This is really the intuition of our spirit. We need such a sensitive spirit: "Lord, I don't want to be apart from You." That sense is sharpened, that sense is strengthened, that sense is honed in the times that we spend with the Lord. The more we spend time with him personally, the more sensitive our spirit can become. Then when the Lord speaks to us, it won't be just that He speaks to us after the fact to bring us back to the spirit. It's possible that He will speak to us before the fact: "Don't say that. Don't. Don't think that way." Maybe He was doing that all along but we just were not sensitive to His speaking. Then eventually we're only sensitive to the conscience. How we need our spirit to be built up that we could have this fellowship of spirit, the fellowship of the Spirit, stronger in our being.

4. We should not focus on doing things that are right, good, or godly; rather we should focus on whether we are joined to God, connected to Him, and in a mutual flow with Him when doing things that are right, good, or godly; we should focus on not being separated from God.

Even when we are serving in the church in things such as leading the singing, playing guitar, playing the piano, or service for the children's meeting, how we need to make sure that we are not independent of the Lord, not simply relying on our skill. Relying on our training is very easy; it is

too easy for musicians to just rely on their natural capabilities. That's why we always encourage people, "Before you serve, pray." You can apply this in a very simple way: before you serve, pray. Are you going to bake a cake for some saints, to do something good for someone else? You know how to bake; that's very good. Maybe you're famous among the saints for your baking. But even the experts among us, I would encourage you, "How about praying before you start? Just gave it to the Lord and pray for the one you want to minister to through this act of kindness. In that way we are preserved from doing things independent of the Lord. By just talking to the Lord freely, we are maintained in the fellowship with Him.

- B. A life of fellowship not only has the aspect of not being independent from God but also has the aspect of not being individualistic—1 John 1:3.
  - 1. If we desire to be a normal believer, we must not be independent from God and individualistic toward the brothers and sisters; we not only need God, but we also need the other believers.
  - 2. In the Bible the believers are likened to sheep; sheep are always in a flock—John 10:16.
  - 3. There is hardly anything in our Christian life that does not require fellowship with the saints (1 Cor. 1:2); there are bound to be risks and mistakes in anything we initiate, decide and do on our own.

Just this afternoon a couple called me to have some fellowship because they're considering to move somewhere. I appreciate that they would reach out. They don't consider moving something that just concerns their family. They wanted to bring it into the fellowship with the brothers. Because we're members of the body everything about us affects the body of Christ. So I hope we would have learned this lesson not to be independent of the Lord and not to be independent from the body. Bring everything to fellowship

#### **IV. Fellowship is the foundation for our growth and service:**

Now we come back to my introduction. In Matthew 25 the Lord tells us how to be ready for His coming. There are two aspects: life and service. How can we have the normal growth in life? It depends very much on our fellowship with the Lord. Actually, our fellowship with the Lord is the foundation of our growth. It's also the foundation of the service. The second aspect is to be faithful in service to serve the Lord. We must do the things He tells us to do. It's not that we serve Him and we come up with ideas of what we want to do for the Lord. That's very possible. In Matthew seven those believers say, "Lord, didn't we do this in your name and that in your name?" He doesn't deny that they did those things, but they were not faithful in service because it seems they did not ask the Lord, "Should we do those things?" They did them in His name, but they did them in independence from Him. Maybe we want to pray for our service, but the Lord says, "No, don't pray for the service yet. Just enjoy Me, still enjoy Me, linger with Me." Do you have the grace to do that? Do you have the grace to put down the task and just enjoy the Lord? Or are we too focused on the thing that we have to do for the Lord. Saints, we need more fellowship with Him. In the fellowship He calls us to Himself. After some time He directs us what we should do, and not only what we should do but also when we should do it and how we should do it. The Lord wants to lead us in the fellowship with Him.

- A. A genuinely spiritual person remains in his spirit, enjoys God's presence, and has life, peace, and freedom; he is also satisfied and strengthened—Rom. 8:6b; 2 Cor. 3:17.

Our service should not wear us out. Of course, sometimes we get tired physically, but our service should actually strengthen us with Him as we serve.



