

***Fellowship As Family***  
***1 John 1:3-10***

**Intro:** In the fall of the year, Linda, a young woman, was traveling alone up the rutted and rugged highway from Alberta, Canada to the Yukon. Linda didn't know you don't travel to Whitehorse alone in a rundown Honda Civic, so she set off where only four-wheel drivers normally venture. The first evening she found a room in the mountains near a summit and asked for a 5 a.m. wakeup call so she could get an early start. She couldn't understand why the clerk looked surprised at that request, but as she awoke to early morning fog shrouding the mountain-tops, she understood. Not wanting to look foolish, she got up and went to breakfast. Two truckers invited Linda to join them, and since the place was so small, she felt obliged. "Where are you headed?" one of the truckers asked. "Whitehorse" was her reply. "In that little Civic? No way! This pass is DANGEROUS in weather like this." "Well, I'm determined to try" was Linda's gutsy, if not very uninformed response."

"Then I guess we're just going to have to hug you," the trucker suggested. Linda drew back. "There's no way I'm going to let you touch me!" "Not like THAT!" the truckers chuckled. "We'll put one truck in front of you and one in the rear. In that way, we'll get you through the mountains."

All that foggy morning Linda followed the two red dots in front of her and had the reassurance of a big escort behind as they made their way safely through the mountains.

That story reminds me of what this church is supposed to be like. Caught in the fog of our dangerous passage through life, we need to be "hugged". With fellow Christians who know the way and can

safely lead ahead of us, and with others behind, gently encouraging us along, we, too, can pass safely. – Don Graham as quoted in **Growing** strong in the seasons of life by Chuck Swindoll, p. 286

As we continue on our Journey today we are going to take one last look at this concept of Fellowship.

**[Stand and read 1 John 1:3-7/pray]**

J Frank Norris was the recognized leader of the World Baptist Fellowship and the Bible Baptist Institute of Fort Worth, Texas. In 1948, G B Vick (Norris' co-pastor in Detroit, Michigan) agreed to take the presidency of the school in Fort Worth. In May, 1950, Norris opposed Vick, ousted him from the presidency, and installed a new president. When the World Baptist Fellowship met, no solution could be found, and Vick officially resigned. Noel Smith, W. E. Dowell, Sr., Fred Donnelson, Vick, and other pastors met in the Texas Hotel and laid groundwork for a new fellowship. They moved to Springfield, started the Baptist Bible College, the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, and this fellowship of like-minded churches and individuals. This group of pastor known as the BBFI began a fellowship because they were of the same mind and in total agreement on doctrine they were able to fellowship with one another.

**John Tells Us...**

**I. The Basis Of Our Fellowship – Shared Experiences V.3-5**

- A. In v.3 John says that he is going to communicate to his readers some of the things that he has heard and seen in order that they might have fellowship with him.
  - 1. The word that John uses here to speak of fellowship is the word “koinonia”.

2. It is the idea of sharing a portion of your life with someone else.
- B. The first of these shared experiences is their Salvation
1. The very foundation of our fellowship is our shared experience of Salvation – only one way
  2. This cannot be a view that is mixed but consistent from one to another.
  3. d Just as Christ passed on the message he *heard from* the Father, so the apostles in turn were passing on the same message that they heard from the Son.
  4. John did not use the term “gospel,” but he did use such words as “witness,” “testimony,” “word,” “truth,” and “message.”
  5. John’s message was simple God is light, and in him is no darkness at all – sinless
  6. f You ever been in a place with a group of people and had this thought go through your mind: *“What am I doing here? I have nothing in common with this group of people!”*
  7. When you walk into a group of Christians, you don’t have to have that thought.
  8. The only hope you and I have of being in fellowship with the Lord and each other is if we have received forgiveness of our sins through Christ.
- C. Then there are the shared experiences of Christian life
1. Sharing needs, hurts, joys, laughter, tears, stories – everything that makes up the everyday existence of your life.
  2. On Wed. night, we take some time to gather and just share the needs and concerns that each of us have in order that we might better be able to pray for one another.

3. Our kids came home from a field trip they have to tell us everything about it because they want us to share in the same experience that they had.
  4. The teens came home from camp pumped wanting to keep the bond they experienced at camp – they tell us about it and our reaction says a lot
  5. Last Sunday the Mission Trip Team tried to share with their church family the experience of the trip.
    - a) For those of us on the trip there was nothing like working together toward a common goal for the benefit of someone else it bound us together.
    - b) Things that you have in common with one another, shared experiences, begin the fellowship process.
- D. The basis of our fellowship with one another has nothing to do with personal likes and dislikes.
1. If I base my fellowship with you over the fact that we are both single guys who like to have a good time, what happens when one of us gets married?
  2. If I base my fellowship with you over the fact that we both have cancer, what happens when your cancer goes into remission and I don't see you at the doctor's office every week to get your chemo?
  3. If I base my fellowship with you over the fact that we both have Jesus – there I am safe, because that will never change!
  4. Look at what John has to say there at the end of verse 3 we can only say we have fellowship with each other if ***“our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ”***
- E. There is not separating the two – fellowship with me is based on fellowship with the Father and Son – fellowship

with the Father and Son means you have fellowship with me

**II. The Barriers To Our Fellowship – Sinfulness V. 6-9**

- A. **ILL:** On May 24, 2001, Jim Jeffords, one of the senators from Vermont, announced that he was leaving the Republican Party to become an independent. He said that he no longer felt comfortable being a Republican because the Republican Party had just gone a different direction than he was headed. He broke fellowship because the differences were too great.

