

I JOHN: TRUE SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

X. Gaining Assurance That We Truly Fellowship With God

(1 John 3:19-24)

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. This lack of true fellowship occurs with many believers today, a state that Christ predicted in Revelation 3:14-22 would exist in our era of Church History. We thus continue our study of 1 John in viewing 1 John 3:19-24 on gaining assurance that we truly fellowship with the Lord (as follows):

II. Gaining Assurance That We Truly Fellowship With God, 1 John 3:19-24.

- A. We gain assurance that we truly fellowship with God by loving in word and deed, 1 John 3:18, 19:
 1. The 1 John 3:19 statement, "And hereby we know that we are of the truth" refers to the 1 John 3:18 teaching that meeting the material needs of other believers is true love; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 897.
 2. Thus, we believers experientially know (*ginosko*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 819) that we are of the truth, that we fellowship with God, by our acts of meeting the material needs of fellow believers in Christ.
- B. We gain assurance that we truly fellowship with God by trusting His verification of our fellowship above our own false guilt to the contrary, 1 John 3:20-21:
 1. Having written in 1 John 3:19b that we will assure our hearts before the Lord that we fellowship with Him by the fact that we meet the material needs of other believers, John in 1 John 3:20 added that if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts and experientially knows (*ginosko* again, Ibid.) all things.
 2. So, God's claim that giving to meet the material needs of other believers means we truly love and thus truly fellowship with the Lord is more reliable than our hearts that condemn us as not fellowshiping with Him regardless if we meet the material needs of other believers! We must then rely on God's Word that claims we fellowship with Him above what our own hearts experientially condemn in us to the contrary!
 3. Accordingly, if our hearts do not condemn us because we rely on the claims of God's Word about our fellowship status, we then have confidence before the Lord that we fellowship with Him, 1 John 3:21!
- C. We gain assurance that we truly fellowship with God by answers to prayer, 1 John 3:22:
 1. When we make petitions in prayer to the Lord and receive what we have asked of Him, we can be sure that we are wholeheartedly obeying (*tereo*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p.820) His commands and producing (*poieo*, Ibid.) "what is pleasing" (*arestos*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 105) even in the heavenly presence of (*enopion*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Moulton & Milligan, The Vocab. of the Grk. N. T., 1972, p. 220) the Lord, 1 John 3:22.
 2. In other words, answered prayer is a clear indication that we truly fellowship with God Who is in heaven!
- D. We gain assurance that we truly fellowship with God by our heartfelt obedience (*tereo* again, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.) to His commands, 1 John 3:23-24a: this claim repeats an earlier call to love fellow believers, with the addition that we believe the name of Jesus Christ, that is, that we believe in Christ's name itself through which we pray, John 14:12-15; 16:24; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T.
- E. We gain assurance that we truly fellowship with God by the Holy Spirit's assurances to us, 1 John 3:24b:
 1. In 1 John 2:18-27, John clarified that even immature believers (*paidia*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 816-817), indwelt by the Holy Spirit, could discern all things by the Spirit's ministry to them, cf. 1 John 2:20.
 2. Thus, we experientially know (*ginosko* again, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 820) that we fellowship with the Lord by the Holy Spirit Who was given to us at salvation, 1 John 2:24b with 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:9b.

Lesson: *In the struggle we as believers might have as to the validity of our fellowship with God because our hearts might condemn us as not being in fellowship with Him, God calls us to realize that giving of our means to meet material needs in fellow believers is love in truth in His evaluation, evidence of true fellowship with God, that we not let our hearts condemn us to the contrary. Also, answered prayer, obeying God's commands with heartfelt devotion and the Holy Spirit's assurances add to the evidences that we truly fellowship with the Lord.*

Application: *(1) If we believers in Christ harbor doubts about our fellowship status with God, He directs that we trust His objective, Biblical claims on true fellowship above even what our hearts condemn in us to the contrary! (2) Thus, God claims that evidences of true fellowship are donating to meet the material needs of other believers, answers to prayer, obeying God with heartfelt devotion and the Holy Spirit's assuring discernments.*