

A Practical Study of 1 JOHN
“Fellowship With The Father”
Study Number Eight
1 John 3:11-24
Fellowship is Sacrificial Servanthood

This is Study number eight.

“FELLOWSHIP IS SACRIFICIAL SERVANTHOOD”

1 John 3:11-24

Our **KEY VERSE** is going to be verse 16.

Bill Hybles has a little book called *Who You are When No One’s Looking*. And he says this:

In the early years of our marriage, both Lynne and I chose peace keeping over truth telling. I was starting up a church and I had a lot of upheaval at work--no money, no people, no buildings and plenty of disagreement among those who were involved with the project. Lynne had troubles of her own at home. She was pregnant; we had two boarders living with us who took a great deal of her time; and she was teaching flute lessons to help make ends meet. So with upheaval at home and upheaval at work, we had a common understanding whenever we got together “Don’t make any more waves.” Nevertheless, inside us the frustrations were building up.

God began to work on Lynne's heart. Before long, my tenderhearted wife started meeting me at the door saying, "Sit down, I have to tell you something. I haven't been truthful with you. I am sick and tired of being tenth on your priority list. You don't show me much affection. I don't like the way this marriage is heading, and I'm not going to stand for it."

I did not respond very well. I did not say, "I'm glad to hear what's on your heart. (laugh) I'll change my schedule and start thinking about your needs as well as my own." Instead I yelled, "With all the problems I have trying to start this church--and you lay this trip on me! What do you want, anyway? Here, take some blood." (laugh)

In spite of my reaction, Lynne stuck to her guns. She knew our marriage needed work, and she decided to fight until I saw the light. Over the years God used Lynne's tough love until I faced the truth about myself and allowed him to do a lot of surgery on me.

But then, once I started listening to Lynne and working on my problems, I began seeing some things in her I did not want to live with anymore. (laugh) Having learned the value of truth telling, I decided to open up. "Sweetheart," I said, "I see a streak of self-centeredness in your life that bothers me."

Sweet, softhearted Lynne did not say, "Thank you for sharing your feelings." Instead she ran away sobbing, "I can't believe you'd say that!" and slammed the bedroom door. But I stuck to my guns, and we had several more rough months. Eventually she made some changes, just as I had had to do, and our marriage became peaceful once again. But this time there was a

difference. This was not a counterfeit peace based on avoiding the real issues. This was the peace of the Lord--based on truth, real and lasting.

And the secret to the whole thing is learning to serve one another.

Francis Schaeffer wrote a small book called *The Mark of the Christian*. He says:

We must be very careful at this point, however. We may be true Christians, really born-again Christians, and yet fail in our love toward other Christians. As a matter of fact, to be completely realistic, it is stronger than this. There will be times (and let us say it with tears), there will be times when we will fail in our love toward each other as Christians. In a fallen world, where there is no such thing as perfection until Jesus comes, we know this will be the case. And, of course, when we fail, we must ask God's forgiveness.

You see Jesus is not here saying that our failure to love Christians proves that we are not Christians, He is simply pointing up the fact that when we do not love it is a manifestation of being out of fellowship with the Lord.

Now we are pursuing the subject of FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER and each portion of the text under girds that:

1. **FELLOWSHIP IS RESTORED BY JESUS CHRIST.**
2. **FELLOWSHIP IS BROKEN BY SIN.**
3. **FELLOWSHIP IS NOURISHED BY OBEDIENCE.**
4. **FELLOWSHIP IS ESCALATED BY GROWTH.**
5. **FELLOWSHIP IS BEING EDUCATED BY HIS SPIRIT**
6. **FELLOWSHIP IS A REHEARSAL FOR THE FUTURE**
7. **FELLOWSHIP IS APPARENT BY FRUIT**

And then this brings us now to number eight:

8. **FELLOWSHIP IS SACRIFICIAL SERVANTHOOD**

Now can I put it this way? Fellowship will issue in the giving of ourselves unselfishly to others. Fellowship issues in involvement.

Maybe I could say it this way. SACRIFICIAL SERVANTHOOD is the normal outgrowth of an ever deepening relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

You manifest it by the fact that you can truly serve others unselfishly for the glory of God and you delight in doing that.

Fellowship prepares us for doing His will.

Let me give you two passages of Scripture.

2 Corinthians 8:9

You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich.

