

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Theme: Out of Fellowship

Lost Fellowship

Charles Spurgeon

I once asked a Christian how long it was since he had enjoyed fellowship with Jesus. His reply was remarkable. "I feel sorry," he said, "you have asked me that question, and yet I must thank you. Had you asked me whether I continued in prayer, I would have said, 'Yes,' for I constantly pray with more or less fervor. Had you inquired whether I endeavored to walk honestly and uprightly before my fellow creatures, I would have said, 'Yes,' thank God, I hope I have not slipped with my feet. However, when you say, 'How long is it since you have had fellowship with Jesus?' I blush because many a day has passed since I have known that high privilege."

Is that so with you, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ? If so, it is very, very sad.

Your excuses for drifting far from God will not stand!

"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."

Isaiah 40:29

Out of Touch with God

Bill Brinkworth

Psalms 60 referred to the historical event when David got the victory over the Edomites. However, as do most of the Psalms, there is something that one can relate to in their own life today.

There are times some have the feeling David had when he knew He was not in fellowship with the Lord. He sensed something was different between him and His relationship with the Lord. David knew he and Israel had displeased God, and he desired His heavenly Father's help, guidance, and fellowship again.

"... O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again." Psalm 60:1

We are joyous over the times we know God is close, and we see His hand in our lives every day. We pray, and we see His answers. Miraculously, we see His blessings in our lives. They are wonderful days, but something happens. Those feelings disappear. For some, those God-filled days are only a dim memory.

Frantically, we search our lives. We know God would never leave us, but He will withdraw His helping hand in our lives when we sin. Prayers go up but appear unanswered. "What is it that I have done to grieve you, dear Lord," we plea.

As we recall past events, one, two, or maybe more sins that we have done against the Father come to mind. We certainly cannot undo our past, but we must do something to have a better future.

Quickly, we pull aside out of what we are doing and bow our heads in prayer. God knows what we have done or neglected to do, but He wants to hear us admit our transgressions. As we name them one by one in prayer, a waited-for plea is uttered from our lips, “And, please Father, forgive me for what I have done. With your help, please help this never to happen again.”

Forgiveness is sought, and it is received from a gracious God. Many times, the fellowship is not immediately restored to the point it was previously. Still, our confession to Him is all we can do. It is a necessary re-starting point.

David experienced that situation. He knew why his and his nation’s close relationship with God had changed, and He wanted the relationship back the way it was. The leader humbled himself and sought forgiveness.

If you find yourself in a situation that your walk with the Lord is not what it used to be, it may be time you do as David did. Search your heart. Be honest with yourself, and do not hide behind excuses.

Seek answers through praying. As you are reminded of things that could have been done differently, sin that never should have been committed, or steps of disobedience, beg God’s forgiveness and help to stay within His graces. Do so when your heart is convicted. There may not be another opportunity to be restored to the fellowship with your heavenly Father.

“True repentance hates the sin, and not merely the penalty...” — Taylor

Blow on the Embers

Bill Brinkworth

To supplement our heater, we use a wood stove. With the right fuel, it produces a roaring fire, and with the damper set just right, a load of wood will burn most of the night and heat the house.

After a night-long burn, the fire seems to have gone out by the morning, but there are still embers. After some poking and attention are given to them, they will easily ignite new fuel and continue to burn the rest of the day. At first, there seems to be no hope of rekindling the night’s fire. However, after the burned-out ash is pushed aside to expose hidden embers, kindling is laid on top of them, gently blown on, and it is not long until a blaze results from the revived embers.

A born-again child of God can likewise lose the “blaze” for the Lord he once had. There may have been a time when prayer, church attendance, Bible reading, and other spiritual activities were priorities. Slowly, however, the fervent, spiritual-fire burning in one’s life was reduced to a smoldering, hardly-remembered ember.

If one is genuinely born-again, the embers are still there. The embers never completely went out. There is no loss of salvation, as some suppose is the reason for no spiritual activity and more involvement in sin. The Bible does teach that once saved, always saved (II Tim. 1:9, Eph. 2:8-9,

John 10:28-29). Since salvation is still there, there may be just an over-covering of “ash” from sin’s participation.

Involvement in sin will not chase the indwelling Holy Spirit away. It will, however, grieve Him enough that He will not speak or move in one’s life until the sin is repented.

The Holy Spirit does work in one’s life. It is He that speaks to one’s heart, does the convicting resulting in changing one’s life, and He encourages spiritual growth in one’s life. When the Holy Spirit is no longer working, His refusal to work often reflects our non-spirituality.

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” Eph. 4:30 (Also: Prov. 28:13, I Thes. 5:19).

Like the seemingly defunct fire, a saved person can once again be the spiritual person he was or even be closer to God than he was before. There is hope in rekindling spiritual fires again!

The first necessary step to get back to where one once was spiritually, or to have any spiritual growth, is to want change! One can feel guilty or be depressed about one’s condition, but if one does not want to change, nothing will ever be altered in one’s relationship with God. The fire in my stove would never be re-started unless I wanted it to be. A person has to desire an alteration before anything will change. As much as others want a person to be different, their efforts will not be long-lived or not result in any modifications unless the person himself desires a different life.

Secondly, the person himself must know what made the spiritual fires cease from burning fervently. Was there not enough fuel to keep it burning? Was there no Bible reading? Was there no prayer life? Was there no spiritual food on which to feed? If one feeds fleshly desires with worldliness, how can one expect the spiritual part to grow? Whatever part of us that is fed the most is the one that grows!

Another reason spiritual fires may be gone out is sin over-covering the embers. Sin will quench any desire to live for God. It will sadden the Holy Spirit so much He will not work in one’s life. The only remedy is to admit (confess) what one has allowed to hamper his relationship with the Lord, ask the Lord to forgive him for his transgression, and with God’s help, purpose not to err that way anymore (Psalms 51:2). If an attempt to get closer to God again fails, one can start all over again. He is a second-chance God, and third chance, and fourth....

After this truth is realized, the Lord is faithful and just to forgive and forget, and one can get back to where he should have been in his relationship with the Lord. Once again, the Holy Spirit will blow on our “embers,” and a “blaze” can be resumed.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9 (Also I John 1:7)

“There can be no doubt in any man’s mind, nor any man’s heart, that God is our sustenance and our strength. Each of us must believe wholeheartedly and fiercely in the power and the glory, and the strength of God. Thus, it would be more proper to say that each man must seek the companionship of God. God awaits each one of us.”

— Harold K. Johnson