

I. Review

As we have come through Psalms in the last three or four weeks, we have been looking at some key spiritual applications, truths, whatever you want to call it, on really how to have the right kind of relationship with God. It has kind of turned into a little mini-series, but looking back, it actually started in Psalms 23 where we talked about that great Psalm: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. Leading me in the paths of righteousness and beside the still waters, lying down in green pastures, walking through the valley of the shadow of death. And I put it into a practical understanding for you.

Then Psalms 24, we talked about building a sure house, that the truth of God will be available for, as he says, the coming generation that will seek Him and that seed that He talks about. And we laid that out. Psalms 25 then, I remember giving you the eight key Bible principles on how to build a sure house, and the sure house being your body, being the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God. And then chapter 26, how we can never stop growing. And we talked about how to maintain a maintenance on your body, the house of God, that it stays sure. And we talked about our publishing the Word of God through our lives, our lives being the epistle that people read, talking about His wondrous works, and then our feet being on an even ground. And I gave you nine, if I remember right, keys to that.

And then last week we were in chapter 27, and we talked about how to understand the warfare of the believer to always have the victory. Here we learned how to, in the midst of the battle, and being surrounded. And I took you back to 2 Kings chapter 6 and showed you there Elisha, how he was surrounded. How that when you get surrounded by those who hate the stand that you take, the key is to always learn how to encourage yourself in the Lord. And I showed you that through David in 1 Samuel chapter 30 verse 6. And I broke verses 1 through 6 down, and here again I laid out nine key ways to do that, showing you a process in all of this, to stay in the battle and not faint.

We talked about how the world, and sometimes the people of God, will try to dismember you. Things that will try to get you out of the church that God puts you in, and it happens all the time. And then the great phrase, "sacrifice of joy." What a way to really put our sacrificial giving through the last two months, and really all year round, into a proper context. Giving the joy that we have so others may have that joy. And that is really what the conference is going to be about. You have no idea what God has waiting for us next week. It is incredible. The men that God has put together to come in, and yet at the same time where God has built our church to be ready for this moment in time. It is an incredible process, and we are going to go through that next week because not only do I want you to meet and be with those guys, but I want you to get everything that God has for you because it is going to take this church through the next year and hopefully right up to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are really looking forward to it.

But now with what I have given you, you have a complete and total study of your Christian life and every aspect for you to have that working relationship with Christ. And I tried to show you the importance of our understanding what our fellowship with God really is.

II. The Telephone Pole Analogy: Raw Power



I have told you this many, many times how God reveals Himself in everything. This is why the Bible says that man is without excuse when he stands before God. The invisible things of Him are seen from the creation. The heavens declare the glory of God. Even with whatever man builds, you see a picture in some form or another of what God wants to have with us through our fellowship. I have seen this and thought about it a lot, but I had forgotten about it until yesterday when we had Breakfast with Santa. I was sitting down there at the table with all the little decorations, and then right in front of me, I saw a telephone pole. And telephone poles have always been an incredible study for me in understanding what God has with me. I do not know if you have ever seen it or not. I am going to lay out for you today what happens when you lose your fellowship, but

the important thing is fellowship with God.

Now you wouldn't think much about a telephone pole being anything that has to do with the relationship God wants to have through fellowship, but it is. Every time you drive down the street, and I want you to remember this: you see on both sides of the road telephone poles. A telephone pole is a cross. And on that cross is raw power. Raw power coming from some distant substation that is power on the cross.

➤ The Transformer is Jesus Christ

Now you all have the lights on in your home. You have electricity. You cannot take the raw power off that telephone pole and put it into your house. It would blow the house to smithereens. You know what you must have? You have to have something that takes that power on that cross that is the raw power of God on that cross and then making it applicable into your house, your body. So you know what that raw power has to go through? You see them in your backyard. You see them on the telephone poles. You thought those big green boxes back there made out of steel were just for you to put flowers around because you did not like it messing up your yard. You know what that is? That is a transformer. You know what that transformer does? That transformer takes the raw power off the pole and transforms it into usable power in your home. **That transformer is Jesus Christ. He is the mediator between God and man. Jesus Christ takes the raw power off of the cross of God and transforms it into usable power.** And just as the electrical system in your backyard keeps your lights on, through the fellowship of Jesus Christ, the transformer of God's power, it will keep the lights on in your sure house and you will never have any darkness.

