**Chapter 6: Fellowship**

**Accountability:** How did you do on your application goals from chapter 5? How is your group doing? Are you using the four elements of a meeting: accountability, vision casting, practice, and application goals? Remember, Jesus wants disciples not decisions.

**What:** Fellowship is when the Holy Spirit in one person supernaturally connects with the Holy Spirit in another person. Once we are filled with the Spirit we are a part of a family. When the family gets together the Spirit is joyed and moves us in joy as well. The more we seek Jesus in all we do, the closer Jesus pulls us together with others who seek Him as well.

**Scripture:**

1. Hebrews 10:24-25
2. 1 John 1:3
3. Ephesians 2:20-22
4. Colossians 2:2-3
5. John 13:34-35

**Why:** My friend, the Lord has blessed each one of us with gifts to be used for the kingdom. Each one of us has been wonderfully created by the Father to fill a special part of the body. My gifts are not your gifts and your gifts are not my gifts; God made us this way on purpose. When we come together with different gifts, we’re able to better serve the Lord and bring more glory to the giver of the gifts. By giving us different gifts, the Lord has shaped us as different building blocks for the same house. You may be a corner block and I may be a block that fits in the middle of the wall, but both are equally valued in the building of the house.

 Notice in Ephesians 2:20-22 that the blocks are put together “in Him”. As we come passionately to our Lord and humbly submit to Him, He’ll lead us through our life by the power of the Spirit. The gifts He’s given us will naturally be prevalent in a surrendered life and will match up perfectly with those of other surrendered believers. Remember, the Lord is the master builder of this temple in His Son. He doesn’t require us to build it for Him. He requires us to be humbly submitted to Him as building blocks to be used for His glory.

 As we release our desire to build ourselves into something more than a building block, we step into the peace that transcends all understanding. We release the stress of feeling responsible for doing a God sized project. We’re called to sit back and allow Him to build us into something larger than ourselves. When we, as a building block, don’t submit to the Father, we remain an unusable rock. But, when we submit to Him and come into the natural fellowship, we’re used and become a necessary piece of the temple of God. We become something we could never become on our own.

We come into fellowship as a natural part of intimacy with the Lord in order to bring glory to Him, but *we* also benefit from His glory. This is explained in Colossians when we read, “that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to teach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (Colossians 2:2-3, ESV) When we come into the fellowship of the Lord, we’re introduced to the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. These treasures are an inherent piece of Christ, which can only be seen while in Him.

**How:** The Gospel of John records a command from Jesus that offers a directional arrow to productive fellowship. In John 13:34-35, Jesus doesn’t recommend we love one another; He commands it. Loving one another is essential to the teaching of Jesus. If we’re to be like Him, loving one another is not an option.

 Loving other people isn’t always easy. Relationships are hard work and often become very messy. Messy relationships are ok though. As we work through the messy pieces we’re investing ourselves into the other person and ultimately increasing our fellowship. This is the point where we begin to learn lessons we couldn’t learn outside fellowship. We can read books about social interaction, but until we’re faced with decisions that involve human emotion we can’t fully understand the lesson. When the Lord places us in a relationship, we learn to “balance” ourselves on the relational bicycle.

 Learning to ride the relational bicycle implies that we enter deep relationships. We must be willing to risk falling off the bike a time or two in the effort to learn how to ride. When believers only maintain superficial relationships they miss the opportunity for lessons the Lord wishes to bless them with. This is dangerous, I understand. Our hearts stand to be hurt and pain seems inevitable. But my friend, our Lord loves us and will never crush us. He may allow us pain in order to teach us, but He has good plans for us to prosper.

Men are definitely the guiltiest party when it comes to superficial relationships. Women are not off the hook, but men certainly battle allowing intimacy with others. This is what Jesus told us to do. He told us to love one another. That means men and women. Jesus is not referring to men loving men as a husband loves a wife, but rather allowing your soul to pour out to a trusted brother. The Lord wants to teach us through our relationships with other believers, but we must be submitted to Him and willing to bear our souls to others.

The key to fellowship, the piece that brings us into fellowship in the first place, is an intentional seeking after Jesus. Being intentional in fellowship is something that comes from your heart. It’s driven from an intense hunger to know more of Jesus. Please don’t force this in your life, but prayerfully ask the Lord to give you a hunger that makes you intentional. Growing in intentionality is also something that takes time. The Lord will teach you how to better be intentional in fellowship, just give it time. Allow Him to teach you. Don’t hesitate to find other believers who are being intentional in fellowship and join them. Learn from them. Reproduce the fruitful things you see the Lord doing through them.

**Application:**

1. Pray for an accountability partner-then ask that person this week.
2. Plan or attend a party and be deliberate for Jesus.
3. Spend time outside Bible Study with the people you are helping. Just live life with them and truly love them. Make at least 2 appointments this week outside Bible Study time.
4. Teach this lesson to 3 people this week.

Share the Gospel with 2 new people.