

16. Fellowship (Living in the Real World)

For an addict, the necessity of change has become increasingly evident to everyone in our lives and finally to ourselves. Denial has been overcome, and now we are faced with the reality of what that change will look like. We may have had some experience with sober living among other recovering addicts in NA or AA, but even there we were most comfortable in a society of people like us. Even in speaking about “normal people,” we maintained our distinct personal uniqueness with a degree of underlying pride. This façade provided a certain security that enabled us to be comfortable in sobriety.

Coming to Christ for recovery, on the other hand, requires that we learn to live in the real world among normal people. That for us is a rather frightening concept. We cringe at the prospect of being labeled a fanatic by those in our family, our old friends, and the people that we work with. How will we explain something to them that we don't fully understand ourselves? In our addiction we had spent far too much effort trying to “fit in.”

As we grow in our new relationship with Christ, He calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves. This means we can no longer see others as different than ourselves, but instead must learn to relate to those around us in a healthy manner. This can actually present more of a challenge to the recovering addict than putting down the substance or putting away the behavior that once us held in bondage. In fact, unless we can do this successfully, we are destined to return.

Fortunately, the Scriptures are very clear in guiding us in this new endeavor. The Apostle Paul in his letter to Titus says, **“Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another”** (Titus 3:1-3 NKJV).

This is a learning process that, for us, is a bit intimidating but ultimately is rewarding as God empowers us to be totally transformed by His grace. Those of us who have travelled this road before assure you that it is worth whatever effort it takes.

16. Fellowship Lesson

Meditation passage for the week – Titus 3:1-8

1. Living in Fellowship with **God (John 14:23)**
 - A. Our relationship with God must remain as our **top priority (Matt 6:33)**
 - B. Relationships require **commitment** and **time (Mark 1:35)** and we must keep short **accounts** of sin

2. Living in Fellowship with our **Family**
 - A. They have been **hurt** by our sinful behavior
 - B. They may not **understand** our faith (Matthew 10:34-36)
 - C. We must **show** them the change rather than **telling** them about it

3. Living in Fellowship with our **Church**
 - A. Some will **welcome** us as part of the Body of Christ (**Luke 15:20**)
 - B. Others will view us **suspiciously** (Luke 15:27-28)
 - C. We have been saved to **serve** (Luke 4:38-39)

4. Living in Fellowship with the **World** around us
 - A. We must overcome the **fear** of **man (Matthew 10:32-33)**
 - B. We must resign ourselves to the fact that we **are different** because of our **faith (1 Peter 4:3-4)**
 - D. We are called to let our light shine **among men (Matthew 5:16)**

5. Preparing our **Christian Testimony**
 - A. Where were we **before** we knew about God?
 - B. Who was influential in **leading** us to salvation?
 - C. What has God revealed to us about **our future** in His Kingdom?