

TOPIC: THE QUALITIES OF TRUE FELLOWSHIP IN THE CHURCH

By William J. Senn, III

THE TEXT	THE PERSON(S) HINDERING FELLOWSHIP	THE PROBLEM LIMITING THE FELLOWSHIP	THE PRACTICE TO PROMOTE THE FELLOWSHIP
Matthew 8:23-27 Mark 4:35-41 Luke 8:22-25 (1)	The Twelve	A LACK OF FAITH: <i>Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? How is it that ye have no faith. Where is your faith?</i>	Trust Christ in the midst of the trial. He cares for you!
Matthew 14:22-33 Mark 6:45-52 John 6:15-21. (2)	The Twelve	A LACK OF FAITH: <i>Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid. O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?</i>	Trust Christ by stepping out on the Word of God - walk by faith not fear!
Matthew 15:10-14 (3)	The Twelve	A LACK OF COURAGE: <i>Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind.</i>	Do not be a man pleaser! Do not worry about offending the Pharisees by truth.
Matthew 15:15-20 Mark 7:14-23 (4)	Peter The Twelve	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand? Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand. Do ye not perceive?</i>	Sin proceeds out of the heart of sinful man. Sin defiles and damages our fellowship. Guard your heart and deal with sin!
Matthew 15:21-28 Mark 7:24-29 (5)	The Twelve	A LACK OF COMPASSION: <i>Send her away; for she crieth after us. She was annoying them.</i>	Help those who enter your fellowship with heavy burdens!
Matthew 16:6-10 Mark 8:14-21 (6)	The Twelve	A LACK OF FAITH: <i>O ye of little faith. Do ye not understand, neither remember.</i>	Testify and review the miraculous provisions of God and answers to prayers.
Matthew 16:6-12 Mark 8:14-21 (7)	The Twelve	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>How is it that ye do not understand . . .</i>	Know the dangers of hypocrisy and unbelief and purge such leaven!
Matthew 16:21-23 Mark 8:27-33 (8)	Peter	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.</i>	Our focus must be on Christ and the gospel. We must value the things that are eternal and of God.
Matthew 17:14-21 Mark 9:14-29 Luke 9:37-43 (9)	The Twelve	A LACK OF FAITH: <i>O faithless and perverse generation. Because of your unbelief. If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed. If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.</i>	We must demonstrate our faith in God by prayer and fasting. We must ask God to do what is humanly impossible. Pray, <i>“Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”</i>

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Matthew 18:1-6 Mark 9:33-37 Luke 9:44-48 (10)	The Twelve	A LACK OF SERVANTHOOD/HUMILITY: <i>Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Whomsoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.</i>	We must serve God with all humility of mind. We must exercise child-like faith. Seeking preeminence and greatness kills fellowship.
Matthew 18:21-22 (11)	Peter	A LACK OF FORGIVENESS: <i>Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times.</i>	Jesus wants us to forgive our erring brother seventy times seven
Matthew 19:1-12 (12)	The Twelve	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he (Jesus) said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.</i>	Appreciate those who are single who have devoted their lives to the King and His kingdom. If married, be faithful! The church needs both faithful single and married people.
Matthew 19:13-15 Mark 10:13-16 (13)	The Twelve	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.</i>	Fellowship must not be short-sighted. A church must be involved in building for the future a self-sustaining, multi-generational fellowship.
Matthew 19:16-26 Mark 10:17-27 Luke 18:18-27 (14)	The Twelve	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>Who then can be saved? But Jesus said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.</i>	The impossibility of a man saving himself must be understood and that every conversion is a miraculous work of God!
Matthew 20:20-28 Mark 10:35-45 (15)	John and James	A LACK OF SERVANTHOOD: <i>Whoever will be great among, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.</i>	We must not have an inflated view of ourselves! We must be servant leaders!
Matthew 26:6-13 Mark 14:3-9 John 12:1-8 (16)	The Twelve	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>To what purpose is this waste? For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.</i>	We need to pour out our hearts to God. We need to value supremely Christ and His death, burial and resurrection.