- B. Since a genuinely spiritual person lives in fellowship with God, the divine life can flow into him and become his constitution. As a result, he can always express the life of God and impart this life into others.
- C. It is possible that some of us who do not have the fellowship of life, yet we still give messages, pray, visit, or administrate the church; this kind of work which is not in fellowship with God, is merely a job, and it cannot impart life into others.

It's possible, even to give messages and be independent of the Lord. We have to be in the fellowship with the Lord so that we are flowing Him to others. In Romans 11 we have this verse that mentions out from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. This should be the principle for all our service. *Out from Him*; why am I doing this? Because it's out from Him. Actually, He is the source. His will is the source of my service. Then *through Him*; even as I'm carrying it out I am depending on Him all the time and in fellowship with Him. It's not that I prayed about it; I had fellowship with Him; now I go do it. No. The Lord Jesus in His ministry on the earth says that He is with the Father. He is from the Father and with the Father. Actually, there is such a word in Greek—*from-with*. We don't have this word in English or in Spanish. So the Lord came from the Father, but that He is from the Father doesn't mean that He left the Father and came to be with us. He is from the Father and right now with the Father in His presence. We need the experience in all our service that we are from-with the Lord, so that out from Him and through Him and to Him are all things, that all our service will be out from Him with Him and unto Him, unto His glory. We are serving by the fellowship of life and we're dispensing life to others to His glory.

- D. Fellowship is the key to all our spiritual experiences, whether they are related to our life, our living, or our work; if we desire to be used by God, we must pay attention to this fellowship—cf. Mark 3:14.

I hope you could go over this line, this point—even highlight this for your consideration and study. Fellowship is the key to all our spiritual experiences. Those who have experience in the Lord will witness to this. How we need the ongoing fellowship with the Lord. Even as we're speaking to others, we still need to be in contact with Him. It's kind of a three dimensional flow.

**V. Learning to fellowship with the Lord is the most important lesson for the Lord's serving ones:**

I do believe that all of us here have the heart to serve the Lord, so learning to fellowship with the Lord and learning to deepen our fellowship with the Lord is the most important thing we can do to serve Him and even to prepare for His coming. What we need to do is have our fellowship with Him deepened.

- A. A person who desires to be used by the Lord needs the Lord's visitation, and he must be willing to pay the price; furthermore, he must learn to fellowship with the Lord—cf. Luke 1:28-30, 34-38.

I hope we would be willing to pay the price for this fellowship, to maybe get up a few minutes earlier to spend a time with the Lord. When we're having fellowship together for maybe the children's work, or the gospel, or some practical service; it's too easy for us to come together, everybody prays, and then we start talking about the task or the service. Or we come together and pray, but right away we pray for the things of the service. I hope we could learn the lesson of deeper fellowship first.

- B. To be used by God is to let him flow out of us in order to supply others; however, if we do not let him flow into us, He cannot flow out of us; the best way to let God flow into us is to fellowship with Him.

If there's no inflow, there will be no outflow.

- C. The Lord always demands something of us in our fellowship with Him because there are too many matters and things within us, in our living and in our environment that replace Him; hence we do not express much of his element—Matt. 12:33-34.

I mentioned this earlier as well; in the real fellowship with the Lord, we are not only supplied. Very often we focus on that part—the inflow, the Lord flows into us; He's supplying us. But actually, He wants to remove things from us. In the long run, we might be able to measure how far we have advanced in the Lord, not by how much we've received, but by how much we've lost. All the replacements have been taken away.

- D. The experience of being touched by God in our fellowship with Him and surrendering to Him is very precious; this experience will not only enable us to be used by the Lord; it will also keep us fresh and living—John 7:38b.

We must admit that sometimes in our going on with the Lord, staleness sets in. We don't have that livingness that we had before. How can we have that has to do with just coming back to restore the fellowship with Him.

- E. When we sense that our experiences testimonies, or messages are old, there must be a problem in our fellowship with the Lord; we have either lost this fellowship, or we do not fellowship as much; as a result, we do not have new experiences, and we are not useful.