Now every time you drive out of the neighborhood you are going to think about that, and that is good. We need to understand that God's key for us is fellowship. We cannot have fellowship with God one on one. The power of God would blow us up just like it would blow your house up right off the pole. It has to go through a transformer. And through that transformer, Romans chapter 12 verses 1 and 2 says, *be not conformed to this world: but be ye **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.* There it is, for God's fellowship. And I tried to show you the importance of our fellowship, how it is more than what we just think about it. To God anyhow, because God's original plan was to have fellowship with his creation through all of eternity.

III. God's Original Plan

You know back when we were at the Apple Center, if you remember those of you who were there back then, along the one wall there, remember that big chart we had? That thing had to be 40, 50 feet long and 3 feet wide. And it was the greatest chart I had ever found in my life that showed you the Bible from Genesis to Revelation with every event, everything that God was doing. People marveled at that. It was the most unbelievable thing you had ever seen in your life. Dr. Ruckman did that chart, and as far as I am concerned, it is the best chart that you will ever get your hands on. Now, the big one is stored here, and at some point, maybe we will find someplace where we can get it up. We have smaller versions in the bookstore, and even that one is probably 15 or 20 feet long. But it is a color version of every event in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, giving you the explanation that God, in this little parentheses called time, wants to fellowship with us.

➤ Peter Ruckman's Bible Chart

And if you remember, in the front of this chart right at the beginning, there is a little paragraph that Dr. Ruckman wrote in that really explains what the whole chart is. And he says in that little paragraph, "God's original purpose was to populate an infinite universe with a people made in his image, subject to Him as Almighty Sovereign. The first trial ended in Genesis chapter 1 verse 2 with a rebellion of those spiritual beings. And then God did a re-creation and a re-commissioning in the creation of man made a little lower than the angels to begin the work anew. This trial will bring us up to Genesis chapter 3 verses 1 through 13 and it too fails, the devil steps in and tries to stop God's plan. At this point and from this failure we see the subsequent revelation of God is now devoted to one thing, to an accurate record of God Himself becoming a man to come down to this earth to redeem his fallen creation and to absolutely ensure that God Himself by becoming a man would finish to perfection His original plan found in Revelation 20 and 22 to restore God's fellowship to man for all of eternity." That is this chart. This would be one of the greatest tools a parent could ever have if you have a rec room downstairs or someplace in the basement and you wanted to teach your kids the Bible by a visual, it does not get any better than that. But that is your Bible in a nutshell from Genesis to Revelation.

The whole Christian life and the work of God in our lives will hang on this one concept, after salvation, and that will be our fellowship with Him. Right now as the Bible says I have to walk in the light as He is in the light, and we have fellowship one with another. Right now, sometimes

that fellowship gets broken, it gets sidestepped, but then when Christ comes back, He has ensured by His own Son coming down that through eternity my fellowship with Him will never be broken. It does not get any better than that. And today I want to finish this little mini-series that just kind of popped up on itself and by defining for you what I think you need to know: what really happens when we break that fellowship and lose our walk with the Lord. I think there are some things that in the Christian world that we live in need to be redefined. There are some values that have been lost. There are some concepts that are solid biblical principles that have just got cast aside. And I think there are some things that all of us need to understand today especially as we go into this conference that God has for us.

IV. Psalms 27:7-14

Psalms 27:7-14. Hear, O LORD, [when] I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

8. [When thou saidst], Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

9. Hide not thy face [far] from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

10. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.

11. Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

12. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

13. [I had fainted], unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

14. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

➤ Our Cry to the Lord Before Salvation

*Psalms 27:7. **Hear, O LORD, [when] I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.***

Now we see in verse 7, this is our cry to the Lord before salvation. If you have not got this already marked in your Bible, this will be Psalms chapter 40 verses 1 through 3 where it says,

Psalms 40:1-3. I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

2. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, [and] established my goings.

3. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, [even] praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. That is the day. You will find that back in Exodus in the first 12 chapters there that Israel was in bondage to Egypt. A picture of you and I being in bondage to the world. And through that bondage they cried out to God. They cried out to God to send them a deliverer, and God sent them Moses. **When you and I cried out, God sent us our Deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He saved you.**

And that is what he says here. *He brought me up also out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, [and] established my goings.* You know, one of the great things about God saving all of us was not just the fact that He brought us up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay, but it is more than that. Salvation is more than just getting your sins and my sins forgiven. **If you look at it there, He established my goings. He gave me a new direction in life. He gave us a new path in life.**

And then he says in verse 3, *and he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.* Here comes your witness now, and *many shall see it, and fear, and trust in the LORD.* **You see the first part of that is the day you got saved and he established your goings, and then the second part in verse 3 is your fellowship.**

➤ Seeking God's Face

*Psalms 27:8. [When thou saidst], **Seek ye my face**; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.*

Now I want to explain something to you today, and I think probably most of you have never looked at it on this level. But I want to talk to you today about what fellowship really is. I think many times fellowship becomes such a transient word that we just use it and don't really think of its importance. **But I want you to understand today that fellowship is simply seeking and looking for God's face for everything in life.** This again is one of the great unknown studies in the Bible. I have never heard a preacher preach on it except for years ago. Now obviously the question that comes into all of our minds is how do we do this? I mean the Bible says God is a spirit, John chapter 4 verse 24. And if we have any kind of relationship or worship with God it has to be in the spirit and truth. Then how do we seek God's face? As I said, this is one of the greatest studies in the Bible.

➤ You Find the Face of God in the Face of Jesus Christ

If you would, turn over to 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and let's begin our study of this.

*2 Corinthians 4:6-7. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God **in the face of Jesus Christ.***

7. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Now do you see that? You find the face of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So when you are told to seek God's face for true fellowship, you are seeking the face of His Son. And man is there a lot that goes along with that. I believe that most of God's people want to have fellowship. I believe

they do not understand what that fellowship really is. Hebrews 1:3 tells us that Jesus Christ was *the express image of his person*. And in the face of God, which no man can see, I will show you that in a minute. In the Old Testament, nobody could see that face. That face was reserved for you and me because that face is Jesus Christ, the face of God, and we are supposed to seek that. Now that face has some components to it. It has ears, it has eyes, it has a mouth, it has a nose.

➤ The Twilight Zone of Christianity Today

I have found in over 50-some years in the ministry, dealing with thousands of people, like most things concerning God and the Bible, God's people are really operating in a closed system. Their whole Christian life, because of what they are taught in the churches they go to and the lack of Bible, they have no clue. Hosea chapter 4 verse 6 says that when you lose the Word of God, that God's people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, and we lose the knowledge of God. And that is what has happened today. Most of God's people have a Bible, probably the wrong one. They go to a church, probably the wrong one. They listen to preaching, probably the wrong thing to listen to. But nothing really is clear anymore. God's people are living in a gray area that we call Christianity. We as God's people have created our own twilight zone. You know what a twilight zone is? It is not daylight and it is not dark yet. It is just in the middle. Now that is where I find most Christians: in the fog bank of blurred lines.

I have found things today, and I do not say much about it. This is certainly not a criticism, just an observation. But I find people get so caught up in things, and it comes back to the pastors not knowing and understanding the Bible themselves. We talk about the idea of worship. I can't drive by hardly any churches where it does not say worship service or worship God with your tithes and your offerings. That kind of stuff is totally non-biblical. And what it does, it creates a false understanding of what worship really is. Now we think that being here this morning in this service, we are worshipping God and we are not. You think that when you put your little tithe in that you were worshipping God with your tithes and your offerings. You are not.

➤ True Biblical Worship Only Comes from your Spirit and God's Truth

True biblical worship from the Bible, B-I-B-L-E, yes that's the book for me, the little black book. Pure, clear biblical worship only comes from your spirit in God's truth. It is not a service. It is not an offering. God's people need to live in a state of worship 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. It is not something that you schedule in a service. But do you see how that misconception pulls people completely out of the biblical form of worship? You worship God 24/7 in your spirit in that Book and if you do not have the Book, you have no worship. Now I am not fighting it. This is the Christian world that we live in. But my favorite phrase to you is to be smarter than the problem. The key for all of us is fellowship.