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Matthew 26:30-35 Mark 14:26-31 Luke 22:31-34 John 13:36-38 (17)	Peter	A LACK OF HUMILITY: <i>Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.</i>	Take heed lest you fall! Do not make unwise comparisons as to your devotion to Christ and what you will do and not do. Be humble, fear God.
Matthew 26:36-46 Mark 14:32-42 Luke 22:39-46 (18)	Peter, James and John	A LACK OF DEVOTION: <i>Watch with me. What could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Our churches are prayer-less, fleshly and weak.</i>	The church needs dedicated people who are spiritually alert and who pray. Believers need to be devoted to Christ and be willing to sacrifice to serve Him.
Matthew 26:47-54 John 18:10-11 (19)	Peter	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.</i>	The weapons of war are not physical swords and guns. We are in a spiritual battle and the battle must be won by God's spiritual means.
Mark 9:38-41 Luke 9:49-50 (20)	John	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us. Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part.</i>	We are to recognize that there are other believers outside our fellowship that are serving God. We may not be able to work with them, but we should not work against them.
Mark 16:9-14 Luke 24:33-43 (21)	The Eleven	A LACK OF FAITH: <i>And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. Neither believed they them. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.</i>	Foundational to our doctrine and our fellowship is the shared belief of the resurrection of Christ. This experienced truth should elevate our fellowship. People must see in our fellowship that Jesus is alive!
Luke 9:51-56 (22)	James and John	A LACK OF COMPASSION/LOVE: <i>Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did. But he (Jesus) turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.</i>	Our mission must be to see people saved by the love, mercy and grace of God! We need to share the heart of God who finds no pleasure in the death of the wicked. We must have a heart for all people!

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Luke 22:24-27 (23)	The Twelve	A LACK OF SERVANTHOOD/HUMILITY: <i>And there was a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. But ye that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth.</i>	Our focus must be on Christ's humility and how He humbled himself to die on the cross for us. His example as a servant is to motivate us to serve His body, the church.
John 1:43-51 (24)	Nathaniel	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Whence knowest thou me? Thou shalt see greater things than these. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.</i>	<i>Before that Philip called thee, when thou was under the fig tree, I saw thee.</i> Jesus was the Messiah, God in the flesh, the greatest man to come out of any city. He is the ladder, the bridge between heaven and earth!
John 4:31-38 (25)	The Twelve	A LACK OF MISSION/URGENCY: <i>Master eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.</i>	We need to have a sense of urgency in making disciples. We need to lift up our eyes and look on the fields around us, for they are white already to harvest. We desperately need an outreach focus.
John 9:1-5 (26)	The Twelve	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.</i>	Our focus needs to be on the "works of God." Our mission is to magnify Christ as the light of the world! His grace is greater than our dark sins. Proclaiming this message should be our life-work.
John 11:7-15 (27)	The Twelve	A LACK OF COURAGE/MISSION: <i>Let us go into Judaea again. Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of the world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.</i>	There are two types of people in the world: people who walk in the day and people who walk in the night. As people of light we are here to give light to the children of darkness.

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John 13:2-11 (28)	Peter	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knows not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.</i>	The ultimate Servant desires to cleanse us of all our sins. Positionally, all of our sins have forgiven. Practically, our feet need cleaning as a result of our imperfect walk in a fallen world. Sin hinders fellowship with God and others.
John 14:1-6 (29)	Thomas	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.</i>	The gospel needs to be clearly preached with Christ being seen as the only way of salvation.
John 14:7-12 (30)	Philip	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?</i>	The nature of the Triune God needs to be clearly taught as well as the roles each Person of the Trinity plays in our salvation and life. Our fellowship is enhanced by our knowledge and admiration of God.
John 16:16-28 (31)	The Twelve	A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING: <i>What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and Because I go to the Father. What is this that he saith, A little while? We cannot tell what he saith.</i>	Jesus wanted to give His children hope that they would see Him again at His second coming. Our fellowship needs to be fueled by the hope of Christ's return. Our conversations need this emphasis.
John 16:29-33 (32)	The Twelve	A LACK OF FAITH: <i>Now we are sure that thou knoweth all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.</i>	We do not know how strong our faith really is until it is tested. We may be surprised how weak our faith truly is when it comes to standing with Jesus. We need to trust God for grace not to run from our Biblical views.

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John 20:24-29 (33)	Thomas	A LACK OF FAITH: <i>Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.</i>	We need to stress our blessed position as believers, but also need to keep before our people that in the future we will see the Lord.
John 21:15-17 (34)	Peter	A LACK OF LOVE: <i>Simon, son of Jonas, loves thou me more than these? Feed my lambs.</i>	We need to love God supremely and feed His sheep. We are not to compare our love for God with the love of others.
John 21:18-22 (35)	Peter	A LACK OF FOCUS/HUMILITY/FOLLOWING: <i>Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus said unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.</i>	We need to know God and what He wants us to do in His work. We are not to compare ourselves with others. There are no grounds for spiritual competition amongst God's workers.

