

Fellowship in the Light

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Study Given by W. D. Frazee—May 12,

Can you think of anything more important than to know God's will? You and I are living in the time when everyone who goes through will be somebody who has obtained an experience in this science of knowing the will of God. We are all going to be tested individually, so we must know how to get God's light and guidance.

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" John 8:12.

"But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" 1 John 1:7.

Both of these texts shows that God wants us to walk in light instead of darkness. In fact, if we try to walk in darkness we are likely to stumble.

"If perplexed, hold still; make no move in the dark"
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, page 572.

I remember a providence I experienced a number of years ago. My wife and I were traveling through New Mexico. We were up in the mountains one night looking for a place to camp. Finally we saw a place alongside the road where we thought we could pull off. We unloaded our things and made camp.

The next morning I saw that the right rear wheel of the car was in such a position that if we had gone just a few inches to the right or a few inches further back we would have gone off the edge of a culvert.

Well, the Lord took care of us. I think He takes care of us many times when we are moving around in the dark. I think we can all look back and see times when God, in His mercy, took pity on us and helped us when we didn't have any better sense than to try to move in the dark.

But the purpose of all those providence is not to encourage us in careless movements. If perplexed hold still. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

To follow Jesus, we will need to stay behind Him, won't we? That's right. He goes ahead, and we follow. It is interesting to me to start out on a walk and see how many times some dog will appear. He wants to go along. Dogs like companionship.

But one thing I have observed is that dogs like to run ahead. At least the ones who have gone with me do. A well-trained sheep will follow, but a dog likes to run ahead.

I have watched as we go up different trails that sometimes a dog will be many yards ahead, and where the trail divides he will go where he thinks we are going. Maybe we are not going that direction at all. But by and by we see him come running. He has finally decided he is on the wrong trail, so he backs up and catches up.

We don't need to blame the dog for what he does. He does that because he is a dog. That is his nature. But God expects something better from us. Jesus says:

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" John 10:27.

We are to follow Jesus. If in our zeal or presumption, or deep interest, or whatever may be the motive, we have run ahead and it turns out that after all it is the path the Master is taking, when the Master and those who are following Him catch up with us, shall we boast about it? That would be an unreasonable thing to do. But human nature is like that. And remember that if the dog guesses right which trail his master is going to take, it doesn't mean that he always knows the answer. And it doesn't mean it will be safe for him to do that the next time.

Speaking of running ahead, I was quite interested in an experience told about in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1. It begins on page 204 and goes to page 209. It is written to Brother and Sister A. I don't know what their names were. It was written in 1858. That's about a hundred and three years ago. Here is a statement that especially impressed me:

"God is leading out a people, not a few separate individuals here and there, one believing this thing, another that. Angels of God are doing the work committed to their trust. The third angel is leading out and purifying a people, and they should move with him unitedly. Some run ahead of the angels that are leading this people; but they have to retrace every step, and meekly follow no faster than the angels lead. . . . But some restless spirits do not more than half do up their work. As the angel leads them, they get in haste for something new, and rush on without divine guidance, thus bring confusion and discord into the ranks. They do not speak or act in harmony with the body"

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, page 207.

Here is the third angel leading out a people to prepare them for Jesus' coming. These people were running ahead of the angel. Sister White said they needed to retrace their steps and meekly follow.

You will be interested to know that the subject that this testimony was about was the burden that Brother and Sister A had on not eating swine's flesh. You say

that everybody ought to know that we shouldn't eat swine's flesh. The Bible makes that clear. But that wasn't the present truth in 1858. That was a step that needed to be taken up the road. About five years ahead to be exact. In 1863 the Lord gave clear light to His people what He wanted them to do on that subject and several other subjects. But here were people who were five years in advance. When five years later the Lord gave light on this question, I wonder if those people were tempted to say, Well, you folks are just arriving. We were there five years ago.

But this vision was to help them realize that God was leading His people as fast as they could follow, and that He was not going to lead them faster than they could follow.

