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"FELLOWSHIP"

Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

"Fellowship" is a good Bible word. Those baptized on the day of Pentecost continued in "fellowship." (Acts 2:42). The Corinthians "were called unto the **fellowship** of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Cor. 1:9) The Christian is not to "have **fellowship** with devils." (1 Cor. 10:20) Paul asks, "What **fellowship** hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" (2 Cor. 6:14) Paul wrote about "the **fellowship** of ministering to the saints." (2 Cor 8:4) James, Cephas, and John gave "the right hands of **fellowship**" to Paul and Barnabas that they might go to the heathen. (Gal 2:9) Paul calls the gospel to the world (Jew and Gentile) "the **fellowship** of the mystery." (Eph. 3:9) The Philippians are commended for the "**fellowship** in the gospel." (Phil. 1:5) Paul writes to the Philippians about "**fellowship** of the Spirit" and "**felloship** of his sufferings." (Phil. 2:1; 3:10) John wrote, "That which we have seen and heard declare we

unto you, that ye also may have **fellowship** with us: and truly our **fellowship** is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ ... If we say that we **fellowship** with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have **fellowship** one with another..." (1 John 1:3, 6,7).

It should be apparent to the serious Bible student that there is a vast difference between the modern day usage of the word "fellowship," and the Bible usage. Churches become involved in social and secular activities and then tag them: "Fellowships." Common meals become "Fellowship Dinners" or "Fellowship Breakfasts" (I noticed in the bulletin of the Madison Street church in Clarksville about their "Fellowship Breakfast"). Dining rooms are built and called "Fellowship Halls." Game rooms become "Fellowship Rooms". Sporting events are called "periods of fellow-

ship." Brethren can be sold on these things, which the church has no business being involved in, if they are given a religious flavor by labeling them "Fellowships." After all, does not the Bible say something about fellowship over there somewhere?

The defenders (when one does attempt to defend) of such unscriptural activities point out that the basic meaning of "fellowhip" is partnership or togetherness. Yes, but **partnership** and **togetherness in what?** There is no hin of a church feast, nor church party, nor church play house in the Bible word "fellowship". The basic meaning of the word "baptize" is to dip or plunge under, but just any dipping of anything could not be called Bible baptism. If so, the old swimming hole in Little Bear Creek back home has been the scene of more "baptisms" than I had thought -- even one old black cat! It makes just as much sense to call any dipping [See page 4]



MEN, WOMEN, AND THE DOUBLE STANDARD

Edward O. Bragwell, Jr.

One thing that the women's movement of recent years has tried to do is to focus attention on what they call the "double standard" that has existed in our society. According to those who speak out on such matters, society in general has had one set of standards for men and another set of standards for women. And to a certain degree this is right. The world in general has for some time expected a different code of moral conduct from men than from women. Women, in general, have been expected to maintain a higher standard of conduct than men. The problem, however, with those in the women's movement is that they want women to be able to conduct themselves after the same low standards that men have always done, rather than seeking that both men and women conduct themselves after the high standards that the One who created them both has set.

We need to realize that God is no respecter of persons in regards to sex. He expects the same standard of conduct from all. (cf. Rom. 2:11; Acts 10:34,35) He wants all to be obedient to Him and those who obey Him are all considered equal in His sight. There is "neither male nor female". All are "one in Christ Jesus". (Gal. 3:28) Anyone who thinks that God will overlook his conduct because of his race, nationality or sex is in for a big surprise. Each person regardless of who he is will have to stand before God one

day and give an account of the things that he has done. (Rom. 14:12)

Men and women alike need to understand what God's will is and do it. Religion is not something that is just for women and children, as some seem to think. Whether you are a man or a woman you need God, for without Him you are without hope. (Eph. 2:12) We all need to follow God's commands and allow Him to guide our lives.

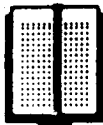
There are several areas of conduct in which we see or at least have seen a double standard practiced by the world when it comes to men and women. Let us look at some of these areas and notice that the Bible does not place such double standards. Both men and women are expected to conduct themselves in the same way when it comes to these things.

Drinking And Smoking. We have all seen advertisements telling women that they have "come a long way, baby" since they can now smoke in public just like men. Through the years, drinking and smoking have been considered by the world as just part of being a "real man". But a hard drinking, chain smoking woman was "unlady-like". In recent years, however, drinking and smoking have become regarded as behavior that is just as acceptable in women as it has always been in men. How sad that we have come such a "long way" in the wrong direction.