Within the BBFI church choose to “break fellowship” with one another all the time when a church believes it can no longer follow the other churches in a particular direction. This churches usually break fellowship over secondary issues and most of the time it is a sin issue on the part of the one breaking the fellowship. There is a group of men (some are pastors) who follow a teaching regarding the KJV started by Peter Ruckman. These men, called Ruckmenites, believe that the KJV is more than a translation of the scripture arguing that the KJV is more authoritative for English speakers than the Greek and Hebrew texts, they believe the KJV represents the final authority for modern disputes about the content and meaning of the original manuscripts. When these men come into a church they cause so much trouble that they force people within the church to choose between their view and the alternative view. If you choose against their view they “break fellowship” with you

- B. Just like GB Vick and the men of the BBFI could no longer fellowship with J Frank Norris and the WBF was because of sinful behavior on the part of Norris by accusing Vick of

- stealing missions money breaking fellowship with a fellow believer is always the result of sin on someone’s part.
- C. It is not differences of opinion that break fellowship, but major sin.
1. I don’t have to be just like you in order to fellowship with you.
  2. Paul talks about in 1 Cor 12 that each of us is different from one another.
  3. We have different gifts and abilities.
  4. What enables us to fellowship with one another is the fact that we each use our differences to help one another, serve one another and carry the whole group in the same direction.
  5. That’s why Paul calls us a body.
  6. We’re headed the same way.
- D. Look at what John says at the end of verse 5 and in verse 6-7, he contrasts light and darkness
1. John’s message emphasized that *God is light*.
  2. “Darkness” represents what is sinful and evil.
    - a) The Greek could be translated literally as “darkness is not in him ever.”
    - b) God is untainted by any evil or sin.
  3. Thus, “God is light” means that God is perfectly holy and true and that he alone can guide people out of the darkness of sin.
  4. In 1 Timothy 6:16, Paul expressed that God dwells **“in the light which no man can approach unto”**
  5. Light also relates to truth because light exposes whatever exists, whether it is good or bad.
  6. Just as darkness cannot exist in the presence of light, sin cannot exist in the presence of a holy God.
- E. Notice that verse 6 it says IF WE SAY that we have fellowship with Him and walk darkness we lie...then in

Verse 7 it says **BUT IF WE WALK** in the light...we have fellowship one with another.

1. Paul makes it clear regarding fellowship and darkness/sin/unrighteousness and light when he asks the question of the Corinthians, **“what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?”** (2 Cor 6:14)
  2. Friends we – you and I, the saved – have no basis for fellowship with the lost – we have nothing in common with them
  3. If we choose to fellowship with the lost of the saved then we are living contrary to Scripture.
  4. This doesn’t mean we shouldn’t interact with the lost, how else are we going to get an opportunity to witness to them?
  5. But choosing to skip fellowshiping with your saved family to spend time with your lost friends simply because you feel more at home with them – well that should be cause for alarm
  6. Sin is the Barrier of fellowship, the barrier both among the church as well as outside the church.
- F. The Good News is that saved or lost the barrier of sin can be removed when we confess our sin **“he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”**
- III. **The Bond Of Our Fellowship – Love V.9**
- A. John’s letter is filled with direct and indirect references to “fellowship.”
1. Fellowship means more than a superficial conversation after church or a midweek meal together.

2. The biblical term conveys the idea of a deep sharing of life, partnership together in a common cause, and spiritual oneness.
  3. Remember that the intimacy and fulfillment of biblical fellowship (whether with God or with others) first require a relationship.
- B. Time and time again throughout John's letter we find references to the connection to the love we have for God and the love we have for each other.
1. 2:9-10 ***"He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. <sup>10</sup>He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him <sup>11</sup>But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness"***
  2. 3:10-11 ***"In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. <sup>11</sup>For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another"***
  3. 3:14-18 ***"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love <sup>£</sup>his brother abides in death. <sup>15</sup>Whoever hates his brother is a murderer... <sup>16</sup>Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. <sup>17</sup>But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? <sup>18</sup>My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth"***

4. 3:23 **“love one another”** this is a direct reference to Christ answer to the question “what is the Greatest Commandment” to which He answered that we are to **“love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind...thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”**
  5. In chapter 4 there are no less than 6 references to loving your fellow Christians; in one case it goes so far as to say, **“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”** 4:20
- C. Why is all this so important? Because fellowship among the believer is the physical display of the love of God.
1. It is impossible to be in a real love relationship with the Lord and not be in a real love relationship with His people; love His Church.
  2. In Eph 5:25 we husbands are told to **“...love your wives”** a verse we are all very familiar with but the verse carries with it much deeper meaning than a husbands love for his wife for it goes on to say, **“even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it”**
  3. If Christ loved the church so much that He died for it is impossible for someone to say they love Christ and not love spending time with the very thing He died for – the church – the place where real Christian fellowship takes place.
- D. This six-question test will help determine the quality of the fellowship within a relationship:
1. Are there any unresolved tensions or conflicts in the relationship? (If so, these must be addressed.)

2. Are we spending adequate time together? (If not, there can never be intimacy!)
3. Are we communicating openly and honestly? (The sharing of thoughts, concerns, feelings, plans—even motives—is indispensable to true fellowship.)
4. Do we share the same vision? (If we are going in two different directions, it will be impossible to be partners.)
5. Are we committed to this relationship? (If the relationship is not a priority, then fellowship will never be a reality!)
6. Are we laying aside our own agendas and looking out for the best interests of others? (Self-centeredness cannot coexist with fellowship.)

**Conclusion:** Are you in a right relationship with the Lord – are you in “fellowship” with Him?

Are you in a right relationship with your fellow Christians who meet here at NHBC – are you in “fellowship” with this family?”

Today is the day to make both right.