And of course in Philippians chapter 2 Paul says,

He humbled Himself and took the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men.

Listen to 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

So it is wrong for me to live selfishly once I become a believer captured by the love of Jesus Christ flowing out of that fellowship is a passion to be spent in the lives of others.

In Philippians 2:1 Paul says,

If my life is poured out upon the sacrifice and service of your faith I joy and rejoice with you.

I am glad to be spent for you my brother and sister in the body of Christ that He might be glorified and honored.

Now with those thoughts in mind and seeing the relationship between the level of servanthood and the effectiveness of our fellowship, let's put it together in some of the richest part of this little epistle.

v. 11 Because this is the message which you heard from the beginning, that we should be loving one another;

You see flowing out of fellowship is going to be love and love is nothing other than spending ourselves in the lives of those whom we love. Love will be fruitage of fellowship with the Father.

Someone described love as the sheer ecstasy of giving the best we have to the one we love the most.

Now what John is going to do here is he is going to tell us what this love is NOT first by using an Old Testament illustration. Then he is going to describe it for us. We are going to talk about Cain and Abel for just a minute.

v. 12 not as Cain [who] was out of the evil one, and killed his brother. And for what reason did he kill him? Because his works were evil, and those of his brother righteous.

Genesis 4:6-8

Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.” Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

You see Cain filled with envy, hatred and jealousy murders his brother.

You can say HATE SLAYS, and LOVE SERVES. That’s your principle. That is how you can tell the difference.

You see Cain initially gets his nose out of joint because the offering that he brings gets a reject on it from the Lord. Now a lot of people think the Lord is really unfair but Cain knew exactly what to do because Abel knew what to do. And so Cain is just thinking you know God is a pretty easy touch, He is going to understand and so I will bring the fruit of the ground, the fruit of my own labor.

And Abel is just smart enough to know that when God says something He is specific and He means business. And so he brings the little lamb which is the acceptable sacrifice to the Lord and as a result he is accepted and Cain is not.

And Cain just lets the thing build up in his life. He is “OUT OF THE EVIL ONE” and as a result of that he knew what he should have done but he rebelled against it. He was stubborn and bullheaded.

And just like so many people today who would take their own human works and lay that on the altar as to make them acceptable in the presence of God, they are going to hear the same thing that Cain heard from the same Lord. And that is “I will not accept your human works.” And that is where? It is in the Sermon on Mount, Matthew chapter 7, 23 and 24:

Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord haven't we done many wonderful works and I will say depart from me I never knew you, you workers of iniquity.

Make no mistake about it, God is specific and Cain, filled with murder, heart filled with hatred, murders his brother.

v. 13 And stop wondering, brethren, if the world is hating you.

**Isn't it interesting in last week's study it was
stop loving the world
and now today it is
the world is hating us.**

It is just part and parcel of the territory. You do not run a popularity contest in the world when you are walking with Jesus Christ. Just realize that is part of the price.

John 15:18, 19

Jesus as they are going down to the Garden of Gethsemane from the upper room says:

If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

He predicted it in His opening address.

Matthew 5:11

Blessed are you when men cast insults at you and you are persecuted. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.

Just realize that the hatred of the world goes with the territory.

v. 14 As for us we are knowing that we have passed over out of death into life, [*why, how do we know it? Reason*] because we are loving the brethren. The one who is not loving is abiding in death.

Now you see that little word “PASSED OVER” you always think of John 5:24 and that verse that I am sure you have used in sharing Christ with others.

John 5:24

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes on Him that sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

1 John 5:11

He that has the Son has life and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

You know the little word “WE” there? That is in the emphatic position, when you read that in the Greek, that is the very first word in the sentence.

It is but we, as for us, we are knowing something, we know “WE HAVE PASSED OVER OUT OF DEATH INTO LIFE” and the way we can tell it is “BECAUSE WE ARE LOVING THE BRETHREN. THE ONE WHO IS NOT

LOVING IS ABIDING IN DEATH.”

Now when you look at that you need to remember that John is writing exclusively to Christians.

“THE ONE WHO IS NOT LOVING IS ABIDING IN DEATH.”

Now that does not say that the one who is not loving is unsaved. The one who is not loving is living in a hell of his own selfishness. He is living just like the world. He is living in a realm of death when he could really know life and life abundant if he would just respond in a submissive way to the God of love who out of fellowship will produce the love of the brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. That is what he is saying.

v. 15 Everyone who is hating his brother is a murderer; and you are knowing that every murderer is not having eternal life abiding in him.