"But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." To walk in the light means fellowship. Fellowship with whom? Those who are walking in the light. Paul says have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11). True fellowship is found only in the light, and in doing what? Walking in the light. Obviously the fellowship we have is with those who are also walking in the light.

Out in the universe there are many bodies from which light is reflecting. The moon reflects light to this world. We look out on a beautiful night and see the moon reflecting light from the sun. If we were out on the moon and looked to this earth we would see light reflected from this world back to the moon. There are other bodies out there that are reflecting light.

God intends that every Christian shall be a reflecting light. He intends that in our march to the heavenly city we shall reflect light upon one another. One catches a ray of light from this angle, another, a ray of light from another angle. And as each one gets that light from heaven he is to reflect it upon others. Each one is to reflect the light that comes from heaven. If we walk in the light as He is in the light we have that fellowship one with another. And what a blessed fellowship it is. It is the fellowship of light. That adds to the joy and illumination of the path we travel.

This becomes necessary to look for counsel, for advice, to those who are walking in the light. This is very important. The Bible says that in the multitude of counselors there is safety (Proverbs 11:14), but it is the multitude of counselors who are walking in the light. Jesus said that if the blind lead the blind, they both shall fall in the ditch. And it doesn't make any difference whether it is one blind man or a thousand blind men who are leading as far as safety is concerned. If we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship, and we have help from counseling with, and getting advice from those who are reflecting light from Jesus.

I want to read an interesting statement that was written in the *Review and Herald*, June 22, 1905:

"Do not accept the words of any man unless you can see that he is conformed to the divine image, because if you do you sustain him in doing wrong. You sustain him by asking his counsel, and following his direction. What we need is the word pure from the holy Bible" *Review and Herald*, June 22, 1905.

That's a good statement. Let me give you another on similar to it:

"We are not to put confidence in the counsel of men and assent to all they shall say unless we have evidence that they are under the influence of the Spirit of God"
Fundamentals of Christian Education, page 530.

So let us remember that no matter what position man may occupy, and no matter how many men may be united in giving counsel, unless they are walking in the light their counsel may be misleading.

If you were looking for counsel about gardening, who would you go to? Would you go down the street and knock at the first door and ask anybody and everybody for advice about gardening? I don't think so. You would probably look around for somebody who had a lovely garden. And if you saw a man out working in that garden, and observing it from week to week you saw a successful garden, you probably would say, There is a man I would like to ask some questions.

Would you take the phone book and call up the different women in your neighborhood and ask them about cooking? You might get some interesting ideas that way. But I know that the people you ask advice from on the matter of cooking are people whose cooking you have tasted, or they have a reputation because other people have tasted their cooking. They are successful cooks.

If you want advice on how to be happy, what kind of person are you going to look up? One who is gloomy, and always complaining? Who gives evidence that he thinks life has dealt him a raw deal? Would you seek out someone like that to get advice on how to be happy? I don't think so.

Suppose a young person is wanting advice on marriage. What kind of person are you going to seek out, my young friend? If you are wise, you are going to seek out someone who has made a success in the matter of marriage. Someone who, under the blessing of the Lord, has established a Christian home, and it is evident that there is success.

Oh, I know people who are failures in gardening might tell you some things to avoid. People who have made a failure in their home might tell you things to keep away from. But a good, strong, positive program of advice and counsel, whether it is in gardening or cooking or marriage or education, or any other subject, good sound sensible advice will usually be found with those who have made a success in the thing they are talking about. But there is something deeper than that.

"The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" Psalm 119:130.

The most experienced man in this world hasn't had more than a hundred years of experience. But think of the understanding and knowledge that the God of this universe has. In His inspired Word we have a great reservoir of counsel. And

the greatest counsel that any man can give you is to help you see what this Word says.

Even people who don't know a great deal can get light, if somebody will cause the light from the Word of God to shine into their hearts. So here is an opportunity for even those of little experience to help someone if they will point them to the Word of God. The Word of God is light. The law of God is light. The testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of Prophecy, is light.