I will tell you another one. And I am going to make somebody mad with this, but I am not trying to, and I do not care. But allow me to be honest. Allow me to be observing of things. I have been in homes over the years that have pictures and things you can buy with the poem *Footprints in the Sand*. And there is a story that goes along with it. You see a beach with nice sand, and you see two sets of footprints walking side by side. I feel goose bumpy already. And this is how the narrative goes. "Lord, we walked together for so long through this life, two sets of footprints.

And I had a dream one night, Lord, and I saw the two sets of footprints in the sand. But then, Lord, I got to the part of the dream where there was only one set of footprints. And Lord, why did you leave me?" The music comes up, the lights come down, and the Lord says, "Son, I did not leave you. That is when I carried you." Now, if you are just an average Christian that knows nothing about the Bible, that will move you. To me, I don't need my finger to throw up. What a terrible, terrible thing to give God's people. When the Bible clearly tells you and me that I am in Him and He is in me. There will never be two sets of footprints. There will only be one set of footprints through life. My set with Him inside me and me in Him. That is the Biblical doctrine of Jesus Christ in you, the hope of glory. You see how it gets destroyed? Now, I am not fighting it. I do not care. You got one in your home? Do not go home and tear it up. Do not go burn it. That is okay. My point is this all leads to a phony understanding of what a real relationship with God is.

You ever notice that we do not have an Israeli flag in our church? We've got an American flag somewhere. Oh, here it is. But I have been in so many churches where they have a Jewish flag. And a Jewish flag has blue border with the six-pointed star David in the middle. I've had more than one guy ask me, "How come you don't have a Jewish flag in your church? Are not you for Israel?" And I said, "I am for Israel more than you are for Israel." And he says, "Well, you do not have a Jewish flag." And I said, "No, I do not. Why? Because that six-pointed star, that you think is the star of David? In Acts 7 verse 43, it is the star Remphan, the false God that Israel worshipped when they rejected God. So am I going to bring into God's house the star Remphan to represent Israel? No. I'll represent Israel out of my mouth every time I go to the Old Testament and preach the Word of God." But you see? You see how clouded Christianity is today? God's people actually believe all this stuff. It is incredible. They just get caught up in it.

➤ You are Either in Fellowship with God or You are Not

You know what I found out over the years? You need to write this down if you do not listen to anything else. There are some of God's people who want to believe something so desperately. They do not care what the Bible says about it. And as God's people, we have created this spiritual twilight zone, a gray area in Christianity. I hear people all the time say, "Well, Bob, I am not exactly in fellowship, but I am not exactly out of fellowship. I am kind of half in and kind of half out." You cannot do that with God's fellowship!

*1 John 1:3-4. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly **our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.***

4. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

If you do not have the right fellowship in your life, your joy is never going to be full. And our fellowship will be with the Father through his Son, my transformer, by the face of God, that we are to seek Jesus Christ, God's face and God's glory.

1 John 1:6. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

You cannot have halfway. You cannot be kind of in the light with one foot and kind of in the darkness with the other. You lie and do not the truth. And here is the real issue. *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* So with that truth, setting up this doctrine this morning, only you know this, but this morning, sitting here, you are simply in fellowship with God, or you are not. You are not anywhere halfway in between. Matthew 12:30 says, *He that is not with me is against me.* And in Amos 3:3, *Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*

➤ How You Stay in Fellowship

And the key to never losing God's face, the key to always staying in fellowship is one of the simplest things that is not taught today by anybody.

1 John 1:9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

One of the worst days in your life as a Christian will simply come down to this: in fellowship or out of fellowship. Here is what most Christians do. You get up in the morning all ready to go, going to serve the Lord. And you get in that car and drive out to work, and you start to get on the freeway, and some guy pulls out in front of you and almost wrecks your car. And then you just have problem after problem. The devil just attacks you up one side and down the other. You get a couple of bad phone calls, and it just kind of ruins your day. And you go through your whole day out of fellowship with God. And this is what most of God's people do. At night, before you go to bed, you have your nightly prayer. And then you try to recap your day and ask God to forgive you for all of those things that went on through that day. And you know as well as I do, you cannot remember them all. And you know what? You lost that fellowship in the morning the first time it went south and you stayed out of fellowship all day long till that night.

