

Living to Win

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True Fellowship

From Ronald L. Dart's *Born to Win* Notes

What has made you and me friends is the Bible, Jesus Christ and his Father, and the Holy Spirit. It is here that we have found common ground. It is here that we find a spirit of brotherhood and friendship. I think the Apostle John must have felt the same way when he wrote his first epistle.

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete” (1 John 1:1-4 NIV).

What does John mean by fellowship?

Fellowship is a well worn religious word, and like all over used words, it has lost some of its

significance. The word in the Greek denotes more than sitting around after church and sharing coffee and snacks. The word denotes partnership. If we were partners in business, and the business went broke, we would both lose. If it made money, we would both share in the profit.

But if we are partners, we share everything. Listen to what Jesus said to his disciples at the Last Supper. “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast

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forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:5-7 KJV). Jesus' commitment to his disciples was *absolute*. He expected nothing less from them.

Now you and I may speak of fellowship in terms of coffee and conversation after church.

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Maximize Your Gifts—At No Cost to You!

Did you know that Glenn Beck matches the gifts his employees give to charitable organizations? Many other employers do, too. If you work for an employer than matches charitable gifts and if you register CEM to be the recipient, your employer will match all or a portion of what you give, and it costs you nothing extra at all. Some companies match the gifts of their retirees. You can put important resources to work for CEM that help the *Born to Win* broadcast reach even more people. Call us at 1-888-BIBLE-44 for a *FREE* brochure that explains matching gifts to help you talk to your employer about this. It even lists many companies that have matching gift programs in place. Everyone wants their dollars to work harder. Look into matching gifts today!

Should You Keep the Feast of Tabernacles?

By Allie Dart

Many of you have listened to the *Born to Win* “Christian Holidays” broadcast series by Ronald L. Dart, which has drawn the greatest interest of any series Ron has done. You may never have thought about celebrating the festivals that are laid out in the Old Testament and surprisingly, in the New Testament as well.

You may have heard that the holy days in the Old Testament are Jewish and Christians shouldn’t keep them—that they were “nailed to the cross.” But the broadcasts you’ve heard from Ron Dart caused you to rethink whether you should celebrate days such as the Feast of Tabernacles each year.

Why celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles?

For eight days in the Fall of every year, Christians in our tradition pause to observe “The Feast of Tabernacles.” We celebrate this festival because it is commanded of God (Leviticus 23) and because we see a powerful Christian significance in the Feast. For us, this is not merely a Jewish holiday, but one of the “Appointed Times of God,” given to remind us every year of an important part of God’s plan deepening our understanding of the work and ministry of Jesus Christ. It is only through the observance of these festivals that we come to more fully understand their meaning. Precious gems are uncovered in daily sermons to broaden understanding. Ron Dart’s book, *The Thread, God’s*

Appointments with History lays out all of the seven holy days of God in a fascinating and understandable way. You can order online at our website, www.borntowin.net, or write or call CEM at 1-888-BIBLE 44. Ask for a holy day calendar, too. The appointed holy days of God are laid out in a wallet-size calendar.

What is the Feast of Tabernacles?

It is a family pilgrimage festival—a festival observed away from home. We go where many of God’s people gather. The primary purpose is worship of God and spiritual renewal. For eight days we worship, rest, play and learn together. Every day includes an uplifting worship service where we glorify God in song, in the reading and exposition of Scripture and prayer. Each day also includes workshops, seminars designed “That the man of God may be proficient and equipped to every good work,” and classes for children and youth.

There are plenty of opportunities for Christian fellowship, with activities designed not just for fun, but for meeting new people and for bonding with new friends.

So, where can you celebrate the Feast of Tabernacle with people of like faith? Christian Educational Ministries will be hosting the Feast of Tabernacles October 12-20, 2011 in Sevierville, Tennessee at the beautiful Sevierville Events Center.

About the Area

Sevierville is located in the beautiful foothills of the Smoky Mountains. In mid-October, the trees should be displaying an array of beautiful autumn colors. The summer heat should be basically passed so you can enjoy the refreshing cool breeze of Fall.

You’ll find good mountain cooking, but that isn’t all. In Sevierville, the traditional foods provide plenty of down home taste, but restaurants also offer fine dining and ethnic cuisine. You may enjoy mounds of apple fritters (a local favorite), pancakes for breakfast and then enjoy fresh sushi or fine Italian cuisine for dinner.

Outlet malls, specialty shops, boutiques, antique stores and galleries throw their doors open every day to welcome you in for a look at their treasures. Rock bottom prices on name brand items, hard to find collectibles and beautiful artwork fill the shelves in Sevierville . . . and searching out that perfect item is just part of the fun.

