

2 Corinthians 6

Sunday 10/7/2012

If you have your Bibles today, I want to invite you to turn to the book of 2 Corinthians. As you know, we are in 2 Corinthians 6. This is our third week in that particular chapter, and we have been dealing with the aspect of fellowship. I have shown you how this chapter is really the great defining chapter on the fellowship we should have with the Lord Jesus Christ as a Christian through our relationship.

We saw in the first week, if you remember, that the basic, fundamental fellowship we all should have is with truth. That is where it starts, being God's Word. Then last week, we saw that as we grow and develop ourselves, and we add those character qualities of Christ in our lives, we see ourselves grow and develop. Our fellowship also grows and develops to a greater level. We talked about that last week. Last week, I showed you ten things that we, as God's people, ought to be in fellowship with. They are not all good things. We have defined that fellowship is more than just going out and getting a group of people together and having fun and going to get a bite to eat, though that is certainly a good thing to do. Fellowship has a much deeper meaning than that. I told you last week that this is a tremendous teaching chapter and shows us how we ought to be developing as Christians in every aspect of our lives.

A lot of sermons and messages, you can conveniently misplace them, blow them off, or disregard them. But a chapter like this is really hard to do that. If somebody comes and hears the message and hears the Word of God being preached, particularly a chapter like this, it is really hard to disregard. You have to be a pretty good artist at ducking God to be able to keep a chapter like this from knocking on your front door. It is something that really forces us to examine and ask ourselves, "Are we really developing the way we should?"

Last week, I gave you ten areas of developing our fellowship that ought to be in our lives. First of all, we talked about fellowship in much patience, and I explained and laid these out for you. We talked about fellowship in affliction, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonment, in tumults, which are great, catastrophic things in our lives, in labors, in watching, in fastings. I went through and showed you and gave you a brief description of each one of them, and in doing so, hopefully defined them a little bit for you. These are the things that as we develop and grow, we are to be in fellowship with, which the Bible talks about as the sufferings of Christ. I say again, not just because we go out and do something really stupid or do something that causes a lot of problems in our lives. I am not talking about that kind of affliction or problems. I am talking about as you grow and bear the cross of Christ.

I always think of one of the greatest examples of what our life should be: the day that Christ went to the cross to be crucified. He was carrying the cross, and the cross probably weighed somewhere between two and three hundred pounds. It was no small cross that He had to carry. As He carried that cross, He obviously stumbled and fell and was not keeping up with the Romans' pace as much as they wanted. The Bible says that during that time, they were throwing rocks at Him, making fun of Him, spitting on Him. They were obviously doing all the things that a rabid crowd does to somebody whom they hate. They were doing all kinds of things to Him: throwing things, hitting Him, pulling His beard, and all of that stuff. The Bible says that they

compelled one Simon of Cyrene, and they got him out of the crowd. Who knows how or why, but they grabbed him and threw him in there and made him help carry the cross of the Lord Jesus. I have looked at that story many, many times and thought to myself, "If we could picture that in our mind this morning, that is exactly the job of you and me." First of all, we are to help the Lord bear the cross, the cross being the ministry that God has called us to do. Secondly, I guarantee you that when Simon of Cyrene got thrown in there, about fifty feet down the road—I am sure the road was lined with people—twenty feet down the road, I am sure everybody did not make any difference between Simon of Cyrene and the Lord Jesus Christ. I am sure he got kicked; I am sure he got things thrown in his face; I am sure he got hit with stuff. I am sure that the crowd, which was out of control by this point, fervored by the devil to destroy the Lord Jesus, I am sure Simon of Cyrene, helping the Lord carry that cross to Calvary, I am sure he got beat, kicked, spit on, and everything that happened to the Lord happened to him. I have looked at that many, many times and pondered that story and thought to myself, "That is the same affliction that we ought to have if we are bearing the cross for the Lord Jesus and helping Him accomplish what He wants to get accomplished." These ten things here are what go along with that. The key word for these ten things was the word "in," and these are the things you are supposed to be in fellowship with, and it is very important.

I. The Nine Elements of Fellowship

Today, I am going to show you the next segment, and this is nine things by which we have our fellowship. So, you have a situation here where last week we saw the ten things we are to be in fellowship with; now I am going to show you the nine things this week that we keep our fellowship by. It is by these things, and this will be our third section. With the understanding of these nine areas, we will see by these things how to keep our fellowship with Christ and keep developing it. This message is without a doubt probably the most important in all of the segments we are going to look at in this chapter, for without this one, you do not know how to keep and maintain that fellowship. It is one thing to say, "I have fellowship with God," that is great, but it is something else to know how to maintain that fellowship with God, and that is going to be our lesson today.

I think it would be safe to say that we have talked a lot lately about the Judgment Seat of Christ and how that impacts your life and my life. I think it would be safe to say today that a message like this, or maybe this study putting it all together, is probably going to make you or break you with the Judgment Seat of Christ if you are a child of God. Probably everything that you are going to have with the Judgment Seat of Christ hangs on you getting what we are talking about down, not only today, certainly today, but throughout this whole aspect of having fellowship.