➤ Keep Short Accounts with God

Martin Luther said, "Keep short accounts with God." There are times in your life and my life, and 1 John 1:9 is the key. You will have to confess your sins sometimes hour by hour. Sometimes, minute by minute. It is a daily confession. You can have the worst day of your life. You can have 100 things that hit you that will put you out of fellowship. If you will stop at that moment, confess it, get it right with God, you are back in fellowship. Next one, same thing. Next one, same thing. And at the end of the day, where the first guy has let it slide all day long and tried to fix it, you end in perfect fellowship.

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Once you get saved, you confess every time it pops up. That is how you stay in fellowship. That is how you keep the face of God looking at you and you are looking at Him that when the tough times come, where do you look? In the face. In the face.

V. Consequences of Broken Fellowship

Now allow me to show you what happens when you break that fellowship and don't confess it. You let it build and compound. Now we are entering into the lives of most of God's people. The Old Testament term a couple of weeks ago was "backsliding". We use it all the time though it is a term for Israel. Look at verse 9.

➤ Three Things as a Child of God We Never Want to Happen to Us

Psalms 27:9. Hide not thy face [far] from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

There is one thing I want you to see. God will never leave you nor forsake you. He could in the Old Testament. He cannot in the New Testament, but what I want to talk to you about is what is wrong with most of God's people today. And what is wrong with most of God's people is, and you must see this, the day that God hides His face from them. Believe me. The worst day of our lives will be when God takes his hand off of you and me. Hides his face from us, and we are on our own.

Now to fully understand this we must go back and see the model. Go back and see the pattern found in God's relationship and His fellowship with the nation of Israel. Now you will remember Exodus chapter 4 verse 23. Israel as a corporate nation is God's son. In the New Testament, as individuals through a new birth, you and I as individuals are God's son. John chapter 1 verse 12.

Three things as a child of God we never want to happen to us.

1. You never want God to hide His face from you.
2. You never want God to put you away. That means putting you on the shelf. He does not use you anymore.
3. The day that God leaves you alone.

There will come a time in our lives when we reject the truth of God to such a degree that we do not leave God any other options. He is not going to walk in your darkness. He is not going to pretend that we are kind of half in and half out. No, no, no, no. You either seek His face in the glory of God, or these three things begin to descend upon your life. This answers a lot of questions with a lot of God's people who you are going to come across and maybe work with or deal with. I have seen Christians all my life that I thought had great potential. And I thought God could really use them, but God never did use them. Or if he did, he stopped. And for years I could not ever figure it out. Then as I looked at my own life and worked through my own issues and saw why. The worst day of our lives my dear friend, and I love you to death, but the worst day of our lives will be the day God leaves us alone. And takes his hand off of us and leaves us to our own decision-making process and our own devices.

➤ God Temporarily Put the Nation of Israel on the Shelf

Now you will remember God's desire was to fellowship with His people, the nation of Israel. But just like us, they kept breaking God's fellowship—didn't they? It is all through the Old Testament. And finally, God had enough. And now God with His own people hides Himself from them and puts Israel, the nation that He was going to reach the world through, on the shelf. You know there are a lot of churches that got out of the right Bible and got into the wrong things and reinvented Christianity because they did not really have what the true Bible aspect is. God hid His face from them and now put them on the shelf. He's not doing anything with them. They brag about their numbers because that is all they got to brag about. The worst day of our lives is the day that God does not use us anymore. And that will come down to where our fellowship is.

Look at Matthew chapter 13:44. We are now going to look at one of the terrible parables. You have heard me say it many, many times. These are the 12 mysteries given to us about the nation of Israel after their rejection in Matthew chapter 12. And these 12 mysteries are the kingdom that God was going to bring to them but now has rejected because God has temporarily put them away. And the kingdom of heaven now goes into a mystery form because Israel has backslidden and lost its fellowship.

*Matthew 13:44. Again, the kingdom of heaven [is] like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, **he hideth**, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.*

Now the treasure will be Israel. The man here will be God. The field here will be the world. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field which when a man found *he hideth*. See that? Israel is now out of fellowship with God. They do not have God's face anymore. And look at the rest of it. *And for the joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. That is your salvation and my salvation.* He put Israel on the shelf. They lost His face. He hid Himself and then He went and spent everything that He had to buy you and me.