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" Isaiah 8:20.

So if you are going to give counsel, while you may value every experience that God has given you, remember that the greatest thing you can do in counseling anyone is to help them to see what God has said. And if you are seeking counsel on some subject, and you can't find the answer in the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy, the greatest help you can get is not in finding someone who can say, Well, I think it is all right to do so and so. I think it will be all right to do that. My experience leads me to believe that so and so is all right.

No, the greatest help will be to find someone who can help you to open your Bible and find the answer to your problem. Who can turn to the Spirit of Prophecy and find the solution to your problem. We need more of that kind of counselors, and that kind of counseling. The entrance of Thy word giveth light.

My mind went back to a short sentence that impressed me very much when I was a boy studying a chapter in volume one. The reason I was studying this chapter was because it was addressed especially to the young. It was before the book *Messages to Young People* came out, and I enjoyed the chapters addressed to the youth. Here is an interesting statement:

"The words of Christ are of more worth than the opinions of all the physicians in the universe"
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, page 502.

Apparently there were some young people who were trying to defend certain amusements. There were some physicians who had given their opinions that those amusements were good for health. But the testimony of Jesus said that the words of Christ were of more worth than the opinions of all the physicians in the universe.

Speaking of that particular area of counsel, it is interesting to notice that many of the opinions that the physicians held when this was written a hundred years ago have now undergone a radical change due to medical research, work in the chemical laboratory, and discoveries made through the microscope.

You and I know that the testimony of Jesus was ahead a hundred years ago, and that it is still ahead. And he that followeth Me, shall not walk in darkness. All true science will be in harmony with the light from heaven. But how foolish is the person who turns from the light of heaven and accepts the opinion of worldly science. And how foolish is the person that doesn't take time to find out what the

light from heaven is, because he is filling his mind with that which human research has discovered.

Don't misunderstand me. There is a place for scientific research and study of science. The references are clear on that. But my point is that to be sure we have light we must test every statement, no matter who the human authority is. We must test every bit of scientific research, no matter what university carried it on, by the true light which comes down from heaven in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. And I want to repeat, we need more counselors who know what is written in these books. And we need more counseling in finding out what is in the books, and answering people's questions by letting them read what is in the books rather than giving our opinions.

Not long ago someone called me on the telephone. They had a question to ask. The question was a difficult one. I told them to hold the phone while I went to get some books. I read a page and another one and another one. I gave that person four different pages. They appreciated those references because those references gave them at least part of the answer to their question. I am thankful that the party on the phone said, "I appreciate your giving me what the *Testimonies* say on this subject."

After all, isn't that worth a lot more than telling them what I think? I am not an authority. I am glad I am not. I am glad I know I am not. But Jesus is an authority. The testimony of Jesus is an authority. And the Savior says, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The Lord keep us looking to that great, infinite source of light, and reflecting that light to others.

Let me point out a great danger in seeking counsel. The danger is hunting counsel that agrees with us. I don't mean it agrees with our stomach. I mean that agrees with our mind, our attitude, our opinion.

Do you know who your best friend is? The man who can help you see where you are wrong. Think about that when you are going to get some counsel.

I have heard some people relating their experience or thoughts or decisions, and somebody would ask if they had asked so and so for advice. And they would say, Oh, no. I know what he would say.

Do we want advice and counsel that will help us see the weak points in our position, the problems in the path we are contemplating? Sister White tells about how she felt when people came to her for advice on marriage. She said she had the most painful sense of helplessness when people came to her for advice on that subject. And she goes on to explain why. She said she might speak the words that God gives her, but they frequently question every point, and eventually do what they had in mind anyway. Well, if the prophet felt that way, other people might feel the same way.

My subject is guidance, walking in the light, knowing what God's will is. But any of these areas will illustrate the others. If we want light, we must seek for it alone with God, and then get the benefit of any light any other brother or sister has to

reflect upon our pathway. And if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have what? Fellowship one with another. Oh, what a fellowship it is. Your best friend is the man who can help you see where you are wrong. And this means that if you are a real friend to someone, you will help that person see where he is wrong, even if it causes pain.

