

TITLE: FATAL FELLOWSHIP!

TEXT: 2 JOHN 9-11; EPH. 5:11; 2 CHRON. 19:2; 2 COR. 6:14-18

INTRO: Fellowship is an extremely important topic. Most people love fellowship and hate confrontation (relationship-wise, we'd much rather get along than disagree). And certainly God wants His people to be a people of peace (**Jam 3:18; 2 Pet 3:14**), but not at the expense of truth & obedience to Him. There are things Christians cannot ignore – things we must stand up either for or against. And many times this leads to fellowship issues.

I. THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE IN THE WRONG (v. 7):

- A.** Many in the religious world deny that anyone claiming Christianity could ever be "wrong." Unfortunately, this attitude has crept into the church as well. But Scripture clearly proves otherwise (**1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Pet 2:1f; 1 Jn 4:1f**; and this very verse)!
- B.** *"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come... This is a deceiver and an antichrist."*
1. There's no such thing as "The Antichrist" who will come at some future time! "Antichrist" lit. means "opposite, opposed to, or instead of Christ," and John tells us there are multiple antichrists, and that they've been in the world since *John's* day (**1 Jn 2:18-23; 4:1-6**). Antichrists are those who are liars, denying that Jesus is the Christ, denying the Father & the Son (1 Jn 2:22). As we'll see, this isn't done just by words, but by actions – refusing to obey Him (v. 9).
 2. *"They went out from us, but they were not of us..."* (1 Jn 2:19). They're "deceivers." They want to take as many with them to Hell as possible (this is Satan's goal – **1 Pet 5:8**).

II. THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE IN THE RIGHT (v. 8):

- A.** *"Look to yourselves"* – instead of the deceivers (v. 7). You have the truth (v. 2, 4)! This was in a 1st century setting, where they had miraculous abilities, like "discerning of spirits" (**1 Cor 12:10; 1 John 4:1**). So they could *"look to themselves"* – rely on one another and the truth that had been delivered to them – in order to refute these false teachers.
- B.** Having the completed Word (**2 Pet 1:3**), we can and should do the same thing. (We're definitely **NOT** to have fellowship!)

III. NO FELLOWSHIP BETWEEN THEM (v. 9-11):

A. (v. 9) The subjects are defined again:

1. Those who do not remain in the doctrine of Christ (they transgress – "violate, go contrary to"). Grammatically, "the doctrine of Christ" could either mean "the doctrine *belonging to* Christ" or "the doctrine *about* Christ." Change agents say it's the doctrine about Christ, trying to limit the meaning of this verse. But **1** "the doctrine belonging to/taught by Christ" is all-inclusive (includes "the doctrine about Christ"), & **2** both are equally necessary (v. 6 & 7; also **1 Jn 2:4; 3:24**); you cannot limit the meaning! Those who try to limit the meaning show themselves to be the kind of person John's dealing with here!
2. This kind of person *"hath not God!"* If you leave God's Word in any way, you leave God...and you're lost (**Eph 2:12**)!

B. (v. 10-11) The subjects are to be rejected:

1. **(v. 10)** The command to the church: *"Receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."*
 - a. KJV's "God speed" is inaccurate here; literally it's *"do not speak cheer/joy/greeting,"* ("greet"-ASV, NAS, NKJV) and communicates a specific type of greeting - one that indicates joy, a rejoicing together (i.e., agreement as brethren).
 - b. How can Christians say things to a lost person (atheist, Denominationalist, or apostate brother) that will indicate to that person that we believe he's saved? A Christian who does this is not only saying "I don't care enough about you to teach you the truth," but even, "I want you to *think* you're saved so you'll never actually do anything about actually being saved!" The reality is that most brethren who do this don't have this horrible attitude; they simply don't believe that this person is lost. But Satan's best weapon is to convince the lost that they're saved. And how many times have we as Christians wielded his sword with deadly, pinpoint accuracy?!
2. **(v. 11)** If you *do* receive him and greet him as a brother, you're a *partaker* (to participate, have fellowship) *of his evil deeds!* By your own words & attitude (your fellowship), you've aligned yourself with this person who *"hath not God!"* And now you're a partaker of his evil deeds (his departure from the doctrine of Christ). I know so many brethren who are seemingly solid in their beliefs & teaching, but because of their continued fellowship with false teachers, have departed from the doctrine of Christ (by the actual fellowshiping of those in error, and by showing support for their error by their fellowship).

C. Other commands & examples

1. **Eph 5:11**–*"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."* We do this with the Word (**2 Tim 3:16**). God expects us to know the truth, then be ready, able, & willing to reprove ("expose") error. But so often the church not only fails to reprove, but continues to have open fellowship with those who teach error & won't repent!
2. **2 Chron 18:1-3**–Jehoshaphat (the good king of Judah) decided to help Ahab (evil king of Israel) by going with him to war against Ramoth-Gilead. Ahab was killed, & Jehoshaphat, after almost dying himself, was rebuked by Jehu (**2 Chron 19:2**): *"Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD."*
3. **1 Cor 5:9-11**–*"I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."* Eating together has always indicated an acceptance of one another, especially in a religious setting (cf. **Gal 2:11-14**). The world needs to see that the church doesn't tolerate sin/false teaching (this refers to *living* in sin, not a situation where a Christian sins, repents, and is forgiven).
4. **2 Cor 6:14-18**–*"What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"* This speaks of unbelievers, the principle is the same with apostate brethren (as already seen in **1 Cor 5** & **2 John 9-11**).

CONCLUSION: Fellowship & influence are important, yet so often overlooked. Sound Christians & congregations need to be aware of their influence and how it is damaged by their fellowship with brethren or congregations who have fallen away. We need to be careful not to damage our influence on the church or the lost by fellowshiping things & people we shouldn't. **Is it really worth it? Is getting along worth losing their souls & yours?**