Now you find this all through the Bible:

*Deuteronomy 31:17-18. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and **I will hide my face from them**, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?*

*18. And **I will surely hide my face** in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.*

Broken fellowship. He hid from them. They cannot find God anymore. Oh, but the best part is coming. (This is not the best part. Be few minutes).

Isaiah 54:7-8. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

8. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

Isaiah 45:15. Verily thou [art] a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.

Isaiah 57:17. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him (Israel): I hid me, and [was] wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.

Now that is what happens when we break the fellowship and we backslide. We know God will never cast us off, never forsake us, Hebrews 13:5. But He will hide His face, Christ, and all that He has for us so we cannot find Him.

➤ The Principles of the Word of God will Keep You in Fellowship

He will not walk in any darkness in our lives, only light. And the only way to keep the darkness out and the light on is every time we fall, right then, when the Holy Spirit of God convicts you, stop, get it right, and the lights come back on. Now this is why I try to get you to stay and live a principled life. It is the principles of the Word of God that will keep you in fellowship. And Christianity today has no principles. It does whatever it wants to do. It is like the book of Judges. There is no king in Israel, and every man is doing what is right in his own eyes. And now, like Israel, back in the Old Testament, we now are left to our own devices to go through the Christian life in a state of confusion.

When you find yourself in a broken relationship with Christ, you can mark it down, if it is not restored quickly, and it keeps going and compounds itself, you will lose five things. Now when you get to these five things, you are on the shelf and God is done with you.

1. Fellowship
2. Your joy
3. The blessings
4. Assurance
5. Your own walk with the Lord

And you are done. You are done.

VI. The Illusion of Spirituality

But yet, look at this. Here is the good part. Oh, you cannot miss this. Yet, God was done with Israel and when God's people do not have a Bible, get out of fellowship, live their lives doing whatever they want to do, and claim that they are in fellowship with God when they are not... I want you to notice that the nation of Israel, just like New Testament Christianity, will continue out of fellowship. And now, everybody pretends. Everybody fabricates. Everybody pretends that we are with God when we are not.

When you look at the nation of Israel, the Bible clearly shows you where God hid himself from them. They went after other gods. They rejected him. And yet, at the first coming of Christ, Israel has a form of godliness. They are pretending they are okay. They are pretending that they are right with God. Even when they crucified God's Son, they did it on the basis of their thought that they were doing what God wanted them to do. They deluded themselves. They got themselves in a pretend relationship. A relationship with Jesus Christ that is faceless.

You'll find churches today that have no Bible; they do not have a King James Bible. Whatever they've got certainly has not got anything to do with God. And what do they do? They have to maintain the illusion of their spirituality. So they manufacture it. They don't have preaching, they don't have truth, but they've got great light shows. Smoke comes out from under the pulpit. They've got great singers up there that are swaying all over the place. They have to maintain and manufacture a fake spirituality because they lost the face. It is only found in that Book.

I find that God's people, when they get out of fellowship with God, they reject the church, they reject the Bible, they reject any truth. They pretend that everything is okay. They pretend that God is leading them when God is not 100 million miles around. And they replace the face of Jesus Christ that should be in their life with a face of somebody else. Some gal, some guy. Now that is the face.

➤ God's People Can Go on Down the Road of Life Thinking that He is with Them When He is Not

I think one of the greatest places in the Bible, welcome to New Testament Christianity, is one of the craziest things you ever saw in your life. And yet it shows me exactly what the problem is today with God's people. It is found in Luke chapter 2 verses 41-46, if you want to look at it sometime. The Bible says that Jesus, His mom and dad, with Him and His brothers, were going down to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. They are all walking together as a family. And they are down there doing their deal, and they get it done, and they start to leave to go back home. And after, on a little road, it could not be more than 20 feet across, on this little dusty dirt road, this family walked for two days. And then somebody in the family said, "Where is Jesus?" The mom said to the dad, "Where is Jesus?" Dad said to the mom, "I don't know; your turn to watch Him." They looked at the kids, "where did your brother go?"

They were on a trip on one road, a family, for two days, and did not know that Jesus was not with them. All those two days, they thought He was with them when He was not. They turned around and went back to Jerusalem; you know the rest of the story. They find Him in the temple. He is teaching all the Bible scholars. That is an amazing story to me, but you know what it shows me? It shows that God's people, just like His family, can go on down the road of life thinking that He is with them when He is not.

