

CPC School of Discipleship
 Fall 2020
 Communion with God, part 1

The Incredible Benefits of Being in Christ

The Heart of the Matter

Catalyst: How do you convince someone *in the 1st Century* to become a Christian, if it will just bring familial strife, social ostracism, and loss of privilege?

Response: *“That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1John 1.3)*

“Fellowship” = *koinonia* (κοινωνία), the million \$ word! “Communion, union, mutual sharing, community, participation”

What is our typical response to “why should I become a Christian?”

Marveling at the Fact of Communion: “Consider how greatly God has honored us! Human wisdom sees such an infinite disparity between God and man that it concludes there can be no communion between them. But we have in Christ the way into God’s presence without fear.

“Our communion with God lies in his giving himself to us and our giving ourselves and all that he requires to him.

“May God give you such a taste of his sweetness and excellence in this communion as to be stirred up to a greater longing for that eternal enjoyment of him in eternal glory” - John Owen (1616-1683), *Communion with God*, 2-3.

*****Goal of this class: To become aware, marvel at, and empower to enjoy communally and individually the incredible benefits we have in Christ.**

*Citations from John Owen, *Communion with God* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1991)

A Survey of "Communion with God"

Communion in Scripture:

1. *Totally New Identity*

1. Notice "in Christ" throughout the New Testament letters, summarized by Gal. 2.20 - *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

2. *Sharing Christ's benefits:*

1. Compare Eph. 1.19-20 to Eph. 2.4-7: *"his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places"* compared to *"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."*

1. We become by grace what Jesus is by nature

2. Does this seem too idealistic? Or in the clouds? Why?

2. **Overall Summary** - If Christ is the new Adam - doing what humanity failed at; the New Israel - doing what Israel failed at; the new Moses and David and High Priest - doing what the prophet, king, and priest didn't quite accomplish.... THEN he incorporates us into what he accomplished so that we may do so in Him - *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."* (Rom. 8.1-4)

1. *"God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory"* (Col. 1.27)

3. **In Community** - *"For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."* (Eph. 2.18-22) See also 4.1-16

1. At the Lord's Supper - 1Cor. 10.16-18 - *"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation (koinonia) in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation (koinonia) in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 18 Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants (koinonoi) in the altar?"*

Communion in Westminster:

Ch. 26 - I. All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by his Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory: (a) and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces,(b) and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.(c)

(a) 1 John 1:3; Eph 3:16-18; John 1:16; Eph 2:5-6; Phil 3:10; Rom 6:5-6; Rom 8:17; 2 Tim 2:12

(b) Eph 4:15-16; 1 Cor 12:7,12; 1 Cor 3:21-23; Col 2:19

(c) 1 Thess 5:11,14; Rom 1:11-12,14; 1 John 3:16-18; Gal 6:10

II. Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification;(d) as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.(e)

(d) Heb 10:24-25; Acts 2:42,46; Isa 2:3; 1 Cor 11:20

(e) Acts 2:44; 1 John 3:17; 2 Cor 8-9; Acts 11:29-30

The Practice of Communion with God

1. Prayer and the Word
2. Meditating on the benefits we enjoy in Christ
 1. Meditation as a back-and-forth with God in His Word
 2. Journaling
3. "Practicing the Presence of God" in daily life - You are a new creation, with a new posture, new identity, therefore different purpose in all of life - Christ is in you!
 1. Living fearlessly - if we share in Christ, then....!!
4. Mutual encouragement
5. Making good "use" of the gift that is the Sabbath