

Sunday, August 9, 2026

## What God Has NOT Joined Together (3) Fellowship with Unbelievers 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

Today, we continue our theme for 2026, “What God has (and has not) joined together”. We concluded part 1 by noting some doctrinal matters that God has joined together though men often try to separate these. We have just started part 2 noting things God has NOT joined together. We devoted the previous 2 lessons to Creation and Evolution, making the case for a literal interpretation of Genesis 1-11.

Today, we want to notice another thing God has NOT joined together, Fellowship with Unbelievers.

### 1. What is fellowship?

- a. Biblically – it is joint participation. The Greek word is κοινωνία (koinōnia) –
  - i. BDAG – close association involving mutual interests and sharing. Association, communion, fellowship, close relationship. and it always has a spiritual connotation. It was not about meals, social activities, etc.
  - ii. Bullinger – to have a thing in common, have a share, to partake of or with.
  - iii. Thayer – the share which one has in anything, participation. 2. ...intimacy – that indicates a close sharing.
- b. The English definition of the word. AHD<sup>1</sup> defines it as “1. the companionship of individuals in a congenial atmosphere and on equal terms. 2. Friendship, comradeship; 3. A close association of friends or equals sharing similar interest. Etc.
- c. BOTH, the English and Greek words indicate a closeness that results in sharing or joint participation. This can present a challenge as to how we ought to use the word and when.
- d. HOWEVER, the word in its Biblical NT usage positively is always related to spiritual matters.
  - i. **Acts 2:42** is the first usage of the word, it is in a context describing how the first century disciples were engaged in spiritual acts of worship. They shared in their worship together.
  - ii. **1 Corinthians 10:16**, the word “communion” is this Greek word and the text has a reference to partaking the Lord’s supper (and all scriptural elements associated with it).
  - iii. **1 Corinthians 1:9** – speaks of being called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ.
  - iv. **Galatians 2:9** – when Paul and Barnabas showed leaders of the church in Jerusalem (Peter, James and John) that salvation was available to all, including Gentiles, “they gave (us) the right hand of fellowship.”
  - v. **Philippians 1:5** – Paul commends the church at Philippi for their fellowship with him in the gospel (they supported him in his work).
  - vi. **Hebrews 13:16** - Do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. (NOTE: Contextually, the writer is dealing with spiritual matters.
  - vii. Others could be added to these, but we see a sufficient amount of texts helping us understand what Biblical fellowship is about.
- e. An important passage clarifying fellowship is 1 John 1:3-7 – our fellowship is with God and then one another. Note vs. 4, “your joy may be full”. Fellowship with God is our goal.
- f. Because of this, we must be careful how we use this word. There is a big difference between the world’s perception when we use this word and the Biblical usage.

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<sup>1</sup> fellowship. (n.d.) *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition*. (2011). Retrieved December 7 2022 from <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/fellowship>

## 2. Fellowship with unbelievers

- a. However, there are also warnings about who we should NOT have fellowship with. Namely unbelievers.
- b. 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 – there are 5 descriptions that should not exist. These are 5 different words that point to association with others.
  - i. The first word, “fellowship” (NKJV) is actually a different Greek word μετοχή, metochē, is a word that means “sharing”. He notes righteousness and lawlessness are at odds with each other.
  - ii. Next is, communion – which IS our word for fellowship. It speaks of light vs. darkness.
  - iii. This is followed by accord (agreement, harmony) – Christ vs. Belial – a name for Satan or possibly some other God. Sources say this developed during the years of silence) or some would associate it with *antichrist*. Vines notes that its ordinal meaning is worthlessness or hopeless ruin.
  - iv. Part (a portion of the whole). We speak of a body with its various parts joined and functioning together. The believer and unbeliever is mentioned here.
  - v. Finally agreement (consensus). Paul contrasts the temple of God with that of idols.
  - vi. Together these words identify how we are NOT to seek fellowship with unbelievers.
  - vii. It is also emphasized in the text (come out and be separate).
  - viii. OF course, we must define, who is an *unbeliever* here – it would be one who rejects Christ.
    1. We think of those in the world, which is the way the word is used.
    2. But it can also include some who believe in Jesus, but falsely (cf. 2 John 9-11). In that text, John is likely addressing some who believe in Jesus but deny who He was and/or His teachings (doctrines). They might believe IN Jesus (and God), but they do not believe Him!
    3. Matthew 17:17 – Jesus speaks of a “faithless generation” when disciples failed to perform a miracle. Same word as our text.
  - ix. WHO we fellowship with is important.
- c. Ephesians 5:11 – declares we must not have fellowship with works of darkness. Sinful conduct is the work of the devil. As Christians we should not be partnering with lusts, immorality, greed, etc. This factors into the everyday decisions we make – what we watch, how we spend our time, who we prefer to associate with, how we spend our money, etc. Are we supporting those who stand opposed to our Lord and God?
- d. James 4:4 - Friendship with the world is enmity with God.
- e. 1 John 2:15-17 – we are called to not love the world or the things in the world.
- f. Consider Israel. Deuteronomy 7:1-6. God was very clear to Israel about this when they inherited Canaan. They were to utterly remove idolatry and idolaters. They were NOT to fellowship with them. The sad history of Israel was a continual rejection of this command. And ultimately it led to their downfall and being put away from Him.
- g. Let us clarify what it means to have no fellowship with unbelievers. It does NOT mean we have NO association with those of the world, but rather we maintain our faith and purity and LIMIT our association with them.
  - i. John 17:9-17 as Jesus prays for His apostles, He notes that they are in the world and He does NOT request that they be taken out of the world (they are needed). Nevertheless, they are not OF the world.
  - ii. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 – we must clearly define whom we “fellowship” with and how. After addressing the need to withdraw from a worldly brother (who was having fellowship with the world in his relationship), Paul is clear that we have a purpose in the world - Fellowship OUGHT to be a source of joy.