VII. When You Stay in Fellowship His Face Shines Upon You

Now, when you seek His face, Numbers chapter 6, verses 24, 25 and 26 will now be what will come into your life. This is the benefit of seeking His face and the face of God is Jesus Christ.

This is what you never want to lose right here. This is what you lose when He puts you on a shelf, He leaves you alone, and He hides from you until you get right with God.

Numbers 6:24-26. The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:

*25. The LORD make **his face shine upon thee**, and be gracious unto thee:*

26. The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

You see what He does? When you stay in fellowship with God and you walk with Him, that face that you seek, the face of Jesus Christ, you know what it does? It shines upon you. Remember Moses back in the Old Testament when he had been with God up on the mountain getting the Ten Commandments? And he comes down to the people, and he is coming down off the mountain, and the people are seeing this light come down off the mountain. When Moses came into that camp, they all were afraid because Moses' face shined like the sun because he had been with God. And the light of God shined upon him. And when you get the face of God, Jesus Christ, in this old dark world, your face will shine because His face has shined upon you. And people will see it.

Years ago on Monday Night Football, and I remember when it started, were two of the greatest football commentators: Howard Cosell and Dandy Don Meredith. They were an oddball couple of guys, but I really, really, really enjoyed it. Howard Cosell was a straight shooter and Dandy Don, was always throwing it in. And at the end of every game, he used to say, and I have thought about this for years because this is where most of God's people are at. Dandy Don would sing the song at the end of the game, "Turn out the lights! The party is over." That is exactly what has happened to God's people. God turned out the lights, and the party is over.

Now you will have the guidance of the Lord through the shining of His face, the graciousness, the direction, the light of His countenance, the blessings that will keep you. And most importantly, the peace that you get only through a relationship of fellowship that He can give you as you seek His face. And so many of God's people, like Israel, have a fellowship without a face. They are like the Athenians over there in Acts 17 verse 23; they've got to get a t-shirt that says, "to the unknown God." And when all the issues come into your life, and they will come, when God takes His hand off of your life and leaves you to your own devices...It is bad enough when we are walking with God, what the devil throws at us, wait till God takes His hand off of you and see what the devil throws at you. And you are on your own. And now you will make some terrible, terrible, terrible choices that will have terrible consequences.

➤ Just Because you are a Christian Doesn't Mean You Won't Have Issues

*Psalms 27:10. **When my father and my mother forsake me**, then the LORD will take me up.*

Now, doctrinally, that is Luke 12:53. That actually happens in the tribulation, when with the antichrist, some of the kids turn their own parents in. But it is also true, inspirationally, in the lives of people that we deal with. Some of you kids will take a stand for the Lord and get saved and want to do what is right, and your parents will think you are nuts. They will think you are

crazy. Family issues will come. And that is why God gives you a church and gives you men and women who the Lord will use to take you up, that you are not in it all by yourself.

Sometimes it comes down to almost losing your marriage because of the dumb, stupid things that you do being out of fellowship. Sometimes it is losing your father and mother. Sometimes it is losing your children to the world. But God's shining on you through His Face. These things will come. Just because you are a Christian does not mean you are not going to have to face these. But you do not want to face them without the leading of His way through it. Every one of these, you will deal with it. But you will want His guiding through it. When the world throws you down and runs over you and backs up to run over you again, He will take you up.

Not always, but most of the time, when you deal with these kinds of issues in a family, you only get one shot. You don't want to do it your way because there will be eternal consequences. But you want to follow the principles through His countenance as His face shines upon you and His grace wraps its arms around you. And you are lifted up by His countenance with the direction and the guidance and the peace that passes all understanding. In a world of confusion with many issues to deal with, we have to decide in our own lives. Making bad choices because you are in a faceless pretend relationship with the Lord is not a good idea.

I get a lot of emails and a lot of people talking to me about the AI thing, you know, artificial intelligence. I am not for it, but I got to say this. Artificial intelligence is better than in America with no intelligence. And you know where this is going to go. This is going to be the crown jewel of the Antichrist when he shows up. No question about it. You are just seeing the formulation of it right now.