I am sure you already know this because you are pretty smart people, but there are certain things you have to do when you have any relationship, and we all have relationships, and you know this to be true. There are certain things you have to do to maintain that relationship, to keep it going, and in the same respect, or the same way, you have to keep developing that relationship for it to be successful.

I will take something that you are all familiar with, and the longer you are married, the less familiar you are with this, I hope, anyhow: dating. If you have dated somebody, and obviously, if you are married today, you obviously dated the person that you are married to, and you know that in dating, if you never progressed past the first date, you never would have gotten married. It is just the way that it goes. In dating, you develop two aspects, whether you know it or not, and that leads to the developing of your relationship to the point where at some point you want to get married. Those two basic formats that you have in dating are simply relationship and fellowship. People ask me all the time, "What do you think is the number one problem why people get divorced?" I always kind of tell them, "The number one problem why people get divorced is marriage." I am just kidding with them, but truthfully, if you would ask me what is the number one reason why marriages do not make it, it is very clear, and you want to learn this if you are going to work with people down the line, because it is so simple. Marriages fail today; marriages break up today in a failure of these two areas: relationship and fellowship. They either do not have the right relationship when they start, or they do not develop the relationship. If you do not develop these two before you get married, you are not going to get married. You cannot just drive and never talk, go out someplace and never say anything to each other, and wind up someday married. You have to develop that relationship, and as a relationship develops, you then have fellowship, and that is really what brings it all together. If you do not develop those two things, you are never going to get married, and after you are married, if you do not continue to develop those two things, you will not stay married. It is just that simple. Life and problems that people go through only seem to be complicated. They usually have a very basic format for why things happen to people the way they do.

In marriage, when I deal with marriage issues or teach marriage enrichment, I lay out that marriage is basically three things. When I work with couples that are having marital problems, or we do pre-marital counseling with somebody before they get married, I talk about the three absolutes that you have to have in marriage. The first one is lordship, and lordship simply means that you both have to be saved. There can be—and we will see it when we get a little farther in this chapter, not today, but down the line—the Bible talks about not marrying unsaved people. The Bible calls it not being unequally yoked together with unbelievers. I tell young couples all the time, and I tell anybody that is having marital struggles, "Your marriage will only be as strong together as your individual relationship is one-on-one." That is lordship. Lordship is your ability to have a relationship with God, you and your spouse separately, that brings a lordship relationship back together. The next aspect is fellowship, and those would be the things that you go through together with Christ, not by yourself. Most couples, because they have no lordship in their life, never get to the point where they have fellowship in their life, so problems then pull them apart instead of putting them together. In Christianity, the things we go through are by God's design. In the book of Job, the things that we go through as Christians, God intends and allows them in our lives that we might be able to grow together with Him through that. He comes through for us. We get in a panic mode, "Oh, what am I going to do?" And then God comes through for us and shows us, and that is how you build your fellowship with Him, and you learn how to trust Him. For a Christian's life, the things that we go through in life, the struggles that we have, whether we cause them or not, God is a holy God and a righteous God. He lets us get in the messes, but God is not without a warehouse of life preservers to throw us if we need one, and

He does it all the time. He allows us to go through those things, and by that, those things bring us closer together with Him, not farther apart. I tell people all the time, "The tough times you go through either drive you to God or drive you away from God." It is that simple. In a husband and wife relationship, that is what fellowship is. When you are in fellowship with the ten things I gave you last week as a Christian, it makes you stronger. When you have fellowship with those same ups and downs that you have through a marriage relationship, you become stronger. The good times should develop you and your spouse; the bad times should develop you and your spouse. They pull you together, not pull you apart. I tell couples that have severe problems, "You got yourselves in a mess, and you got yourselves in a mess because there was no lordship and there was no fellowship, and you did not have the third one yet." So now you are in a mess. Now you have two choices: you can continue to blame each other, or you can start to take the individual blame, deal with your own personal life, get your lordship right, and then get your fellowship back, and then build into the next one. I say, "Look at it this way: you are both up on a high mountain in Colorado, and you both fall at the same time. You both fall, and you, sir, are standing here, you break your left leg; your wife breaks her right leg. Now she cannot help you down; you cannot help her down. How are you going to get off that mountain? You have no cell phone service, no dogs around with a keg of brandy underneath his neck. You are looking like you are going to be in trouble." I said, "Here is what you ought to do: you want to splint the broken leg. So here is what you do: you were lucky, you broke your left one; she broke her right one. Put her right broken leg up against your left broken leg, splint them together, and then put your arms around each other and use your good leg on this side or her good leg on that side and help each other down off that mountain." That is how you get out of marital problems. If you really want to get out of them, you have to help each other down, and it comes from lordship and then fellowship. Then the third one, when you build those two, then it leads to relationship. Relationship is the thing where fellowship is the things that you go through, but the relationship that you build from your lordship and your fellowship is the thing that holds it all together all the time, and you become each other's best friend. That is the thing that holds it together through the rough times, and by your relationship, by these things, your fellowship will never get broken, and your marriage stays strong and develops and even gets stronger. I said all that to say this because that is exactly the same three areas that you have to build in your relationship with Christ, whom, if you have not figured it out yet, you are going to marry someday. Ephesians 5:22-33, it is spiritual marriage. Lordship, you see, that is your salvation in this scenario. That is the day you got saved. That is the day you took Jesus Christ as your Lord. Whether you are doing right today or not is immaterial. If there was a day in your life when you trusted Christ as your own personal Savior, that is your lordship, and He from that point on should be number one in your life. Maybe He is not today, but He should be, and that is your lordship. The second one, once you have that, builds then, as we talked about, through your fellowship. It starts with the truth of your salvation and then develops in the things that you experience with Christ together, like we talked about last week, of those ten things, and you grow in your fellowship, fellowship of His suffering. Philippians 3:10. We saw in Hebrews 13 that as He suffered without the gate, you and I are to suffer with the things that He goes through. So we saw that last week. So in your relationship with Christ, in building it, you have your lordship, you got saved, you have your fellowship, those are the things that you are in, but you also then have your relationship. When

