



Relationships
(Romans 12:18)
The Knitting of Souls

This study will look at four types of relationships from a Biblical perspective to see what God has to say about the ways we conduct ourselves. Almost all wars, conflicts, crimes against others and crimes we commit on ourselves are the result of improper or incorrect relationships. If we all related to one another the way we should all the time, the world would be a peaceful and tranquil place to live. Relationships are a part of life and can have dire consequences on a person's destiny.

The Bible has a lot to say about relationships both in commands and in example. It is not God's Will that we war against each other or that we use each other. He wants us to be peacemakers and followers of His commands. All of His motivation is that His Creation love one another and love Him. Unfortunately, we don't do well in this... part because of ignorance and part because of disobedience. It is the ignorance that I hope to remove through this study. The obedience is up to you.

What are some bad relationship experiences in your life that have had a great influence on you today?

Basically, four types of relationships exist in life. To one degree or another, we all have dealings with each one and how we handle them will design our life. The four types of relationships are:

1. **Friendships:** These are our dealings with those whom we call 'friends'. They may be school acquaintance or neighbors. Our friendship relationships can cross over into the next two types, work and intimate or they may stand on their own.
2. **Working:** Those we work with, for most, occupy just under one third of our life... almost half of our time awake! These relationships are vital and how we deal with them will affect our course in life.
3. **Intimate:** This category includes your wife or girlfriend, family members such as parents, brothers and sisters, and children. We all have some degree of dealings with intimate relationships.
4. **Divine:** Everyone must address how they relate to God. It will happen either now or at the judgment in heaven... but it will happen. It is best to study this now and resolve how it should be handled.

How have past relationships affected your life in a positive way and what has it done for you?



Friendship Relationships

Friendship relationships are the ones we all have had at one time or another. A person's friends tell a lot about a person. God has called us to surround ourselves with friends that will support us and guide us correctly. Many times, choosing the wrong friends can guide you down the wrong path. It is not as important to have many friends as it is to have the RIGHT kind of friends. God never intended us to do it alone. He knows we need help and expects us to secure the right kind of help.

True or False

We should seek those people who always agree with everything we want to do.

True or False?

Friends are people who like to go do things with us, and never impose their morals on our decisions.

True or False?

True friends are honest with us and comfortable with guiding us to truth about our lives.

True or False?

Friends are the people we spend our leisure time with when we don't want to be alone. They are essential, necessary. No man is an island... we need friends. They can share ups and downs, victories and defeats. They are there when you need them. True friends are open to each others thought and opinions. We all need mentors, those who guide us and keep us on track because they care about us.

Many of the reasons we have problems has to do with the selection of friends we choose. The Bible says "bad company corrupts good character". Another old saying is 'one bad apple spoils the whole bunch'. If you hang with users, you will eventually be a user. It is inevitable. In the position you are in you have an advantage. You can begin to make friends that will have a positive effect on your life.

What you Crave

Every man needs three kinds of individuals in their life to succeed. You need a “Paul” a “Barnabas” and a “Timothy”.

Paul of the Bible was a person who left part of himself everywhere he went. He “mentored” many people and gave them the tools to be successful.

- **Being Mentored**

Mentoring is the on-going process of building one’s self into others. If you are being mentored or have ever been mentored, then a part of the other person is being placed inside of you. Our God gives gifts to each person that we can build into others to produce positive results. If you are in need of a Mentor, you know it because you are the one who needs the companionship and the direction and are just not stable enough to stand on your own. In that case, seek out someone who is morally and ethically clean. Seek out someone who is willing to spend the time with you that will make the difference in your life. Mentors are usually older than you and wiser. They have been through much of what you face and have survived. Look for a person who has their “ducks in a row”. Male to male or female to female is the best kind of mentoring because opposite sex mentors can cause difficulties. Look for a “Paul” to mentor you.

Barnabas was Paul’s companion through much of his ministry in Asia and Europe. Barnabas stuck with Paul when others ran away.

