



## Pastor David's Weekly Devotional

Theologians make a helpful distinction between our “union” with Christ and our “communion” with Christ. In simple terms, our union with Christ depicts the spiritual and eternal relationship Christians have with Christ. The Bible reveals that every believer is *in* Christ and Christ is *in* every believer (see Jn.15:4; 1Jn.4:13). Everyone who truly receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is united with Christ. Since this union is established by Christ’s redemptive work and rooted in His sanctifying work, every true believer is eternally united with Christ. This union is the irrevocable work of the Holy Spirit, and cannot be diminished, damaged, or destroyed by sin. Nothing believers do, or don’t do, can make them more or less united with Christ.

But this is not the case concerning our communion with Christ. This communion represents our fellowship with and faithfulness to Christ. Whereas our union is unalterable, our communion with Christ can be negatively affected by sin. Unfortunately, many believers relegate their communion with Christ to prayer or participating in the Lord’s Supper (i.e., Communion). To be sure, these are part but not all of what it means to have communion with Christ. True spiritual growth depends on our willful, faithful, and submissive communion with Christ.

We see a picture of this in marriage. A true (healthy and growing) marriage is not merely a legally binding union. It takes work, from both the husband and wife, to have a good marriage. Staying married is not enough. Similarly, while our union with Christ is unchanging, our communion with Christ takes work – working with the Spirit not apart from the Spirit. Spiritual maturity does not come from osmosis (simply going to church, hanging out with Christians, or sleeping on one’s Bible). Spiritual growth takes intentional and persistent effort on our part.

In Scripture, we are exhorted to “*train [ourselves] for godliness*” (1Tim.4:7), to “*pursue righteousness, godliness...*” (1Tim.6:11), and to “*make every effort to supplement [our] faith with virtue...*” (2Pet.1:5). In other words, while Christians are saved by faith alone, they are not sanctified by faith alone. God commands that we participate in our own spiritual growth. Active and willful obedience on our part is required as we respond to the enabling power of God’s Spirit. We cannot do it without Him, and He will not do it without us.

Jesus perfectly articulated this mysterious truth in the following analogy:

*“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ... By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples” (John 15:4-8).*

True communion with Christ comes only to those who are truly united in Christ. Only those who are united with Christ receive the benefits of being united with Christ (i.e., fellowship, strength, love, wisdom, comfort, peace, joy, grace, etc.; see Eph.1:3-14). Those who reject Christ as Lord and Savior forfeit everything associated with a believer’s salvation. Apart from this union with Christ, it is impossible to receive any of the salvific or spiritual blessings of God.

Together in and for Christ,  
Pastor David

**Scripture Readings for the Week** (Monday – Sunday ~ Week #19):

*Exodus 21-24; 2 Samuel 10-14; Psalm 54-56; Job 37-38; Jeremiah 32-36; Luke 1-2; 2 Corinthians 6-8*

**Recommended Reading:**

*“Communion with the Triune God” by John Owen (edited by Justin Taylor)*