you have the fellowship and you are in fellowship with the ten things I gave you last week, then you stay in fellowship by having a relationship. I want to give you nine things today by which you build a relationship that keeps you in your fellowship, and these things will maintain a fellowship that you will never lose it, no matter how rough it gets. Whether it is a husband and wife relationship, it works for that. Whether it is your only relationship with Christ, it works for that. This is how it works.

Now let us read our text again today and let us look at the next set of biblical principles here on fellowship. I am going to start reading where I read last week just so we can keep it all in context. We only got past four and five; we are only going to get past probably six and seven today, but let us read it all together.

2 Corinthians 6:4-10

But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true;

As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Father, help us today to glean from this all that You have for us. We thank You, Father, for those that are here today, and we pray for the ones that are sick, that You will help them and help them feel better and get back on their feet and work out all the different scenarios. Lord, there are many people sick today, so help them, Lord, and help us today to learn these great truths, and we will thank You and praise You. In Jesus' name we ask it, Amen.

II. Characteristics of a Christian Minister

In our third section today, which will be verses 6 and 7, we find, as I have already told you, nine things by which you keep your fellowship. God wants to have fellowship with you, and the ten things I gave you last week, if you want to stay in that fellowship, it is by these things that you stay in that fellowship. Next week, if we get through all this today, I am going to take and show you the fourth section, and you are going to see some great Christian contrasts. I think there are eight of them, great contrasts that a Christian has in his life, and we will talk about that next week. When I start to lay these out, all these things here that we are about to look at are what I call the characteristics of what a Christian should be. These are the characteristics of someone who ministers. It is very important, for these are the key to keeping your fellowship as you build

your relationship by, and you stay in fellowship by doing these things, and we will begin to talk about them here now.

III. By Pureness

The first one is found in verse 6. He says, "by pureness." The ministry for the person of the child of God consists of keeping yourself pure. In 1 Timothy 5:22, Paul tells young Timothy this directly, and it is good advice for all of us. He says:

1 Timothy 5:22

Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

Watch the crowd you hang out with. Of all the fellowship you have and all other relationships—and we all have them, we all have fellowship with people that are in various relationships, people that work, they are on different levels, people that are our friends—the thing you have to remember or try to do is always put the relationship with the Lord first. That has to be the first one. I have told you before, and it is a great principle that you will use over and over again: you cannot build two intimate relationships at the same time. By saying that, I mean you cannot build an intimate relationship with a person that you just met and build one with the Lord. It is impossible; you just cannot. You have to have your relationship with the Lord solid first, and then you can build into that and build on that, and every other relationship you would develop, you would build into that relationship you have with Christ. I told you last week, 1 John 1:7:

1 John 1:7

But if we 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.

I told you 1 John 1:5, the Bible says:

1 John 1:5

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Wrong fellowship, we now know, has kind of been our theme phrase throughout this study: wrong fellowship will always lead to out of fellowship. But at the same time, what do you do with it? I am certainly not saying you void out all unsaved people out of your life, but you have to know where to draw a line. Maintaining your testimony in the Christian world and the unsaved world is vitally important. In Ephesians 5:11, there is a great verse, and if you can grasp it, it will really—it has always been a great verse for me. It says:

