

## Fellowship with \_\_\_\_?

By Jani Lynn Warner

With whom do we fellowship? Do we fellowship with our Old Nature (“flesh” or “self”) or with the New Nature that offers communion with the Father and His Son through the Holy Spirit?

On good days, we would like to think we fellowship only with God, but it often only takes a difficulty or trial to flare up feelings of anger, fear, resentment, jealousy, greed, and the thoughts that are engaged to justify them. When we listen to these thoughts, we are gossiping with the Old Nature against God. Even when we recognize this, we don’t always turn immediately to God and ask for His help. Sometimes rebellion just “feels better,” if only for a time.

Our Old Nature is bound by sin to death, but our New Nature is created for eternal life. *“And this is eternal life, that they know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”* (John 17:3). Jesus died for us and said, *“It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you”* (John 16:7).

Furthermore, Jesus declared, *“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him”* (John 14:23). Our New Nature is created for knowing and fellowshiping with the Lord, who makes His home with us.

A home is where we spend our dwelling time. Where we spend our time and energy shows us what we love or fear. It is where we are at home. Are we at home as slaves to the Old Nature in anger, fear, resentment, jealousy, or greed? Jesus said, *“Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed”* (John 8:34-36).

As Christians, we put on the New Nature to dress differently as representatives of God. We are in fellowship with Him in an act of Faith. Paul tells us to *“put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires”* (Romans 13:14). Let’s no longer try fitting the Old Nature on for size. We should turn away from it to Christ and ask for His help.

When we give attention to our feelings and thoughts, we should make sure they agree with Scripture and are energized by the Holy Spirit, not the Old Nature. Too often, I realize I am having conversations with my old nature, stirring up strife, fear, feelings of resentment, feelings of self-pity, or justification for my actions. Sometimes, I realize I am enjoying fitting into the Old Nature and become rebellious at the thought of turning and returning to God. When I recognize this attitude, I ask God to help me *“be still and know that [He] is God”* (Psalm 46:10). Then, I ask for help to submit to His will.

Would we choose a friend like our old nature? Would we follow a leader like our old nature? Would we read a book written by our old nature? As Christians we should not, because it is full of deceptions, lies, destruction, and murderous tendencies - *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked”* (Jeremiah 17:9 KJV). Our New Nature enjoys fellowship with the Father and His Son through the Holy Spirit. It is at home in Jesus, it is nourished by His Word, and it fellowships with those that love Him.

In our Christian Walk, we should ask ourselves what thoughts and feelings we converse with daily. In every situation, do we fear the Lord or do we fear man? Where do we feel at home - in Jesus or in the world?