- **A Soul Brother**

A person who is there for you through thick and thin is your soul brother. They are the one who loves you for who you are and are not impressed by what you think you are. They will be honest with you because they care about you. A soul brother will hold you accountable. Living in a world of great temptations requires accountability to make it. Hold fast to friends who are real with you. Avoid the con. They are on every corner. Again, these are ‘brothers’ not sisters. It just doesn’t work with members of the opposite sex. Look for a “Barnabas” to be your soul brother.

Timothy was a protégé of Paul. He was a young man who Paul had left in charge of ministries that Paul had formed. He was who Paul mentored.

- **A Person to Mentor**

As you grow and it becomes clearer that your life is moving in a direction that will bring on the good things, you will hopefully see that you need to build your life into others. Having someone who looks to you for guidance and encouragement is as good for them as it is for you. Sometimes, the only thing stopping us from doing something we shouldn’t is the thought of how that will affect someone who looks up to us. Look for a ‘Timothy’ to mentor. This will mature you in ways you thought not possible.

Look at Ecclesiastes 4:9-12...

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Begin today to rebuild your relationships, especially your friendships. The Bible says that friendship with the world is enmity with God. In other words, your best friend should always be your Creator and all others should be in line with His teachings.



Working Relationships

Look at Ephesians 6:5-9...

⁵Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; ⁶not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. ⁹And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Most all of us must work to eat. Living takes money and whether you work in a paying job or, because of disability or lack of work, you work in a voluntary basis, you will encounter 'Working Relationships'. These differ from friendship relationships and should be seen differently.

Describe a good experience from a past or present work relationship that you have had:

Describe a bad experience from a past work relationship:

Work relationships are inevitable and can make or break most of us. If we simply cannot get along with people that we are forced to deal with out of necessity then we will struggle in life. When we go out into the workplace, we usually cannot choose whom we want to work with and the result can be very testing. Some personalities clash and friction can come on that has the potential to cause you to lose your job or damage your reputation so severely that you can never recover. It all lies in the servant-master relationship.

Wait a minute... did I say servant-master? Yes, that is the relationship we are looking at here. In the workplace you will come in contact with those in charge of you and possibly those you are in charge of. Many have problems in every part of their life because they cannot get this principal straight. When they are in a position to take orders, they don't and when they are in position to give orders, they do it wrongly.

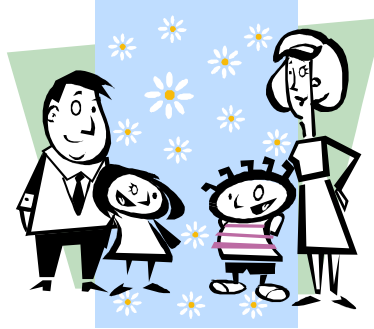


When you work for someone, do it well.

Employers are not all the same and you will work for those who genuinely care about you and those who don't care about you at all. In either case, your attitude towards working should not change. It is a privilege to work for a good employer and a duty to work for one not so good. In either case you should do all you can to 'get along' with both your superiors and those you work along side of. Look at some simple rules of thought here...

- If you are asked to do something that is not morally wrong or illegal, then do it with all your heart. The Bible says that a good way of looking at anything we do is that we are actually doing it for God. In this case the Bible says to do it all as heartily as you can.
- You are expected to perform in a certain way. Be at work on time. Be dressed to work a full day. If you cannot come to work due to illness, call early.
- Regardless of the job you are expected to do, there will always be things that you can do to stay busy. It will make your day go faster and it will please both God and your employer.
- Be willing to do new things for your employer and keep a friendly attitude.
- Try with all within you to work well with others. Don't argue on the job with anyone about anything. If a fight is started try to end it as quickly as possible.

Keeping the right attitude in your work is key. Remember what you did to get the job... how you dressed well and was polite and kind. Remember how you answered all questions clearly and completely? Work each day as if it is another opportunity to make a first impression or as if your job depended on it... it does!



Intimate Relationships

The word 'intimate' means close and personal. We all usually experience intimate relationships. Often, however, we don't always handle these well. Our families and those closest to us know us best. They are fully aware of our shortcomings because they have experienced them first hand. It's hard to fool those whom we have had intimate contact with.