Ephesians 5:11

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

I want you to look at that verse or listen to the verse if you have not turned to it. It says, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." It did not say "workers of darkness";

it said "works of darkness," because the Bible knows, and God knows, you are going to have to have some kind of relationship with unsaved people. You do at work. If we voided out unsaved people out of our world completely, would we never win anybody to Christ? You have to be able to have contact, relationship to some form, and fellowship to some form with unsaved people. We have our volleyball; we have our softball; we have unsaved people come to that, and we fellowship with them. When we go out, we go to Pappy's afterwards. There have been times when you brought somebody who was probably lost to softball, and they go over to Pappy's, and we all order pizza and get a Coke. When they get a beer, you do not see us running over with a fire extinguisher dousing them out. You do not see us running over and saying, "You cannot do that here now." But at the same time, you do not see me ordering around for everybody else that is there so we can all be with them. You see what I am saying? In other words, you have to draw a line someplace. I am not saying you cannot come back; that is ridiculous, and I know churches that would do that. That is not what you do. You can have the fellowship with them, but you have to be able to draw a line. You have to know where a line you cannot cross, and you have to realize that the fellowship is not necessarily with the workers; the fellowship is with what they do. I can have fellowship—maybe you cannot even grasp this, I do not know—I can have fellowship to a certain point with an unsaved person, but I will never have fellowship with what they do. Let me show you a good example. There are some great examples in the Bible, but my favorite is the Apostle Paul. You will find this in Acts 21. Paul had a burden for the Jews, so much that in time, at the end, it got him into trouble. But Paul had a real burden for the nation of Israel. The first thing that he would do—now keep in mind, he was the Apostle to the Gentiles; his job is to start Gentile churches—and yet every time, the first thing he did when he went into a town is he went down into the Jewish temple, and he would talk with them. He would talk with them about the differences between the Law and try to convince them about Jesus Christ. But you have to see what he did. Acts 21 is a great example. The Jews had a lot of customs that they went along with, and Paul was smart enough to know that if he was going to be able to talk with them, he was going to have to accept some of those. So you find in that chapter that he purifies himself. Did he need to do that? Absolutely not. He is as pure as he ever is going to get. But there are a bunch of Old Testament believing Jews that are still going through the Old Testament, so he did that. Did he violate any principle by doing that? Absolutely not, because he knew it did not matter. The Bible says he cut his hair the way they cut their hair. Did that make a difference? No, absolutely not. He is trying to identify with them and trying to be able to witness to them and to tell them about Christ, and he knows that if he does not do some things, he will never get in the door. He had Timothy circumcised, not here, but another place. He had Timothy circumcised when he went in because they did not want a Gentile coming in that was not circumcised. That is an Old Testament Jewish thing. Now, did he have to have him circumcised? Absolutely not. Did it make any difference to God if he did or not? Absolutely not. In other words, you have to in time learn where you can draw the line and where you cannot. When Paul goes in, you look at the passage, he does everything that they do, but his purpose is he wants to win them to Christ. He wants to be able to tell them the story. So he does everything up to a point with them, except when it comes to six o'clock in the evening, and they killed the sacrifice and they made the evening oblation and the sacrifice, which was the Old Testament Law. That is where he drew the line. You know why he drew the line? Because at that point, if he would have gone along with

that, he would have violated the major scriptures of Hebrews 8, 9, 10, and 11, that Christ was the sacrificial Lamb and there was no need for a sacrificial Lamb, and he would have been in trouble if he had stepped over that line. The hair did not matter; circumcision did not matter. Everything that he did up to that point, it did not matter; it did not violate any hard doctrine. But when it came to the sacrifice of a lamb, that we already knew was the sacrifice of God's Lamb on the cross, he says, "That is the line I cannot cross." That is a great example of how we live our lives. We have to be pure, but yet at the same time, you cannot keep all unsaved people out of your life. That is part of our job.

IV. By Knowledge

The second thing he says in verse 6 is, "by knowledge." If there is anything that the minister needs, or the Christian needs, it is knowledge. The Bible says in Proverbs 1:7:

Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

For a Christian, it is not just about getting knowledge; it is about you getting the right knowledge. That is what is important. I put getting knowledge down in three formats.

- Knowledge About the Lord
- Knowledge About Yourself
- Knowledge About Other People

V. By Longsuffering

The third one is longsuffering. That is a good one. I love to talk about longsuffering because most people do not know what it means. In Galatians 5:22, there are nine fruit of the Spirit. The Bible says:

Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Number four is longsuffering. I know what everybody thinks longsuffering is. Everybody thinks longsuffering is patience. You know how I know that longsuffering and patience are not the same thing? One, they are not spelled the same. I am not saying they do not go hand in hand, but let me give you a Bible definition. This is really going to help you. This is going to, for a lot of you, put some focus in your life and where you are trying to get in helping people. Longsuffering is not just patience, but it is much more than that. Yet it is such a simple concept. Longsuffering is suffering through something for a long time to bring about a desired end result. Let me give you the definitive verse on it in the Bible. 1 Peter 3:20. I will start in verse 18:

1 Peter 3:18-20

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

You see that? That is a definitive verse. Longsuffering is waiting for somebody, putting up with something—yes, patience—but more than patience. It is suffering through something with somebody because you have a desired end result you want to take place. That ark took one hundred and twenty years to build. God's longsuffering went on for one hundred and twenty years. What was the end result? He wanted people to get on that ark. That is longsuffering. Longsuffering is God suffered long with sin, put up with it for one hundred and twenty years until the ark was finished. Why? The end result: He wanted men to repent. Now watch this, 1 Timothy 1:16. Here is the application to it:

