

Vss. 1-6 tell us what Fellowship looks like in the life of a believer.

(When Jesus is at the center of your life, you're gonna...)

(:1) Be Loving (both noun & verb)

- Brotherly love = *philadelphia* = the basis for fellowship
 - lit. = "the brotherly love remain"
 - NIV: *Keep on loving each other as brothers*
 - *Message*
- Stated as a principle: God's people care about & care for one another
 - We're in this together.
 - We were all headed for an eternity apart from God, w/o hope.
 - Then the light of God's love broke through our hard hearts.
 - Now we all share the same Spirit, the same hope.
 - Having that in common makes us more than friends / members of the same club.
 - Just like blood is thicker than water, the blood of Jesus is thickest of all.
- Apparently the Hebrew Xians were dividing, taking sides...
 - Keep on...
- When He is at the center of your life, you're gonna be loving.

(And you're gonna...)

(:2) Be Hospitable

- This is brotherly love extended beyond the immediate circle of fellowship. (? Strangers, ! Believers!)
- Entertain = *philoxenia* = brotherly love toward people you don't know / hospitality
- In those days travelers couldn't check into Motel 6.
 - If they didn't have family, they'd wait in the town square or by the gate, with their bags, etc., & wait for someone to invite them home for dinner & a place to sleep. (house / barn)
 - That was the common custom.
- For Xians, it was even more common to welcome strangers with the love of Jesus.
- And you never really know who it is you're showing hospitality to (:2b)
 - cf. Abraham (Gen. 18), Lot (Gen 19), Gideon (Judges 6), Samson's parents (Judges 13)
- When Jesus is the main thing, His love will compel you to care for others - even strangers.

(:3) Be Concerned For Suffering

- The circle of fellowship extends even farther - to God's people who are being persecuted.
 - cf. (10:32-34) = compassion for writer while in prison
- When someone was in prison, it was up to the family to provide for that prisoner.
 - If someone was imprisoned for their faith, it was the fellowship of faith (church) who did that
- There are prisons of all kinds:
 - sickness, loneliness, poverty...
- Jesus said that to love God & love your neighbor as yourself is all God ever asks us to do,
 - When Jesus drops that love rock, the ripples go out and touch everyone who's in the water
 - Those ripples are us.

(:4) Be Pure

- Now the ripples of fellowship reach inward - into the most private place of all: our beds.
- Why is God so concerned with how people express their sexuality?
 - If God is love, why can't everyone just make love w/whoever, whenever, however they choose?
 - That's how it is: on TV? / in the big city / with all my neighbors...
- (4a) Marriage is honorable (esteemed/precious) among all (cf. holy matrimony).

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- (:4b) And the bed undefiled = there's nothing precious or pure about casual sex.
 - (STRONG LANGUAGE) Sexual intimacy is raped of it's honor and sacredness when it is purely a physical act, apart from emotional connectedness and a lifelong, 'till death do us part, commitment.
 - The fact is that it's impossible to separate the emotional component from the physical act.
 - That's why psychologist and psychiatrist offices are jammed with people who can't seem to connect with their spouses or even their children.
 - The mechanism for emotional intimacy has had to make and break the connection so many times - a connection it's designed to make only once - that it doesn't work when you want it to.
 - But that's not the real reason God is so concerned. Here's the real reason:
- Marriage was instituted & is intended to be a model of the relationship God has w/His people.
 - Physical intimacy between a husband & wife is a picture of the spiritual intimacy God wants w/you. (Ephesians 5:32) "This is a great mystery, but I speak of Christ & the church."
 - Could anything be more personal? Private? Fulfilling?
 - It's an emotional connection designed to be made once and kept forever.
 - 1st commandment: "You shall have no other Gods" - 'cuz there is no other God, not really!
 - It's an unbreakable commitment for better worse, richer poorer, sickness health.
 - Our bridegroom says "I'll never leave you or forsake you". (:5)
- (:4c) Fornication/Adultery = misuse of sexuality unmarried/married
 - That doesn't mean that those sins are unforgivable.
 - But it does mean that if Jesus is the main thing, you won't be able to continue in those things.
 - Your own heart, mind, conscience won't let you be joined to Jesus & live a loose life.

(w/Jesus is on the big chair in your life, you'll be Loving / Hospitable / Concerned for suffering / Pure & you'll...)

(:5-6) Be Content

- (:5a) If your conduct w/o covetousness, the first 4 are easy.
 - When you're satisfied w/what you have you'll be able to: love others w/a genuine love; welcome strangers w/genuine hospitality; care for others w/genuine concern; enjoy a marriage that you truly hold precious
- If not, then you're apt to chase after the exact opposite of fellowship: self-centeredness.
 - Loving yourself, keeping to yourself, caring only for yourself, using others to satisfy your cravings.
 - And isn't that how most of us have lived? And isn't that kind of living the source of our pain?
- But in Jesus you are truly 10 feet tall & bullet proof (:6)