How many, when appealed to for counsel, dish out what in one language is called applesauce. But afterward when the individual goes ahead and does what he wants to and gets into trouble, the one who gave the advice says, Well, I was pretty sure he would get into trouble, but then I didn't want to hurt his feelings.

We had better get our feelings hurt now than get into a wreck tomorrow.

"But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light" Ephesians 5:13.

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd" John 3:20.

What shows up the weaknesses, the mistakes, the sins? Light. And if a brother or sister has light for you, it will show up the weakness and faults and mistakes. Is that what you want? Or do you want someone who will say, Oh brother, that is a wonderful plan. That is a wonderful idea you have. That is a wonderful thought. Go right ahead and do it.

Even the prophet of God, Nathan, made that mistake with David. David came out with a wonderful plan to build the temple. Nathan was called in for advice, and he said, Do all that is in thine heart. That night Nathan was given a vision, and the Lord said go tell David not to do that. So you can see that even the human counsel of a prophet that is not inspired might not always be the thing. And if that is true even of a prophet of God, how much more may it be true of other people who have not had the benefit of the illumination and education?

What is it you want? Do you want the spirit of God to come in and show the weakness, faults, mistakes, problems? Notice what Jesus said:

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd" John 3:20.

Don't go and talk with that fellow, because he will only confuse you. He will only make you feel that you are doing the wrong thing. Don't go and talk to with him. Just go ahead and do what you please, and don't be bothered.

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues" 1 Corinthians 12:28.

Helps. I don't know what all that means, but wise counseling is one of those helps. I have been interested in finding that there are some people who especially have that gift.

"Some men have insight into matters, having ability to counsel. It is a gift of God" 2 *Selected Messages*, page 361.

There are times when we need that gift more than we need the ability to speak in tongues or work miracles.

"In moments when the cause of God is in need of words, sound and solemn and solid, they can speak words which will lead minds perplexed and in darkness, to see as a quick flash of sunlight the course for them to pursue, which has filled them with perplexity and baffled their minds in study for weeks and months" *Ibid.* page 361.

I have been studying and praying for weeks and months, baffled with some problem. Ah, in the providence of God there may be some brother I can go to, and from the experience God has given him, or his knowledge of the Book, he can bring a reference, and, like a ray of sunlight, clears it up.

"There is an unraveling, a clearing up of the path before them, and the Lord has let His sunlight in, and they see their prayers are answered, their way is made clear" *Ibid.*, page 362.

Friends, that's the kind of counseling I want. But notice the caution:

"Therefore, let all be careful what they say; if they know not the mind of God in some matters, let them never speak from a guess or suppose so. If they know nothing definite, let them say so, and let the individual rely wholly upon God" *Ibid.*, page 363.

Let the individual rely wholly upon God. If we would follow that, there would be a great many questions that would be answered with a frank, I don't know. And in order to give quick answers to questions you either have to know everything or not know very much.

Take the matter of health and disease. A person is sick. He goes to a well educated doctor, and that doctor may take hours and days to even make a diagnosis. But I could name several food faddists and health faddists who could look at him for three minutes and tell him what was the matter and what to do.

Many people are struck and impressed with the man who can rattle off the answers, whether it is on the question of health or a question on doctrine. Thousands of people are ready to follow such a man. Why? He knows. But does he? Therefore let all be careful what they say.

"If they know nothing definite, let them say so, and let the individual rely wholly upon God" *Ibid*, page 363.

Those who know the most in Christian experience, medical science, education, science, are the most ready to admit that there are many things they do not have clear light on. So let us beware of those who think they have all the answers on every subject. Let us rather appreciate those who will carefully weigh evidence, those who will point out what is written in the books, and those who will help us find real authority in the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, and true science rather than glibly accept floating rumors, faddist ideas, and all sorts of things that are here today and gone tomorrow.

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