What is God's will in this matter? What standard of con-

duct does He expect out of men and women when it comes to drinking and smoking? He expects us all to abstain from any engagement in such behavior. Men and women alike must not run with the world by indulging in the evils of alcohol, realizing that those who do will have to give an account of their actions before God. (1 Pet. 4:2-5) We must realize that men who surrender themselves to alcohol and tobacco are in just as much danger as women. No one can afford to be brought under the power of these drugs or defile their bodies with them. (1 Cor. 6:12,19,20)

Cursing. Some have the idea that there is certain language that is acceptable when it comes from a man, but it is improper for women to speak in such a way. According to the standards of the world, men should talk in a rugged way as they do their rugged work, play their rugged games, and pal around in the "locker room". Sometimes, this rugged language spills over into the less rugged aspects of their lives, but so what. That is just a part of being a man. Women, on the other hand, should be more delicate in their use of the English language. It is "unlady-like" to swear and curse. Unfortunately, this too is heading in the wrong direction. It is becoming more and more common to hear women use the same filthy language that has always characterized vulgar men.



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Edited By:
Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

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Bible Class 10:00 AM
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The Lord, however, will not accept this kind of behavior out of anyone, man or woman. He expects us to be pure in speech. (Eph. 4:29; Col. 3:8) He wants us to control our tongues and speak only the things that are worthwhile and proper. (James 3:2-12) Let's keep our speech up to God's standards and not sink to the world's standards. Men and women alike need to speak as God would have them to.

Sexual Conduct. Another double standard that has existed for a long time, is the standard of sexual conduct for men and women. Sexual immorality among men has usually been looked at in a different way by the world than the same immorality among women. A man who engages in adultery and fornication is admired as a "playboy", "a man of the world", or a "real Romeo". A woman, however, who is promiscuous is considered a "tramp". A young man is not expected, by some, to save himself for marriage as a young woman is expected to do. The young man who engages in sexual activity is "just sowing his wild oats" and "will settle down" to be a fine gentlemen someday. But the young woman who engages in such is "ruined for life". On and on we could go. Unfortunately, this too has taken a turn in the wrong direction. Today, the world does not seem to consider any sexual activity outside the institution of marriage to be improper or sinful, for a man or a woman.

We need to understand and respect God's will in this matter. God has reserved certain privileges for the institution of marriage. (Heb. 13:4) Both men and women must accept this and abide by it. Any man or woman who engages in any form of sexual immorality is sinning against God and must answer for it. (Gal. 5:19-21) We must all heed the advice of the apostles and "flee sexual immorality". (I Cor. 6:18; I Thess. 4:3)

There are possibly other areas that we could talk about, but as you can see, we need to realize that God does not expect one standard of conduct from men and another standard from women. Certainly, God has given men and women different roles and different duties in this world and in the church, but he expects both to conduct themselves by the same standards of moral conduct while carrying out those roles. We will all be judged by the same standards, so let us live with that in mind.

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HOW TO SUCCEED AT GRIPING WITHOUT REALLY TRYING

Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

After several years of observing successful gripers, I have concluded that maybe I am qualified to offer some tips to those who might want to succeed in the art of griping. Here are some proven hints that I have collected (having learned purely from observation, of course) which should make you the most successful griper in your congregation:

1. Learn as little as you can about the Bible. This will help you not to get too disturbed about such passages as: "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer." (1 Cor. 10:10). Once that passage really gets to you, your griping days are just about over.

2. Learn to apply what you do know about the Bible only to the other person. This allows you to know enough about the Bible to answer some of the questions people might ask you -- but allows you to still use all your faultfinding time on other people.

3. Do not get disturbed about sin among members of the

church. Do this and you can maintain a wide target area for your gripes. You can grip about those who are concerned enough for souls of men and women to "rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith." You may talk about how "hard" and "unchristian" the reproof is.

4. Accept no responsibility in carrying out the work of the church. It is much easier to gripe when you are sitting on the side line without any responsibility. You see, it kind of works like the old maid telling folks how to raise their children.

5. Get as few facts as possible before passing judgment. Facts only serve to confuse and might even take away your old spunk to gripe. Let your motto be: "Speak now, think later".

6. Feed regularly upon gossip. Never let a telephone ring pass without swallowing at least a mouth full of gossip. You will be surprised at how many big complaints you can make from the smallest morsel of gossip.

We suggest that you clip this handy reference and attach it to the inside of your phone book, your TV guide, or the outside cover of your Bible. Then it can be seen easily and often, and you can be assured of being a successful griper -- without really trying. Δ

- Fellowship from page 1 -

"baptism" as it does to call a gathering of any kind "fellowship". It would be just as logical to have a "church washday" on which members washed their clothes and justify it under the heading of "baptism" as it is to seek to justify activities that do not belong to the church's work under a heading of "fellowship." Both would show a misuse of the Bible terms.

It is no wonder that some have said that at the very mention of the word "fellowship", that they can nearly smell coffee and taste donuts. Fellowship is a good word. Let's not use it to sell the church into "social gospel" apostacy. Δ

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