

# FELLOWSHIP GOD DOES NOT WANT

By Donald Townsley

God has plainly revealed in His word who His faithful people are **NOT** to fellowship. He does not want His people to have fellowship with those who are **IMMORAL**. The man at Corinth who had his father's wife was to be delivered "*unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh*" (I Cor. 5:5). To keep the fornicator in their fellowship would have leavened the "*whole lump*" (the congregation - I Cor. 5:6). They were commanded to put him out of their fellowship (I Cor. 5: 5, 7). Paul told them that they could not "*keep the feast*" (live a righteous, godly life) with Christ so long as they had the "*old leaven*" (the fornicator) in their midst (I Cor. 5:8). He then charged them not to company with any man that is called a brother who was a fornicator, covetous, an idolator, a railer, a drunkard, or an extortioner ( I Cor. 5:11).

God does not want His people to have fellowship with **FALSE TEACHERS** and **FALSE DOCTRINE**. Fellowship with false teachers and false doctrine is popular and pleasing among men, but is **NOT** pleasing to God. John said, "*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*" ( II John 9 - 11). Paul said, "*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them*" ( Rom. 16:17).

God does not want His people to have fellowship with those **IN COMPROMISE WITH ERROR**. Paul sought no compromise with the Judaizing element in the church: he said, "*To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you*" (Gal. 2:5). Neither did he compromise with Hymenaeus and Philetus over their error concerning the resurrection (II Tim. 2: 16 -18). There are many areas today where men compromise the standard -- the word of God. Let us look at some of them:

- Divorce an remarriage for any reason when the word of God teaches that there is only one reason that gives a person the right to divorce his/her mate and marry again, and that reason is fornication (Matt. 19:9). The innocent party has a right to divorce the guilty party and marry again (Matt. 19:9).
- Social drinking is tolerated in many congregations, when the word of God says that "drinking parties" are wrong (I Pet. 4:3 NKJV).
- Cursing is overlooked and condoned (Eph. 4:29).
- Lying is tolerated (Eph. 4:25) when Revelation 21:8 says that "all liars" shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.
- Immodest dress is not dealt with in many congregations, and as a result many Christians (so-called) dress like the world (I Tim. 2:9).
- Fornication is rampant, even among some who claim to be Christians, when Paul said in Ephesians 5:3 "*Let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;*" and "*flee fornication*" (I Cor. 6:18).

Local churches of Christ must demand conformity to God's standard and refuse to tolerate compromise. The church is to be the "*pillar and ground of the truth*" ( I Tim. 3:15).

God does not want fellowship of His people **based upon "subjective" grounds**. What is "subjectivism"? It is the doctrine that says that the way a person **feels** is his/her standard of what is right! The subjectivist rejects strong stands on what the word of God teaches; he exalts his personal feelings and experiences and allows them to determine his course of action. He practices "unity-in-diversity"; he says it does not matter what one believes on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, institutionalism, instrumental music in worship (or any other false doctrine), there should still be fellowship.

The subjectivist also makes a distinction between "gospel" and "doctrine" that the New Testament does not make. In the New Testament the will of God is called "the truth" (John 8:32), "the faith" (Acts 6:7), "the gospel" (Mark 16: 15 - 16), "the word" ( II Tim. 4:2), "the way of truth" (II Peter 2:2) and "the doctrine" (I Tim. 4:16).

The basis for fellowship of God's people is the Word of God (II John 9 - 11). Men who have fellowship upon any other basis come under the condemnation of God (Gal. 1: 6 - 9 ).