Now at this particular point you are saying well now we have a murderer and a murderer can't be a Christian. Alright, let's just talk for a little bit about that very thing.

In Matthew chapter 5 in the Sermon on the Mount the Lord made it quite clear that a person who has hatred has his heart is filled with murder and it is just like he has murdered somebody.

And He also said that a person who looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery in his heart and therefore guilty of the law at that point.

Believers are just as much filled with lust and just as much filled with hate in relationships on the horizontal that you can leave the Christians here in the text.

Now you would notice the text does not say that he does not possess “ETERNAL LIFE” but that he does not have it “ABIDING IN HIM.” In other words he is not in fellowship. Jesus Christ has moved out and He is standing outside the door knocking just like He did in the Laodicean church in Revelation 3:20 because He is not going to stay in fellowship in the heart of somebody who has hatred in his heart. And He is waiting for you to deal with that problem before you will experience the restoration of fellowship.

I know that is hard teaching but I believe that is exactly what is being said.

Zane Hodges who is a professor of Greek at Dallas Theological Seminary puts it this way:

Eternal life which is Christ is not at home in his heart so long as the spirit of murder is there. Such a person is disastrously out of touch with his Lord and he experiences only death.

When he could have known the joy of relationship!

Now what are we learning?

LOVE and LIFE go together,

HATRED and DEATH go together.

John's words are very grim. Hate, unfortunately, is not confined to unsaved people.

And when our hearts are filled with:

LUST,

MATERIALISM,

SELFISHNESS,

MURDER,

or HATRED,

you can just say there is no room for the Lord Jesus in that heart. And so there is not the abiding relationship that ought to be there.

The Laodicean church certainly experienced that. You are saying, you are wealthy and you have need of nothing, but truly you are poor, rich, blind and naked the Lord says. And to that church:

Revelation 3:20

I am standing at the door knocking; and any man who hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and have fellowship with him, and he with Me.

We are so used to using that verse with unsaved. That is written to believers, the Laodicean church, crowding the Christ out. And the Lord is knocking and He is says, “If you will only hear me and respond and open the door of your heart, I will come in and will sup or have fellowship with you. I will dine with you. And you with Me.”

v. 16 In this we have come to know love, because that one [*Jesus Christ*] on our behalf laid down his soul; and we are having a moral obligation on behalf of our brethren to lay down our souls.

There it is, KEY VERSE. When you name the name of Christ and you are walking in sweet fellowship with Him it is just a foregone conclusion that you are going to minister to the comfort of others. Your life is going to begin to be characterized as being spent for the glory of God for others. This is our key verse.

“FELLOWSHIP IS SACRIFICIAL SERVANTHOOD.”

Issuing out of fellowship with the Father is going to come involvement in the serving and giving of ourselves to others.

Now the big question.

Are you loving?

Are you involved?

Can you make a list right now of people that you are sacrificially involved in being a blessing in their lives by serving them in the realm of their needs? Assisting in helping in any way that you can?

Commitment to another person is a courageous act. It is no wonder that we recoil from it in human nature.

But “IN THIS WE HAVE COME TO KNOW LOVE, BECAUSE THAT ONE” laid down His life for us.

Romans 5:8

God commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

And then John records it in John 15:13

Greater love hath no one than this, than a man would lay down his life for his friends.

Somebody put it this way:

No greater love, nor could there be than Christ’s deep love of Calvary.

Now we remember that back in chapter 2 and verse 6 we had a moral obligation to be walking around as He is walking around. That was that word in 2:6 and now here it hits us again in 3:16. Oh it is going to hit us again one more time about what our moral obligation is.

But here our moral obligation is that we should be laying down our lives for the brethren.

We are to be **LIVING** and **LOVING** just like Jesus Christ.

In Philippians 2 Paul describes the Lord as becoming a servant and laying down his life. And then in verse 17 he says if he is poured out it is okay. And in verse 20 he says I do not have anybody like **TIMOTHY** who is as generally concerned about you. And then he concludes the chapter with **EPAPHRODITUS** who practically laid down his physical life in serving the Lord in the city of Rome as a representative of the Philippian church. That is a picture of involvement from the standpoint of sacrificial servanthood that flows out of a life filled with a love for the Savior.