1 Timothy 1:16

Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

God did not wait for all of us for one hundred and twenty years, but I will tell you this, He waited for me for twenty years. Twenty, twenty-one years of my life, I cared nothing about God. God should have put me in hell. He should have killed me and just dropped me in a lake of fire, but He did not. His longsuffering for me lasted twenty years, and I do not know your own personal story, but I know right now in your mind you are all thinking how long He waited for you. It may not have been one hundred and twenty years like it was then, but He waited for you. His longsuffering went on with you through the things that we did, through the things that we said, through what He had to put up with us. But you know why He did it? Because He had an end desired result: He wanted you to get saved. That is a pattern for you and for me. God did not wait one hundred and twenty years, as I said, but He waited for us, and that is the pattern: putting up with people that you would like to shoot, putting up with people that you would like to hang, put up with people that you would like to tell them where to get off. If God would have done that for you and for me, we never would have gotten saved. Longsuffering is putting up and suffering through something because you have a desired end result: that person getting saved, that person getting right, that person doing what they are supposed to do. Sometimes you have to wait on people to get them where you want them to be. You have to always put yourself in that scenario. Sometimes people do not get where I would like them to be fast enough, and that is just the way it is. Some of God's people give up on people so quick. It gets down to me when somebody comes back to church eight or nine times, and they go through the same pattern, they do the same stuff. I understand. There is a way—we will talk about it here in a minute—how you deal with that, but at the end of the day, I simply never give up on anybody. I let that person give up on themselves. You know why? Because of that verse right there. The pattern for me in dealing with people is the pattern of longsuffering that God had for me. And sometimes you have to wait on people to get where you want them to get. Sometimes they take a long time to get there. I want to

tell you something else: this thing in 1 Peter 3:20, which is talking about in Genesis 6, sometimes they never get where they are supposed to, because only eight people got saved, and He waited for the whole world's population, probably five billion people, to repent. Only eight people got saved. But the results never stop God from doing what is right. When you and I do what is right, the end result never happens. It does not matter as long as I do what is right. That is where you have to get to. That is longsuffering. You may never get to where God wants you to be. You may make one bad choice after another, and you may just screw your life up early, and you may never get where God wants you to be. I think about that. I think about one thing: I am ready whenever you are ready. But until then, you have to make your bad choices. You have to do what you have to do. You have to go through what you have to go through. I am sorry, that is your call, that is your choice. But the longsuffering of God never runs out on anybody, and so our longsuffering toward people should never run out either. It does not mean I agree with what they do. It does not mean I like what they do. It does not mean I want to stand to be a target and let you shoot at me. But the bottom line is, when you are ready to do right, I am ready to do right. There will never be a time—and now there are minor exceptions if somebody really tries to really hurt somebody who really does something—but in 99.99% of the cases, there is never a time when somebody cannot say, "Hey, I want to do what is right," and the longsuffering is not there.

VI. By Kindness

The fourth one, in verse 6, is "by kindness." Have you ever scratched your head and wondered why so many of God's people are so mean? I mean, there are so many mean Christians. All my life, I have met God's people who were just as mean as a striped snake about everything, everybody. As I said earlier, the older they get, the meaner they get. They do not get any better. They have a sour attitude about anything, and it made me believe they must have been baptized in dill pickle juice when they got saved. I do not know. They are negative about everything and everybody. You see it in their face and everything they do.

Do you want to know why that is? This is a lesson this morning. You learn so much through these things. I will tell you why that is, especially with a Christian. An unsaved person, we know why they are mean, but I am talking about God's people. Most of God's people are meaner than most unsaved people. If you are an unsaved guy and you are really mean, you just go get drunk and you feel happy with everybody. But a Christian is not supposed to drink; most of them do not drink, they just stay mean. If they had a drink, they would be better about it. I did not mean that; just throwing that in there.

Do you want to know why that is? I will tell you why. Somewhere along life's road, something happened, and they got mad at God about something. Maybe you will never know what it is. Maybe it has been so long ago in their life, they have forgotten what it was. They do not even remember. But somewhere in their life, they got sideways with God about something, got mad at God, and they never made that thing right. The devil took that thing and ran with it. For ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty years, they have had a grudge against God. Yet they would never tell you that. They probably do not even remember, do not even know what it is. It was something that was so far back, but the bottom line is it ruined their fellowship. It ruined their relationship. They