Entertainment and attraction opportunities are available in Sevierville, Sevier County and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. At comedy and music theaters, you will find the best in Southern Highlands entertainment. Visit Sevierville’s outstanding theme park or a world-class aquarium. You’ll find plenty of opportunities for golfing, hiking, and other outdoor adventures. There is so much to do in

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When John speaks of fellowship, he is going way beyond that. He is speaking of the absolute partnership, the closeness, the love between Jesus and his disciples. That meant more to Jesus' disciples than it does to us, so far removed from that night.

Just how strong is true fellowship?

John said this: "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard," said John, "so that you also may be our partner. And our partnership is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ." It is a strange partnership we have, you and I, because you know who I am and what I have to say. But I only know who you are when you decide to speak up and let me know what you think. I think it works because the Holy Spirit works in both of us to take us where God wants us to go.

But back to John's letter. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John 1:5-6).

It is logical then, that we can't claim to be his partner when we wander off into the dark. Continuing, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and

the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:7-10).

John uses the first person plural, "we." That means he saw himself as no better than the people he wrote to. We are sinners, all of us, who need to be cleansed and made right with God—something none of us can accomplish on our own. The only thing any of us have going for us is what John says right here. If we own up to our weakness, he is faithful and just to forgive us and clean us up. I think what John is saying here is: "Brothers, we are all in this together."

Our Fellowship with the Father and Jesus Christ

John was a great man, a revered man among Christian people. He was very special to Jesus Christ. But right here he includes himself when he says this: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." I think John was an old man when he wrote this letter. The style, the spirit of the letter, the substance, all speak of a man who has traveled a long way down the road with Jesus. And he is telling us all these things so that we will be his partners, and our partnership, our fellowship, will be with the Father and Son.

In this first chapter, he is profoundly moved by the idea that we might lie to one another. You can't have true fellowship and lie

to each other. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the [atoning sacrifice] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1-2).

I wondered when I read this, who was included in the first person plural, "our sins"? We are no longer talking about merely saving the Jews and proselytes. Christ is after everyone. John continues, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3-4).

Can we claim to know Christ, but not keep his commandments?

"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:5-6). Oh, that sounds so simple. But it is far from simple. "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1 John 2:7-8). This passage is so Middle Eastern. The Eastern mind loves

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the paradoxical statement. “I am writing nothing new here. Again I am writing something new.” It has a curious way of making you look twice and consider what he is saying more carefully.

Abide in the Light

“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” (1 John 2:9-11). Now, I want to remind you that we are still talking about fellowship, the full blown partnership kind of fellowship that transcends coffee and donuts. Somehow, that has to sink in on any man who stands to preach or teach, and on all those who listen. A preacher, a teacher, has to love the people he is talking to. If he does, really does, and it shows in all his relationships, then yes, there is a time when he can raise his voice to good effect. If he never forgets who he is. If he never forgets that he is no better than those he is shouting at. If it is clear that he is shouting at himself along with everyone else.

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy and told him to preach the word in season and out of season: “reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine,” he said. But right in the middle of this is the word,

“longsuffering.” Mostly, this is translated “patience.” But in the Greek, it is macro patience. Nowadays, macros are becoming familiar to the computer types. In the Greek, it just means “long.” And this kind of patience comes easier for a man who is painfully aware of his own shortcomings, sins, and failures.

There is much more to say about the basis of our closeness to God, our friendship with him, and even a *failure* of fellowship. Request a *FREE* CD of *True Fellowship*, and learn how you can achieve the strong fellowship, the partnership spoken of in this letter from the Apostle John.

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Sevierville you’ll wonder where to start.

Accommodations

Find the perfect accommodations at the *Born to Win* website, www.borntowin.net. You can find a small cozy place to stay or conveniently located log cabins with up to seven bedrooms that more than one family can share.

You are welcome!

Come and keep the Feast of Tabernacles with us. Everyone is welcome and no prior registration with CEM is required. We have plenty of room for you. Come and worship for one day or eight, but come. You will grow deeper in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Time with God will be a memorable experience! We look forward to seeing you. Please make it a point to meet Ron and me.

In Memory

CEM acknowledges with grateful appreciation a generous donation given in memory of Richard Garcia, who passed away on January 29, 2011. Mr. Garcia, a resident of Houston, Texas, was the father of Diane Kleeschulte. Many know Diane, who has served as a vital part of the YEA ministry during the Feast of Tabernacles the last few years. Our profound sympathies are with Diane and her family in this time of loss.

Patsy Scott, a long-standing and well-loved church member, passed away February 3, 2011. She was also remembered by a generous donation to CEM. Mrs. Scott was a member of an independent Church of God congregation in Atlanta, Georgia. She was a writer and illustrator of children’s stories and had a great love of children. She is survived by her husband, Hylan Scott, their grandchildren, and their children, Jimmy Scott, Hylan Scott, Jr., Lora Garcia-Carreras, and Lisa Gregor. Our deepest sympathies are with the family.

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*That the man of God may be proficient
and equipped for every good work.*