Now I realize that so many times we say:

“I love you, but keep your distance.”

or

“I want to give of myself, but not too much.”

You see it is the GIVING part of love, which involves constructive involvement in the lives of others that we seem to have our biggest problem with because we are just built with a nature to think only of ourselves. And it is the part of love involving sacrifice that makes us hesitate to move toward maturity. And if God speaks to your heart today realize you cannot maintain any kind of fellowship unless there is a fruitage of love flowing out of your life which is manifesting itself in acts of sacrificial servanthood.

I just put it in capitol letters, triple spaced in my notes, so I would not miss this statement.

GROWTH in CHRISTLIKE LOVE will always issue in SACRIFICIAL SERVANTHOOD because you will become like your Savior.

The more intimately you become involved with Him, the more the passion of your heart is for the world.

But you and I prefer to say:

“Bless you.”

“I love you.”

“Have a good day.”

Rather than:

“How can I be involved?”

and

“What can I do to help?”

Someone said:

I love humanity. It's people I can't stand.

And C. S. Lewis said:

Loving everybody in a general may be an excuse for loving nobody in particular.

Ooh, boy that was convicting.

John 13:4, 5

[Jesus] rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet.

Matthew 20:26, 27

It shall not be so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you let him be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you let him be your slave.

Jim Elliott, before he went to make contact with the Auco Indians and to lay down his life as one of the five martyrs in 1956 spoke this prayer to the Lord:

**Lord pour out my life as an oblation for the world.
Blood is only of value as it flows before thine altar.**

And he is the man who said “he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

You never miss by being a sacrificial servant.

This love we are talking about has no limit, this love that will make any sacrifice necessary to manifest itself. It is a love which is:

positive,

seeks the other person’s good,

leads to activity for Him, even to the point of self-sacrifice.

We exemplify and model our Savior by giving of ourselves. Are you a person that is characterized by love?

Leighton Ford wrote a book called *Transforming Leadership*. He says:

Jesus saw the heart of the human problem as the problem of the human heart. A radical change from

inside out was at the core of his strategy.

He says:

When our daughter Debbie married, our son-in-law, Craig, sang to her as part of his vows a beautiful folk hymn:

Sister let me be your servant
let me be as Christ to you
Grant that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

Fellowship issues in sacrificial servanthood.

v. 17 But whoever is having the livelihood of the world, and is seeing his brother having need and shuts up his heart from him, how is the love of God abiding in him?

You see:

LOVE is **EMOTIONAL** but it is also **MOTIONAL**.

It also **FEELS** but it also **MOVES**.

It **WEEPS** but it **WORKS**.

It does something and he is saying here, how can you do that.

James agrees with that in James chapter 2.

James 2:14-16

What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

I think John probably has in the back of his mind the parable of the good Samaritan because he was never the same after that particular encounter. How is the love of God abiding in him?

v. 18 Little children, let us not be loving by word nor by the tongue, but in deed and truth.

Layman’s terminology:

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS.

Love, to be love, must issue in deeds.

“NOT BE LOVING BY WORD NOR BY THE TONGUE, BUT IN DEED AND TRUTH.”

v. 19 And in this we shall know that we are out of the truth, and in His presence we shall persuade our hearts,

You see the closer you get to the Lord you begin to realize you cannot do everything but He will provide you opportunities to serve Him. And when you get on track with Him you will not get burned out and spent. You will just be finding that you are doing daily what He wants to flow out of your life “AND IN HIS PRESENCE” you are going to “PERSUADE YOUR HEARTS.”

He will tranquilize your fears and your misgivings. He will bring a peace and love will flow through you.

v. 20 in whatever our hearts are condemning us; because God is greater than our hearts, and He is knowing all things.

What does John mean by this? God knows that the blood of Christ has already been applied to this thing and that the blood of His Son keeps on cleansing us from all sin. All those sins are under the blood of Christ, even the lack of love, even the hatred that is there. And He “IS GREATER THAN OUR HEARTS, AND HE IS KNOWING ALL THINGS.”

Maybe you have been misunderstood. Maybe you have been maligned. Maybe you have been judged and you thought nobody looked. But the Lord is looking and He knows your heart and He knows the purity of your motives. And He knows what you have been trying to do in manifesting His love to others.