have nothing going with God. Then they go to a church where they see people that have been saved ten, fifteen, twenty years less than they have, and those people are going beyond where they are at, doing more than they are doing. The most God-awful thing that could ever happen: these people are happy. That is where it starts. That is why. That is why I call them "one Crayola Christians." When I was a kid in school, the highlight of my life was when I got a box of crayons that had eighty-eight colors in it. If you were really lucky, they had a pencil sharpener in the back. I would open that up, and there would be every color in the rainbow. There are probably more colors in a crayon box now. I did not know there were eighty-eight colors when I was a little guy growing up, but I had a big box with eighty-eight colors. Of course, I was so stupid, they could all be the same color, I would not have known the difference, but I opened that up, and there they all were. But I call these kind of Christians "one Crayola Christians." Out of all those box of colors in that crayon box, you just have one color, and it is always black. All your life. "Boy, ten people got saved." "Yeah, well, I think it is a bad day. The Lord is coming back. Give me a bigger black crayon." "What I found in the Bible." "Oh, what do you know about the Bible? I have been in the Bible a lot longer than you. You do not know nothing." Colored black. One color. It is all they have got. Everything in life, black.

You know why that is? I will tell you: you cannot be right with God and be mad at the world. You know why that is? Because that world is your mission field. I tell people this all the time, "I do not like so-and-so. I do not like this. I do not like it." "Are they a Christian?" "Yeah, they are a Christian." I said, "Well, I do not know if he has got the problem, she has got the problem, or you have got the problem, but you guys have got to get together and fix the problem, because the fact that you do not want to be together now, I have some really bad news for you: you are going to spend eternity with that person. So you better figure it out right now." You cannot be right with God and mad at the world. That is your mission field. The fact that in life you got sideways with God, and it affected you in every area of your life, and now you are mad and you are bitter at the world. You are mad and you are bitter at God's people. The fact that you could go to a church where people who are saved less than you are now moving ahead and doing things.

Proverbs 19:22 says:

Proverbs 19:22

The desire of a man is his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar.

That desire is the desire of his heart. 2 Peter 1:7-8 says, and again, one of the seven things we add to our faith:

2 Peter 1:7-8

And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:32 says:

Ephesians 4:32

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

What is your model? What is your pattern? Even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. Sometimes somebody can hurt you so bad that the only way you can forgive them is for Christ's sake. You cannot even do it for yourself. But a Christian should never get to the place where they cannot do it for Christ. That is a powerful thing if you ever get it. Your kindness to others is based on your fellowship with God and the joy that comes from it, that nothing will cause you to lose it. I am not going to let some Christian, I am not going to let some unsaved person, I am not going to let something happen in my life that is going to take from me my fellowship that I have with the Lord. I am not going to let that happen. A person gets to that point where they have a problem with God, they lose the joy. You ought to see them sometime. Next week, we are going to sing "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Down in My Heart." Just stand up here and watch the faces. Somebody is like, "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart." Down in. You are going your way to heaven. Somebody goes, "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in." You are bouncing, man. Then you have, "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart. Down in my heart." And then you hate it because "down in my heart where?" Lost it. Lost it.

VII. By the Holy Ghost

Number five, "by the Holy Ghost," verse 6. I want you to notice here it says "Holy Ghost" and not "Holy Spirit." That is really important. We have talked about it before. Whenever you find the word "Holy Ghost," it is always a reference to the Holy Spirit of God living inside you. So it is called the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the key factor in our relationship with Christ. In the Bible, if you want to study the Holy Spirit of God, you study Him in three formats:

- The Work of the Holy Spirit
- The Person of the Holy Spirit
- The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit (the Holy Ghost)

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

You see, there was no soul there like we have been talking about. It says, "glorify God in your body, and in your spirit," because your souls are already sealed. I gave you a while back on Thursday night Bible study, John 16:1-15, the seven things the Holy Spirit of God does for you. The first three, found in verse 8, are: He reproves the world of sin; He reproves the world of righteousness; He reproves the world of judgment. That gets you to a point that you need to get saved. Then after He does that, and you get saved, then He does four other things: He leads you and guides you into all truth; He shows you prophecy; He shows you what is of God and what is

not of God; and He glorifies Christ. Through that, by the Holy Ghost, you develop your relationship with God. God shows you what is right and what is wrong. God shows you the truth of some scenario or some circumstances. God shows you what is coming in the future so you can plan your life and know what is going on by the Holy Ghost.

VIII. By Love Unfeigned

The sixth one, again verse 6, is "by love unfeigned." To feign something is to fake it. There are two aspects to this one.

- Love Unfeigned Toward Man
- Love Unfeigned Toward God

IX. By the Word of Truth

Number seven, "by the word of truth." All these things are "by"—by the word of truth, by the power of God, by love unfeigned, by the Holy Ghost. These are the things that you do, that by these things you keep your fellowship. By the word of truth, in your Christian life, you have to know your Bible. Most of God's people—and it is a true statement, and again, there are exceptions to that here, of course—but there are still people in this church that do not know anything about the Bible. They have been around forever, and you do not know any more by now than you did the day you walked in the door. But most of God's people only have a passing acquaintance with the Word of God, and it is called the word of truth in our text. John 17:17 says:

John 17:17

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Most people never even thought probably the mind behind why God gave us a Bible. Why did God give us a book, put it in a book form that you and I could read? The Bible has tremendous applications, and there are a thousand reasons for it. It is a history book. It is a science book. It is the book that gets you to heaven. It is all of those things. But have you ever stopped and considered what the Bible is in its simplest, most basic form? It is simply this: God had the presence of mind to know that the world was going to be a changing cesspool of sin, that every hundred years or so, it regurgitated its sin back up in some other form, because the Bible says there is nothing new under the sun. God also knew the frailty of man, how easily he was fooled by the sideshow of the devil and what he puts on. He understood man's inability to understand and see the great truths that history always repeats itself. When man fails to see that, then he continues to make the mistakes of history over and over and over again because it just keeps going around. This filth just keeps coming up this way, and everybody says, "Oh, it is new again." No, it is not new; it has just been regurgitated from the last time it was up here. He knew the devil's plan was to change all of the value systems in life to his own advantage. That is the bottom-line trick of the devil. He does it slowly. He does it over time. He does it in a way that nobody even suspects it. He brings it through one stage at a time down through history, but the

devil's fundamental goal is to change every value that God established and set, and change it, get away with it, or reset the distribution of the value of it.

I always liken it to Walmart. Walmart is my favorite place. Walmart is the place where man can live and survive. Walmart is my place. By the grace of God, God has always been good to me in life, but when they built a Walmart less than a mile from my house, I knew I was a friend of God. I love Walmart. I think the best thing about Walmart is the people that go there. I love watching the people that go there. If I go by the Walmart and there is not a big crowd in the parking lot, I will not even go. I want a crowd, man. I want the lines backed up where people are going through there, watching the stuff they are buying, watching the people, how they react to this and that. I love it. I have often thought to myself, "Wouldn't it be a hoot to go into Walmart some night and change all the barcodes on all of the items?" You would go in there the next morning, they would open up, and you would go in and you wanted to buy a big screen TV. They sell those at Walmart, you know. You are laughing, but they are the same ones you buy at Best Buy or at Phonic City or wherever you go. They are the same stuff. You walk in there, and this guy says, "I have always wanted to buy one of these." So he says, "I just got almost enough money to buy one at six hundred dollars." He picks this up, and during the night, somebody went through and changed all the barcodes. So he picks up the TV, puts it in his cart, gets a few other things, and he drives up there. The lady scans that thing, and he looks at the bill: "Boom! Two dollars and ninety-eight cents." He is there, "Man, I got a deal! All the money I got in my pocket, I am good to go, man. I was expecting to pay five, six hundred dollars for that. I got that for two dollars, two dollars ninety-eight cents." And then he put up the other stuff. He buys a little broom. She scans that: "Seven hundred and forty-three dollars." Now you are back in the doldrums again. I have often thought what chaos it would be at Walmart on Saturday morning. Saturday morning is the big morning. If you want some action, Saturday morning Walmart is where it is. I am there, man, I know it. I am there watching them. That is where you see it. You look at that, and it would be absolute chaos. I could see the people at the checkout going crazy because they are not the smartest people in the world anyhow. Nice people, but they do not always figure it out. I have watched guys put stuff, buy stuff, container stuff, put stuff down in the containers, and then put it over so they could get out with it. They never look into it. A lady asked me when I go buy my water there for resale, "How many you got?" And I said, "I got ten." And she goes, she never looks. I can say, "I got one." Off you go. But could you imagine the utter chaos of everybody just upside down, inside out, prices going crazy? The manager is running around, everybody putting a stand; the whole place would shut down.

That is exactly what the devil has done over the period of time because our value systems reflected it. Isaiah talked about it in Isaiah 5 when he talked about a time in Israel's time when evil was called good and good was called evil. There is a time there where the Bible says that truth is fallen in the streets; that is today. The devil has done his work. He has absolutely changed the value on everything. Where once family was the value that was held in this country, it means nothing anymore. It means nothing anymore. Where the sanctity of everything that was marriage and all the things that went along with that, and all the things that were right without that, and all the things about raising your kids right and doing the things right, it is all gone now. We have lost everything. We have lost any stretch of a value system that can teach anything to anybody. So

God saw all that. He understood that that was going to happen. So He gave man an absolute standard that would never change: the Bible. He gave something to man in its most simple, basic form. No matter what happened, no matter what transpired, no matter what went wrong, no matter what turn had changed, man could always go and find out what the real value of things really were. That is all the Bible really is. You have to have the word of truth in your life, that no matter when or where we lived, whether it be in 1200, 500 A.D., or whether we are living today, we have a compass that keeps our core straight.

