

Call to Obedience #231
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org

Holy Ghost Fellowship is the fellowship of the second-milers.

Holy Ghost Fellowship

By Reimar Schultze

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22).

We seldom ever hear of anyone living in unbroken fellowship with God today. Yet this is the fellowship God has called us to. We can call it "Holy Ghost Fellowship" or "Mt. Moriah Fellowship."

God spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to a friend (Ex. 33:11). John said that whatsoever he asked of God, he received: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him...." God wants us all to experience this same nearness and fellowship with himself. It is a life that is available to all Christians.

The fact is, Paul says that when Jesus rose from the dead, he ascended to heaven, and he sat down at the right hand of his Father "in the heavenly places." And furthermore, when Jesus raised us up from the dead, from the old selfish life, he "made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:20; 2:6).

Here on this earth we can have fellowship with Jesus, and here we can have fellowship with all Christians who are also in fellowship with Jesus. All this, biblically speaking, takes place in heavenly places. And the secret to living in heavenly places is to come to the point where you do only that which is pleasing in God's sight.

In 1 John 3:22 we have the full range of Christian living. At the very least, the Christian worthy of the name "Christian" will obey, he will keep God's commandments. At the most, he will do that which is pleasing in God's sight. So then, the New Testament Christian will make obedience the minimum standard of his life, and he will make pleasing God every moment of his life his highest ambition. And when the Christian lives in this upper level of always pleasing the Lord, he will always find himself in the divine light of God, which the old-timers used to call "Holy Ghost Fellowship."

What Are the Blessings of This Fellowship?

In this intimate fellowship in the heavenly places, God ceases to be on the far end of a long distance line, always remote and often too busy to answer our call. In this fellowship, even in the midst of the most tragic circumstances, these foolish **questions will never arise**: "Where is God?" or "Why did God let this happen?" Rather, there will always be the sweet abiding in which God's presence is all the answer needed to keep our heads up high.

In this fellowship of the heavenly places, there will be a **joy unspeakable** ever present in the deepest areas of the soul, and often overflowing even to a shout or to a run or to a testimony of the goodness of the Lord. In this fellowship, **God is always good** -- he will never be looked upon, or even thought of, as one not really caring or understanding, nor will he ever be viewed as one detached from our need.

In this fellowship, **all that is ours will come our way** and 1 Corinthians 2:9 becomes reality: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

In this Holy Ghost Fellowship in the heavenly places, **life is prayer and prayer is life.**

Here, the saint will rarely look for a book without saying, "Jesus, where is it?" Here the Christian will always -- except in rare minutes of forgetfulness -- ask the Lord to help to find a screw or a hammer or a motel in which he is to stay long before he even begins looking.

So, in this Holy Ghost Fellowship, **prayers are answered abundantly** as our text so truly states by saying, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." In reference to this scripture, R. A. Torrey says: Whatever John asked for, he got, because he obeyed and did what pleased God in every way.

The whole realm of questions relating to unanswered prayer must always start with these two questions: 1) Do I do what God bids me to do?, and 2) Do I do those things pleasing in his sight?

Friend, unless you can give an affirmative to both of these questions, you have no right ever to question God's faithfulness. Indeed, is it not a great tragedy that most who profess Christianity expect God to hold up his promise of answering prayer without being willing to meet the conditions that make that promise possible? "If we give a listening ear to all God commands of us, he will give a listening ear to all our petitions to him" continues R. A. Torrey in his book, How to Pray.

Oh, the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, how scarcely are they populated by the people born again to live there. How rare a find is it to meet one who lives in Holy Ghost Fellowship to have Holy Ghost Fellowship with? So, let us consider:

What Must We Do to Have Holy Ghost Fellowship?

First, we must be born of God. Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:6,7). **Second, we must deny Self** -- continue to deny Self -- so that we can become obedient followers of Jesus (Luke 9:23).

Having done this, we have come to the bottom of what is normal New Testament Christianity: to follow Jesus; and no one can do that without obedience. For Jesus himself said that our love to God is expressed in our keeping his commandments: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Notice, Jesus does not say to keep the Old Testament commandments nor keep the Levitical commandments, but MY commandments. And how do we find his commandments? By the Word of God and by listening to his voice as we follow him: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27).

But as wonderful as this is, this is only at the bottom of Christian living because we can obey and still be engaged in gray areas of living. For the Lord is not a slave master, but he will give us certain liberties where we might prove our love to him. Many Christians say, "There is no scripture against this." But Paul says, "...all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not" (1 Cor. 10:23). Some things are more pleasing to God and bring more profit to our souls. Let me give you an illustration:

Here is a gas station attendant. The boss puts up a list of all the things he wants done -- there are 20 items, including pumping gas and keeping change in the cash register. The list is the minimum accepted performance. If the attendant does all these 20 things, the boss will pay him and keep him. But, there is a step beyond fulfilling this obedience. The attendant can decide on his own to do other things that his boss did not ask him to do. He could wash the auto windshields for every customer, check their tires, and check the restrooms every hour to see if they are clean, etc.... He can come to the job ten minutes before he is scheduled to arrive and stay another ten minutes after he is scheduled to leave.

If the attendant begins to discover the desires of his boss, and if he will go beyond what he is asked to do, to do all which is pleasing to the heart of his superior, then there will likely be a promotion. So it is with us: if we go beyond obedience and look into the heart of God to find all those things that are pleasing in his sight, we will be promoted into heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and Holy Ghost Fellowship will begin!

Let us not fool ourselves, **we will get no rewards nor promotions for doing our duty but only for going beyond duty.** Jesus, in Luke 17:10 speaks about duty, saying: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." But in Matthew 5:41, in the Sermon on the Mount, he spoke of going the second mile: "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." Friend, if your Christianity only does the minimum, you are not living in heavenly places. It is the two-milers who get the blessings!

Oh, Christ's dear heart is longing to have Holy Ghost Fellowship with us, desiring to have us sit with him in heavenly places so that he can bestow upon us all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and blessing and things that have been stored up for us, even from the foundation of the world.

So then, getting practical: could you, the next time your hand reaches to turn on the television, ask yourself: Is this pleasing to Jesus? Could you, the next time you receive an invitation to go to a ball game, ask: Is this pleasing to Jesus? Could you, the next time you are putting your church offering into the plate, ask: Is this amount that I am giving pleasing to Jesus? Could you ask the Lord if the way you dress, the music you listen to, the magazines and books you read, and the relationships you keep are pleasing to Jesus? Could you also ask if your thought life is pleasing to Jesus?

Oh, I hope you will not listen to the lie of the devil who tells you: This is all legalism -- have no part of it!" No, listen to your Savior: This is love! So get up there to his heavenly places; get up there to that fellowship in the Holy Ghost; get up there where rivers of living waters will begin to flow perpetually through your life into the hearts of many; get up there where your light will be shining and where you only have to say, "Jesus...", and he will ever be ready to answer your prayer.

Holy Ghost Fellowship -- do you want it? If you do, go on from mere obedience, get out of the gray areas where you may or may not do certain things, and get into the light -- stay in the light of all that is pleasing to your Savior, and you will discover the Christianity that is worth dying for and keeping forever.