We have a very precious and patient and gracious Lord and when we walk into His presence we bring our heavy burdens and His yolk is easy and His burden is light and we can come, weary and heavy laden and find rest.

v. 21 Beloved ones, if our heart is not condemning us, we are having boldness toward God.

You can count on the Spirit to let you know when that love is not there and when you deal with it then you can have boldness toward God.

v. 22 And whatever we are asking we are receiving from Him, because we are keeping His commandments and we are doing the things [what?] pleasing in His sight.

As we fellowship with Him, keeping His commandments and doing the things pleasing in His sight, the Lord answers our prayers.

We need to focus upon 2 THINGS there:

1. OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD and
2. PLEASING HIM BY OUR CONDUCT.

Then we have a grounds for answered prayer.

v. 23 And this is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and loving one another, as He gave us commandment.

v. 24 And the one who is keeping His commandments is abiding in Him, and He Himself is abiding in Him. And in this we are knowing that He is abiding in us, from the Spirit whom He gave to us.

The one keeping the “COMMANDMENTS” of the Lord is finding

2 THINGS TRUE:

- 1. HE “IS ABIDING IN” CHRIST,**
- 2. CHRIST “IS ABIDING IN HIM.”**

In verse 24 John is getting ready to introduce the subject of the Holy Spirit again into the subject and we are going to see that next time in a very crucial sturdy.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: Loving one another as brothers and sisters in the body of Christ is very important in the eyes of God.

LESSON #2: Love gives and hate takes.

LESSON #3: When you are walking in fellowship with God, you can expect that the world is going to be hating you.

LESSON #4: As God's love matures within us, it manifests itself in sacrificial servanthood.

LESSON #5: It is not enough to be loving by word or by tongue, but we must demonstrate it in deed and truth.

LESSON #6: Sacrificial servanthood shall still and tranquilize the fears and misgivings of our hearts.

LESSON #7: God is greater than our hearts and He is knowing all things.

LESSON #8: It is possible for us, walking in fellowship with our heavenly Father, to have boldness toward God.

LESSON #9: Effective prayer is the result of two things:
1) keeping His commandments; and
2) doing the things pleasing in His sight

LESSON #10: His commandment is two-fold: 1) We should believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ; and 2) We should be loving one another as He gave us commandment.

LESSON #11: The one who is keeping His commandments is abiding in Him, and He himself is abiding in him.

STUDY NUMBER EIGHT

FELLOWSHIP IS SACRIFICIAL SERVANTHOOD

1 JOHN 3:11-24

KEY VERSE 3:16

v. 11 Because this is the message which you heard from the beginning, that we should be loving one another;

v. 12 not as Cain [who] was out of the evil one, and killed his brother. And for what reason did he kill him? Because his works were evil, and those of his brother righteous.

v. 13 And stop wondering, brethren, if the world is hating you.

v. 14 As for us we are knowing that we have passed over out of death into life, because we are loving the brethren. The one who is not loving is abiding in death.

v. 15 Everyone who is hating his brother is a murderer; and you are knowing that every murderer is not having eternal life abiding in him.

v. 16 In this we have come to know love, because that one on our behalf laid down his soul; and we are having a moral obligation on behalf of our brethren to lay down our souls.

v. 17 But whoever is having the livelihood of the world, and is seeing his brother having need and shuts up his heart from him, how is the love of God abiding in him?

v. 18 Little children, let us not be loving by word nor by the tongue, but in deed and truth.

v. 19 And in this we shall know that we are out of the truth, and in His presence we shall persuade our hearts,

v. 20 in whatever our hearts are condemning us; because God is greater than our hearts, and He is knowing all things.

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v. 22 And whatever we are asking we are receiving from Him, because we are keeping His commandments and we are doing the things pleasing in His sight.

v. 23 And this is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and loving one another, as He gave us commandment.

v. 24 And the one who is keeping His commandments is abiding in Him, and He Himself is abiding in Him. And in this we are knowing that He is abiding in us, from the Spirit whom He gave to us.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 John 3:11-24 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What message has been given to us, according to verse 11?

3. Why did Cain kill his brother, Abel, according to verse 12?

4. What is the evidence of our new life in Jesus Christ, according to verse 14?

5. Who is the great example of love, according to verse 16, and what is our “moral obligation” in this matter?

6. How are we supposed to be loving, according to verse 18?

7. What two things are true of a person who is getting ready answers to his prayers, according to verse 22?

8. What is our responsibility, according to verse 23?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?