Someone said one time, if you took all of the pieces of literature and all the books that anybody had ever written, and you put all of those things and got them in one place, you actually could cover the whole landmass of the United States of America. Then you could take what is left of all the written books and literatures and papers that man has written the last seven thousand, four thousand years—that is how man started writing—and you could put them in a stack that would walk past the orbit of the moon, which is 250,000 miles. Ladies and gentlemen, if we could do all that today, and we could put that stack up, I want to tell you something: you could judge everything that was ever written in those books in the light of one book. That is the book that God gave you. The importance of the Word of God. I have a sermon I have never—I do not think I ever preached it to you guys—but I used to preach it in Bible conferences, and it was on the Word of God. It was five aspects to the Bible and the history of the Bible. The first one was the fact when it came to the Word of God that God thought it; it was the mind of God. But it had to go through a process before we could get it. So the process was that the Holy Spirit of God brought it. But it still had to go through a process because Christ had not died on the cross. So then Jesus was the third process, and He bought it. So God thought it, the Holy Spirit brought it, Jesus bought it. But then down through church history, the devil did not like it. So the devil fought it. When you put the great sermon together, it is a good sermon. It went like this about the Bible: God thought it, the Holy Spirit of God brought it, Jesus bought it, the devil fought it. Praise God, I got it. You have an absolute standard, and it never changes in a world that completely changes. It is the only sanity in a world that is insane. I feel like I am living on Shutter Island, and I am the only one that has got a Bible.

X. By the Power of God

Number eight, "by the power of God." You have to in time in your life—and I see this in many of your lives—you have to let God work through you. Romans 15:13 says:

Romans 15:13

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Ephesians 6:10 says:

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

The misconception today, and charismatics teach this, is that when you got saved, you did not get all of the Holy Spirit of God there was, so you have to pray for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and then you will get more of the Holy Spirit of God, and God is going to do great things with you. That is again bad knowledge about God. When you got saved, you got all of the Holy Spirit of God there was. The problem with you and me is not getting any more of the Holy Spirit; the problem with you and me is the Holy Spirit getting more of us. That is the problem.

I always use my famous example that I think about versus the book of Acts and where we are at today. Today, we have communications that are so fast it is unbelievable. We have laser printing. We have the internet. We have incredible phone connections. We can travel anywhere in the world in eight to ten to twelve hours. The Bible has been translated into ninety percent of the major languages, if not ninety-eight percent of the major, at least eighty percent of the major dialects. There are thirty thousand Bible colleges in America and over two hundred thousand, probably three hundred thousand churches. Yet we are getting less done today with all of that than they got done in the book of Acts when they had none of that. You know why that is? Because all of these things are no replacement for the one thing that will change and set the world on its ear, and that is the power of God working through you. It has to happen sooner or later. I see it in the great revivals of yesteryear: the revivals of Whitfield and Sam Jones and Mordecai Ham and Billy Sunday. I see it in all of the things. When revivals happen today, it is a joke. "Well, we are going to go down into the inner city today, and we are going to pass out food." We always go to the City Union Mission once a month. It will be at the end of the month when we go down there and do that service. Most people do not even know that the City Union Mission goes all the way back to a lady, her name was Anna Chambers. Anna Chambers, around the turn of the century, ran one of the most popular high-class brothels in Kansas City. She was absolutely the queen of prostitution in Kansas City. She paid off the cops, all the corrupt people down there. Around 1911-1920, somewhere in there, a great evangelist called Mordecai Ham came to Kansas City and preached a great revival, and she got saved. When she got saved, she turned her life around, and all of the brothels that she owned, she turned over for women to be instituted and to get right, and it wound up being today the City Union Mission. We used to go down to the camp down there in Warsaw, Missouri, for years and years and years, and they had a big place there where it was their day room where they went in when it rained. All along the wall, I guess they did not know what to do with it, was the most ornate furniture, antique stuff you ever saw in your life that came out of all of her homes. It was down there with big mirrors on them, with big cut wood; it was absolutely fabulous stuff, all because of the power of God in a great revival, and it hit Kansas City. Back then, when revival came, the whole city changed. Today, when revival comes, nothing changes. Nothing changes by the power of God.

XI. By the Armor of Righteousness

Then the last thing, verse 7, "by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." Lastly, and probably most important, putting on the whole armor of God. In Ephesians 6:10-18, in that particular passage, you will find seven pieces of armor to protect the relationship and our fellowship we have with Christ. Each one has a specific function. You could get on the website; we have taught it many, many times. It talks about the loins girded about with truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace—that is what you are going to do this afternoon—the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, praying always with prayer and supplication in the Spirit. All of these things are by the armor of righteousness that you put on. Romans 13:11-14 simply says:

Romans 13:11-14

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

It is called the armor of righteousness; it is called the armor of light; and it is called the whole armor of God. These are what you do in your life. Each one has a specific function that when you put it in your life and make it part of your world, it changes every aspect of your life. By these nine things, your fellowship is sure never to be broken, and by these nine things, you continue to develop it. Next week, we are going to take the nine great contrasts of the Christian life, and I am going to show you, when we talked a little while back about the seven things that changed the day you got saved, and how key it is to see how God sees you now from what you did see you then. I am going to show you next week that contrast of how God sees you and how the world sees you, and it is a great aspect to this, and every child of God should know and understand these things. Let me have every head bowed and every eye closed just a second. Let me ask you a question.