In New York and other places, they are actually building an AI relationship for you who do not feel comfortable in a real human relationship. Now they will build you a profile of a woman or a guy that will give you all the answers that you have ever wanted to hear. One that will always be there for you that you can actually now go to restaurants with and you can have dinner with them. You are the only one eating. But that little face is there, and you are talking to her. She is talking to you, and you are talking to him, and he is talking back to you. And that is now the new norm that is coming. And everybody, everybody is amazed at that. Somebody says, "What do you think about this?" Do you know what I think? I think AI has finally caught up with what most Christians have: a phony fake relationship that isn't real that they think is with Christ.

➤ God Will Put You on a Plain Path

*Psalms 27:11. Teach me thy way, O LORD, and **lead me in a plain path**, because of mine enemies.*

Now that is God's leading right there. God is not the author of confusion. The path that He will put you on is a plain path. It will not be cluttered with a lot of technological verbiage. It will be plain.

I heard an old preacher say one time that whenever you do get out of fellowship with God and you bring 1 John 1:9 into it and confess it and get it right, you just need to talk to Him real plain. And then he said, “Do you know why? Because it is already plain to Him.”

The plain path. This will be the old path of Jeremiah chapter 6. This is why we do not put all the superficial things in. We follow a plain path with a clear direction by clear principles, understanding a clear fellowship and how to keep it. The two most terrible days for the out of fellowship child of God will be the day God leaves you alone and the day God gets you alone. That will be Genesis chapter 32.

➤ You are Going to Have Enemies When You Take Your Stand

Psalms 27:12. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

Now this is easy and plain too. It is not complicated. You are going to have enemies when you take your stand. People who do not like what you believe, what you stand for, what you preach, what you teach. But you’ll want to know that your enemies will always have a face. You will have the face of a false witness. And you will have the face of people who live their lives for one reason. That is to breathe out cruelties.

Last week I told you that we are to live our lives in God's strength. And then I showed you that when the world and your enemies come after you to try to stop you, they are going to come after you in their strength. And I made a comparison that you need to always remember—their strength can never compare up against God's strength. And He will always deliver you. Now I will say this to you. You will have the face of a false witness. You will have the face of those who hate you. **But you want to know this, the face of your enemy, whoever it may be, will never outshine the face of Jesus Christ and His countenance in your life.** Through the fellowship we have with Him.

➤ Consider Him

Psalms 27:13. [I had fainted], unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

Now this will be Hebrews 12:1-3.

*Hebrews 12:1-3. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us **lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,** and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

2. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

*3. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, **lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.***

Verse 1 tells us to lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us. You see, when a man or woman loses that face of God's fellowship, then verse 3 will automatically set in within time. You will become weary, then you will faint in your mind. You have ceased to confess your sins and lay aside every weight and the sin that causes your problems. And the answer to that is found in verse 3. Now I have got a message I preach on this, and don't worry, I won't preach it this morning, but it is simply to consider Him.

What will keep you from fainting and keep you in fellowship, so that you will never let it break.

Just consider:

1. Who He was. He was God's face.
2. What He endured, God's raw power on the cross, that He was going to be the mediator, the transformer between God and you.
3. You never want to forget what He became. He became sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

And all of that is found in the face of Jesus Christ. And like Israel, today in Christianity, in most cases, He has hidden his face from us.

➤ Wait on the LORD

Psalms 27:14. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

You know, in a final analogy here, His face shining on us, and our maintaining that fellowship, will do three basic things through your fellowship:

1. **The first thing that it will do is teach you patience.** The worst thing you can do in a relationship with Christ is get in a hurry. God Has his own timetable for doing things. I waited 20 years for this church to get where we are right now. It was not ready before now. I had some things I had to build, some things I had to do, some minds I had to work on. But I waited, because if I had done it earlier, it would have been a disaster. You wait on the Lord; He will teach you patience. And through that patience, He will reveal Himself through His face.
2. **He will strengthen your heart.**
3. **He will give you courage.** Through the strengthening of your heart, he gives you courage. Courage to never break that fellowship. Courage to never stop seeking that face. And courage to always make sure our lives are filled with the light of His countenance shining upon us.

VIII. Conclusion

Now you have it all. I brought you up through the whole thing, and now I have showed you today what happens when you lose fellowship from the Bible. And now how from the Bible you maintain that fellowship, seeking the face of God.