

1 John 7

Written by Jerry Johnson

The familiar verse reads: *"But if walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."*

But it is argued, "How much light must one walk in?" Sometimes it helps to look at the negative. Second Corinthians 6:14, "...what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" Do we ask of this passage, "How much darkness?" and argue, "Well, we have some sisters here and there who cut their hair, and some brethren who use tobacco, therefore we may overlook such things as unlawful divorce and remarriage." Is that good logic?

Because incidents arise which are difficult to resolve, do we do nothing about manifest works of the flesh such as fornication and adultery and homosexuality (Gal 5:19)? We are not realistic, perhaps unreasonable, if we do not recognize the magnitude of some sins as compared with others. It is one thing for your teenage son to be arrested shop lifting, but quite another to be arrested for raping and murdering Grandma Smith down the street. It is one thing for your teenage daughter to lie to her teacher, but quite another to learn she is the school harlot. King David made many mistakes but God called special attention to the matter of Uriah the Hittite (1 King 15:5). Mankind is accountable for ALL sin, but some is of greater magnitude in the scope of things. To further benefit from brother Kirbo's observations this issue, do we view adultery, fornication and homosexuality the same as a sister cutting her hair? Or a brother who uses tobacco? Some do, thus, because a congregation perhaps does not handle errors such as these as they ought, then that is supposed to be proof enough that we should not be overly concerned about those involved in or supporting unscriptural divorce and remarriage-adultery. Does having fellowship with God enter into this? An accountable person is in fellowship with God when he or she obeys the Lord in scriptural baptism (Gal.3:27). How one lives and worships following baptism has all to do with maintaining this relationship. "Once saved always saved" is not a Bible concept (1 Cor. 10:12). Of worship, if the baptized party joins himself to a denomination, or worships in opposition to Bible truth, he destroys his relationship with God. Or, if this scripturally baptized person proceeds to divorce his wife for (say) incompatibility and moves in with the lady down the street, he certainly does not remain in fellowship with God. He is damned ("shall not inherit the kingdom of God, Gal. 5:21). His sin is a work of darkness, condemned, and we are forbidden to have fellowship with him. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). Note, *"have no fellowship"* is something over which we have control. It involves a decision, the same as the demand to *"reprove them"* in the same verse. The English word *fellowship* of this verse is from the Greek *sugkoin-oneo*. It is used as a noun in various passages, but in this verse Thayer and other Greek scholars tell us it is a verb. (We intend to enlarge on this in a future study). We are forbidden to extend fellowship where we perceive this work of darkness (see again 1 Jn.1:7). We have no scriptural

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right to extend encouragement and good will to those violating God, those who have fallen from His fellowship (2 Chr. 8:1; 2 Jn. 10-11). The positive side of this (the *good* works of others) is seen in Galatians 2:9. We may

perceive

error in preaching or daily living occasionally, but this passage is

representative of brothers perceiving the *faithful* work of other brothers, thus endorsement could follow. "Perceived" (Grk.

ginosko) in this passage means "to come to know by experience and observation-get a knowledge of." This

may include general observation, asking questions, common conversation, advice from

brethren who have unquestionable insight in a matter (1 Cor. 1:11)-other mediums. All of us

want to go to heaven, and we want the same for the many brethren we love, even those

with whom we often disagree. This is why all of us should be concerned about the direction of

the church. This is why we are trying to help our people exercise caution in matters of

fellowship. A secular author writes of the *New Tolerance*.. what was once sin no longer

matters to many-just ignore it, tolerate it, get along. Doesn't such strike fear that we may be

offending God?

It is sobering that I can lose my soul attempting to make peace with those who are not themselves at peace with God.

You older brethren out there, you men who lead our congregations, no doubt it is a concern to you for the

church to drift from her ancient and stable moorings to which we have long anchored. I know

many of you well, and believe it is so. Do you not know that the Lord requires you to speak up?

-Jerry