

Daily Life with Christ. Love-28: Understanding the objective, universal, unchanging, eternal nature of love: 2nd Person Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ is not acquired by conduit use of 1 John 1:9.

A 2nd person personal
living relationship with
Jesus Christ
is not obtained
by conduit use of
1 John 1:9

(Pdf copy at <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/040618.pdf>; for background and complete series, see <http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>).

George: I still think that it sounds kind of creepy or mystical . . . the idea that you have a 2nd person communicative relationship with Jesus Christ. Does Jesus talk back to you? Do you literally hear His voice?

Stephen: No.

George: Then how can you call it a two-way communicative relationship if He is not talking back to you?

Stephen: It is called living “before the Lord” . . . “living in His presence” in a 2nd person relationship. In any 2nd person relationship there is a direct and unmediated shared awareness of each other in a personal way. A person does not have to talk back to have a mutually shared attention in 2nd person connection.

George: How so?

Stephen: For example, when my wife comes home from work and I ask her about her day . . . as she talks about her day and I listen in 2nd person orientation, we are both enjoying a mutual sharing of lives—a real fellowship, even though I am not talking. Although I do not say a word, I am personally connected to her in sharing her experiences. As a matter of fact, if I started talking while she was trying to share something with me, I could no longer be in 2nd person mutual sharing relationship. I would be thinking about me (1st person) and her as an object (3rd person) that I am just talking at.

George: Where do you get the idea from Scripture of living in 2nd person relationship with the Lord?

Stephen: There are three key prepositions in the Bible that describe active fellowship with God: “with” God, “before” God, and “after” God. It is the “before” God that describes living in His presence in 2nd person orientation.

George: Well . . . I think fellowship is by 1 John 1:9.

Stephen: But that is not what the Bible teaches.

George: Yes it does! 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.”

Stephen: So, where does “fellowship” in the passage?

George: Well, you have to take all of Scripture. After a believer is saved, he is filled with the Holy Spirit, and when he sins he grieves the Spirit and so confession puts him back in fellowship with God. It is like he is in a power circle, when he sins he gets out of the spiritual circle, but then when he confesses his sins, he is back in the circle with God.

Stephen: Where in the Bible does it teach that the believer is in a circle or that he bounces in and out of fellowship circle? Is there any place in the Bible that explicitly teaches that upon confession the believer automatically enters into a 2nd person personal relationship with God?

George: It is just common sense.

Stephen: Yes, but a common sense in a materialistic, energy, conduit way devoid of metaphysics, realism, and the nature of fellowship. I call it the conduit method of fellowship. It is relatively new in history and modelled after the scientism of Francis Bacon and his inductivism. Besides, it is self-evidently false that when a believer confesses his sins that he automatically is filled with the Holy Spirit and thus automatically bears the fruit of the Holy Spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23). Just take the first fruit of the Spirit: love. Consider all that involved in just that one fruit: ‘love is patient, kind, no jealous, is not arrogant, does not seek its own, thinks no evil, rejoices in the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, and is the supreme virtue of all virtues’ (1 Cor 13:4-13). Surely, you do not believe that upon confession of sin that every single believer automatically enjoys all of the fruit of the Spirit and all the dynamics of love merely by confession of sin! Does that comport with reality? Is it real? I submit that such a conduit systems are neither biblically valid nor match reality. It also comes close to religious

formulas used in superstition, which does not depend on love . . . just do the recitation, it does not matter about one's heart with God. It is all about ritual.

George: So, what do you think the Bible teaches about fellowship?

Stephen: Like I said, fellowship is all about walking “before/with/after God.” Look at the explicit teaching of 1 John 1:7, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” Instead of the conduit system of abiding in God through confession, consider what 1 John teaches about abiding in God: 1 John 4:16, “he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.” I maintain that fellowship and abiding in God is by proper knowledge and proper love—by truth and love. Given that love does not automatically come to exist in every believer upon confession of sin, and love is the means of abiding in God as above, seems like 1 John 1:9 cannot be used to teach automatic spirituality.

George: Do you deny the need to confess sins as per 1 John 1:9?

Stephen: No! It is important but only as a subset of larger issues of fellowship. What I do deny is that 1 John 1:9 can be used as a means of popping into instant fellowship or instant spirituality. If one is living and abiding with God by truth and love, he will be quick to confess sins but only as part of a larger system of fellowship—far more personal, real, and biblical rather than some contrived religious system born out of the scientism of the Enlightenment era.

George: What do you mean it is more personal?

Stephen: Well, if I am enjoying a second person relationship with my wife and do something that needlessly hurts her, then I will be quick to confess my wrongdoing to her so I can enjoy mutual fellowship with her again. My confession is out of love for her more than simply a utilitarian move to placate her—with no personal feelings for her feelings. In utilitarianism, one does not care how it affects God—this is easy when there is no 2nd person relationship. “Grieving” the Holy Spirit means absolutely nothing, at least in any personal or loving way. It is just a mechanical thing to do before God.

George: How can you say it means nothing to those who live by 1 John 1:9? They think about sin and confession all of the time.

Stephen: This is true, they do care, but in more of a utilitarian way. You are right that they think about keeping short accounts. In fact, it seems like they are obsessed with confession of sin. If one is consumed with confession of sin, then seems like one is always thinking about sin in one way or another. Do you think that the spiritual life is all about thinking about confession of sin all of the time? Seems like a better focus would be to focus on 2nd person loving relationship with God. Seems like a better focus is to love God, to focus on seeking to be nearer and nearer to Him with all our hearts, souls, and minds. Wouldn't focus on the goodness and grace of God and seeking Him be better than focusing on confession of sin to get in a circle for automatic and instant spirituality?