

# STUDY 4: FELLOWSHIP

## Introduction:

Have you heard the old saying: “Birds of a feather flock together?” Some of the progress you make toward recovery will depend on being careful about who you hang around with. Along with following the other suggestions we have made in the first three studies, you must decide to change some of the “friends” and other negative influences you have in your life. “Do not be misled: bad company corrupts good character.” (1 **Corinthians 15:33**) Getting the help you need is a battle that no one can win alone. Alone, in the wrong company, we are more open to temptations. Together, in Godly fellowship, we can help one another to think and live in new ways.

While **accountability** (see study 2) and **fellowship** (this study) contain some of the same elements, they are two somewhat different words. Some dictionary definitions of fellowship are: “companionship, friendliness, and a community of like interests and goals. Also, a group of sharing people that holds to the same faith.” Fellowship is **not** found in harmful relationships.

What drives you to avoid positive fellowship with others? Perhaps you perceive that others, even family, have hurt you deeply and you avoid loving, intimate relationships because you do not want to get hurt again. Maybe you experience feelings of loneliness and rejection...even in a crowd. You feel as though you do not fit in. Or, you may feel unworthy of the love of another, that no one could possibly love you. Many of you are *hiding, physically and emotionally*, for fear of being exposed as the person you have become as a result of your addiction or because you have already been exposed and do not want to be held accountable. “Men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.” (John 3:19) Perhaps you lack necessary social skills. Have you lived a superficial life with others based on physical attraction and the meeting of selfish needs? Are you ashamed, fearful or too proud, thinking you don’t need anyone? Do you fit in any of the categories above? Read on because the truth found in this next sentence can change your life forever:

**The power that you receive from placing your faith in Jesus Christ is sufficient to help you overcome the situations named above or any other life controlling problems you may have.** “Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a *new* creation; the old has gone, the *new* has come.” (2 Corinthians 5:17) And, “He (Christ) is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all we ask or imagine according to *His power* that is at work within us.” (Ephesians 3:20) Friend, these promises become yours when you trust Christ as your personal Savior. Now let us begin our 4<sup>th</sup> study.

1) With whom are we to seek fellowship according to the following verses? “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” “But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood

of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.” (1 John 1:3, 7) We have fellowship with:

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_

2) According to the next verses (a. through h.), **why** is it important to seek fellowship with the Father, Jesus Christ and each other?

a) (Jesus speaking) “I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him he will bear much fruit; *apart from me, you can do nothing.*” (John 15:5)

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b) “If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers, such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.” (John 15:6)

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- Is Jesus talking about real branches? \_\_\_\_\_
- What or whom is He talking about? \_\_\_\_\_

c) “For where 2 or 3 come together in my name, there am I with them.” (Mt. 18:20)

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d) “For none of us lives to himself alone and no one dies to himself alone.” (Romans 14:7)

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e) “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (Psalm 34:18)

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f) “For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are alive or dead, we may live together with Him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up just as in fact you are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:9-11) According to this verse:

- What has God appointed you to? \_\_\_\_\_

- Why did Christ die for you? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is one of the benefits of fellowship with other believers? \_\_\_\_\_

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g) "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another----and all the more as you see the day approaching." **(Hebrews 10:25, 26)**

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h) "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with Me." **(Revelation 3:20)**

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3) **Read** the following verses about the influence people can have on others for good or for bad. Use the space provided to **write how** these verses from the Bible might be helpful in your personal life:

a) "He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm." **(Proverbs 13:20)**

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b) "Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses." **(Proverbs 27:6)**

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c) "Brothers, if someone is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back on the right path.....Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the teaching of Christ." **(Galatians 6:1, 2)**

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d) "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." **(Proverbs 27:17)**

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4) Now refer to the checklist in lesson 3, page 5 on integrity and add the following to the list of actions you can take to help you in your personal recovery process:

a) Are you seeking to distance yourself from the harmful relationships that are contributing to your problems? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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b) Have you actively begun to seek *fellowship* with people who will care about you and who desire to help you? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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## CONCLUSION:

You have now finished the 4<sup>th</sup> and last study of this series which has been written just for you...designed to help meet your needs as you wait for your Keswick Colony bed date. Have you made progress? If you are following the suggestions given you, you are off to a good start. Many of the things you have been learning will be reinforced in greater measure when you begin your Colony experience. **Repentance** (turning from your old thoughts and behaviors and doing things God's way), **accountability** (taking responsibility for your actions and behaviors and allowing others to help you do what is right), **integrity** (being able to hold your head up high in honesty and uprightness before God and man), and **fellowship** (the turning from the old, destructive relationships to Godly, healthy relationships) have been our topics and focus.

There are people who delight in praying for you even now and we pray that you have taken the counsel offered in these studies. Listen to this wonderful verse from God's Word: "Once we, too, **were** foolish and disobedient. We were misled by others and became *slaves* to many wicked desires and evil pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy. We hated others and they hated us. But then God our Savior showed us His kindness and love. He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of His mercy. He washed away our sins and *gave us a new life* through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us because of what Jesus Christ our Savior did. He declared us not guilty because of His great kindness. And now we know that we will inherit eternal life." (**Titus 3:3-7**)

Friends, we want to remind you that you are engaged in a life or death struggle and a battle for your very soul. But *take heart*, Christ's victory on the Cross of Calvary and His resurrection on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day has allowed us to be victorious. For "Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live *new lives*." (**Romans 6:4**) Therefore, we strongly encourage you once more to take the steps as outlined for you in the studies: **Pray** to receive Christ as your personal Savior. **Develop** a regular habit of prayer. **Read** the Bible regularly. **Receive** the encouragement, strength and hope found in God's Word, the Bible. **Find** a Bible believing, Christ honoring Church in which to get involved. **Begin** to talk with the leaders there to get help and set up accountability. **Start** repenting of your old ways. **Begin** the process of walking in God's ways. **Accept** responsibility for yourself, your actions, your behaviors. **Allow** others to help you to be accountable. **Ask** God to search your heart so that offensive ways might be revealed and you might repent. **Distance** yourself from the harmful relationships that have contributed to your problems. **Seek** fellowship with people who will care about you and provide the help and encouragement you need. And, **Finish** the 4 studies which will help guide you in all

these areas.

Finally, as we said at the beginning, **there is hope for you!** Be certain to follow the instructions given to you by the admissions team and know that we care about you. May God direct your path as you seek Him.

**Note:** (Bible verses have been taken from the New International Version and the New Living Translation. Punctuation has been added to some of the verses in an effort to clarify or emphasize a main point.)

Once you have completed this study, please share your answers with your pastor or accountability partner. If you do not have one, begin the process of finding a Bible-teaching, Bible believing church where you can establish contact with someone that you can share your answers with. If you need help in finding a church, please call us at (732) 350-1187 ext. 46

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