

# Fellowship in the Gospel

By Adam Blaney

One of the attributes of that Bible that make it so great is its great depth. Never can a man so study the Bible that it ceases to inspire and elevate his life to a higher plane by its great truths. When studied and considered with an honest heart, even the small, seemingly insignificant passages of Scripture can display wonderful lessons by which to live. Take, for example, the apostle Paul's simple statements of gratitude found in each of his letters to the churches. Though they are easily overlooked, they declare attributes of these churches that meant much to Paul, and for us, are worthy of imitating. One worthy of note and consideration is found in Philippians 1:3-5: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your **fellowship in the Gospel** from the first day until now" (emp. added).

What does it mean to have fellowship in the Gospel? Paul expresses here one of the greatest blessings of living a life for the Lord: the tender, loving companionship of brethren found only in Christ Jesus. As he waited in imprisonment, how precious must have been the memories of such dear friends during such a time of difficulty, what great support they must have given him; what love they must have showered upon him, for he thanked God every time he thought of them (vs. 3), kept them in his heart (vs. 7) and longed for them deeply (vs. 8). How his brethren meant much to him!

It is significant to note that this fellowship to which Paul clung was no ordinary relationship. Rather, it was a special relationship bound by one important commonality: Jesus Christ. His fellowship with them was *in the Gospel*. How great a blessing it is to have those brethren around us who can comfort and console in deepest temptation and sin, encourage and uplift in trial and difficulty, and smile and rejoice in love and happiness. Possibly, however, Paul's consolation resided in the fact that these people were fighting for the same cause for which he was striving: the furtherance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It has always been an encouragement to worship with a local congregation of the Lord's people when traveling. No matter how far from home, one can nearly always find brethren with whom to associate, as we, though sometimes thousands of miles apart, fight for the same goal together: a righteous life to the glory and honor of God Almighty.

Is our fellowship with our brethren able, as it was for Paul, to raise our spirits and encourage our continued devotion to God? How dear do we hold such relationships? It would be well for us to consider such matters. If there are deficiencies, there is work to be done. That fellowship and love between him and his brethren helped even the apostle Paul during his toughest times. In our own moments of need, should we not also reap the benefits of such fellowship in the Gospel? Accordingly, should we not work to provide the same such comfort and peace to others also? 