ANALYSIS:

1. The scope of this study is the gospels and is limited to where Christ rebukes one or more of the Twelve. Each encounter was needed to keep the fellowship and to preserve the unity of the apostles. There are approximately ____35____ times where Christ confronts a deficiency with the Twelve. Some of these corrections were gentle and others were harsh. The strongest rebuke was when Jesus spoke to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

Jesus addresses the Twelve: ____19/35____

His number one problem child was Peter: ____9/35____

His number two problem child was John: ____4/35____

His number three problem child was James: ____3/35____

The Three appear to have received more personal correction than the others. Most of the corrections were done in a small group setting and not privately. It appears that Jesus wanted the others to learn from these teaching moments. Future leaders need such correction and must be teachable and humble to grow into those future roles. We must

teach our future leaders how to handle correction and how to endure criticism.

2. The Twelve were being prepared to plant churches. The training they received regarding fellowship was received directly from Christ. Christ was laying the groundwork for what He desired that fellowship to look like in the church. To keep the Twelve on the rails, Jesus had to confront them on the issues that hinder, limit or even destroys fellowship.
3. The list of deficiencies addressed included:

A Lack of Understanding:	_____15/35_____	A head problem
A Lack of Faith:	_____7/35_____	A heart problem
A Lack of Commitment:	_____5/35_____	A will problem
A Lack of Love:	_____4/35_____	A love problem
A Lack of Humility/Servanthood:	_____4/35_____	A pride problem

These deficiencies if not addressed and corrected will erode the fellowship that the Head of the church desires. These values addressed by Jesus serve as the core to genuine Christian fellowship and is expounded upon in the epistles and showcased in the Book of Revelation.

THE FOUNDATIONAL QUALITIES WE MUST IDENTIFY AND STRIVE TO HAVE FOR OPTIMUM FELLOWSHIP

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND HIS WORD

1. Know sin destroys fellowship (row 4)
2. Know hypocrisy and the denial of God's power is a total turn off to the cause of Christ (row 7)
3. Know that God's grace is greater than our sin (row 26)
4. Know that God seeks to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (row 28)
5. Know that Christ is more valuable than all of our substance (row 16)
6. Know that Christ's death, burial and resurrection is the best news (row 8)
7. Know that Christ is the perfect Mediator between God and man (row 24)
8. Know that God the Father is revealed by the life of Christ (row 30)
9. Know that God only saves those who repent and believe the gospel (row 14)
10. Know that Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven (row 29)
11. Know that God wants us to conquer this world through love and the gospel and not by the sword (row 19)
12. Know that God desires both married couples and singles to serve Him in the beauty of holiness (row 12)
13. Know that God places a premium on us not hindering the next generation from coming to Him (row 13)
14. Know that God wants us to have the right attitude towards other believers serving God who are not in our group (row 20)
15. Know that Christ is coming back in a "little while," so serve Him now! (row 31)

FAITH IN GOD AND HIS WORD

1. Trust God in the midst of trials (row 1)
2. Trust the promises and invitations of God (row 2)
3. Trust God for your daily bread and for your needs to be met (row 6)
4. Trust God for the victory over the Devil (row 9)
5. Trust God's Word that Christ is alive (row 21)
6. Trust God's Word that there is a blessing for those who believe, but who have yet to see Christ (row 33)
7. Trust God to not run from the conflict (row 32)

COMMITMENT TO GOD AND HIS WORD

1. Be committed to following Christ (row 35)
2. Be committed to being spiritually alert and a man/woman of prayer (row 18)
3. Be committed to proclaiming the truth in the fear of God (row 3)
4. Be committed to being a martyr for Jesus Christ (row 27)
5. Be committed to making disciples of all peoples (row 25)

LOVE FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

1. Love strangers who are hurting and have great needs (row 5)
2. Love people unconditionally and maintain a forgiving spirit towards them (row 11)
3. Love people, even your enemies, by trying to win them to Christ (row 22)
4. Love the sheep by teaching them diligently the Word of God (row 34)

LOVE FOR MAN AND HIS NEEDS

1. Be a Humble - Servant Leader (row 10)
2. Be a Humble - Sober-Minded Leader (row 17)
3. Be a Humble - Surrendered Leader (row 23)
4. Be a Humble - Selfless Leader (row 15)

*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us:
And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

I John 1:3