- h. This brings us to another point about fellowship. There are professed believers who are practicing, teaching and/or tolerating worldly immorality and false doctrines. In matters where one rejects the teachings of God and His word, they have become unbelievers. We are NOT to have fellowship with such either.
  - i. Be reminded that fellowship is about mutual sharing and relationship. We have relationship with God AND with one another BASED on that fellowship.
  - ii. But if one is teaching false doctrine or caught up in worldliness and refuses to repent, we are NOT to have fellowship with such.
  - iii. 2 John 9-11 addresses this. NOTE the word “shares” in vs 11 is a form of the word for fellowship.
  - iv. 1 John 4:1-6 gives an example of one rejecting the truth. Note vs. 4-5 – you have overcome them.
  - v. 1 Corinthians 5:1-6 - the very idea of withdrawing from a brother implies severing fellowship. Why because they are practicing worldliness. Romans 16:17-18 speaks of withdrawing from those who cause divisions and to avoid them. Why? Because they are not serving the Lord.
  - vi. Revelation 2:14-15, the church at Pergamos was condemned because they tolerated those who were practicing errors. They were told to repent.
  - vii. Many other texts could be added to this, but our point is we are to keep ourselves pure which means not associating with anyone, EVEN a brother WHO is living a worldly life.

### 3. Why does this matter?

- a. Do we become partakers in other men’s sins? Because “fellowship” means participation. There are many today who want to ignore certain sinful practices as they develop relationships. Consider 1 Corinthians 15:33 – evil company corrupts good habits. Our first text was a warning to not put yourself at a disadvantage with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14).
- b. Where will it lead? Almost always, when you fellowship with unbelievers, in time, you will ALWAYS take it further. Consider Micah’s idolatry – Judges 17-18. It begins with a man named Micah who steals from his mother. But he returns it and part of it is used to make an idol. Judges 17:6 notes, “In those days there was no king in Israel; Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” Because he has created this idol, he makes one of his sons a priest (of the tribe of Ephraim). Then when a Levite comes along, he offers to pay him to be priest. Judges 17:13, *Then Micah said, “Now I know that the Lord will be good to me, since I have a Levite as priest!”* Following this, some of the tribe of Dan seeking more land for themselves find this priest who has compromised God’s laws, and offers him MORE to be priest of their tribe instead of just a household. He goes along. Why? When he accepted the idolatry, he had already established his values. It was only a matter of time before he was willing to take it farther. WHEN we fellowship with the world (and sin), unless we repent it will ALWAYS carry you further than you thought you would go.
- c. It can be a danger to our moral and spiritual eternity. We are to keep ourselves pure – 1 John 3:3 because of the hope we have, we purify ourselves. So much of scripture is about this. Proverbs 6:27, *Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned?*

As Christians, we have become servants of our Lord (Romans 6:16-17). To maintain our fellowship with Him, WHO we have fellowship with here matters. It will impart our manner of life and spiritual growth. It is clear that God has NOT joined together fellowship with unbelievers. WHO are you in fellowship with? Think about it!