In connection with close relationships, life has an interesting aspect. No matter how terribly we have handled intimate relationships in the past, today, we can change. Often damage done from past mistakes in this area can take years to heal, but this should not stop us from choosing to do it right this time. Intimate relationships can be divided into three categories:

1. **Relationships with Women:** Most men will encounter times when they are attracted to members of the opposite sex. This is a God given drive and is natural in His creation. But, along with the drive, God gives us very clear guidelines for how to conduct ourselves. First and foremost, sex is reserved for marriage. If that sounds old fashioned to you, than that is unfortunate. I know it works. To do this right, living together is not an option. Many who go through addiction recovery and take time to heal from its wounds, find it all come crashing down 3 to 6 months after release because they cannot control this aspect of their life. Here are some pointers to assist you...

- Keep your female relationships on a friendly basis.
- Date in public places. Never go to their place or take them to yours.
- Go to church together, if possible.
- If you are a Christian and they are not, be cautious. This type of relationship is destined to fail.

If you are married, begin today to build that marriage into something wonderful. Nurture your wife and love her as much as you do yourself. The Bible has a lot to say about this relationship. If you want more information, let me know and I will see that you get it.

2. **Relationships with Your Children:** Those here who have children have a special privilege. These are gifts on loan to you. They don't belong to you, but you are responsible for them and will be held accountable for their raising. See them as soft clay, easily impressed, not accidents you wish hadn't happen. Spend time with them... quality time. Take them to the park, talk to them... a lot! Pray for them every day.
3. **Relationships with Your Family (Father, Mother, Brother, Sister, etc.):** You will need to let those in your family know that you have been through a rehabilitation program. They will watch you and let you know how you are doing. It is important that you build on your relationships with your family, if you have one. It is also important that you seek to provide healing for damaged relationships in this area and ask for forgiveness if necessary.

Intimate relationships are our anchors. If they are in good shape and conducted correctly, they can hold us fast through all of life's storms. If they are bad, they can cause our ship to sink. Begin today to do this right. Make up your mind that you will follow Biblical principals for relationships with women. Spend time with your children, even if that means simply writing to them for now. It will change your course and change your life.



Divine Relationship

I have saved the most important for last. Everyone in this room will have to address their conception and acceptance of God eventually. No one in this room is exempt from death. We will all experience it. It is best and wisest to recognize God and make all efforts available to develop a relationship with Him now.

Describe an experience you had that you believe to be an encounter with God: _____

Four key elements are to be practiced here to build a relationship with God.

- **How you will worship Him**
- **How you will communicate with Him**
- **How you will know Him**
- **How you will serve Him**

Worshipping:

God is the Creator of all things. He has certain qualities that make Him worthy of our worship and praise. He is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. Omniscient means He knows all things, there is no mystery to Him. Omnipresent means He can be everywhere at once. And, Omnipotent means nothing is impossible for Him, He is all powerful. Our God requires our worship. Only those who choose to worship Him will enjoy His promises. We worship Him by obeying His Will. We know His will by studying His Word. We also worship Him corporately in churches and in our lives. Praise Him for His goodness! Swallow your pride. You have admitted that you need a power greater than yourself to conquer your addictions. Worship Him.

Communicating:

To build a relationship you have to communicate. You will need to make your needs known to God in prayer. Prayer has little to do with the position of your body. Kneeling in

prayer is nice, but not necessary. Prayer has much to do with the condition of the heart. Pray when you are alert and know what you are going to say. Ask for your needs, but leave the answers up to Him. He doesn't always answer the way we think He would. Be willing to accept His answers. Humble yourself to Him. Assume nothing except that He loves you greatly and wants the best for you. Pray everywhere and pray often. The more you communicate with your God, the stronger you will become.

Knowing:

The revelation of God is in the Bible. The Bible contains truths and guidance that no other book has. It is a life source and a solace in times of despair. Today you are clean and sober and even comfortable. But, no man knows where he will be tomorrow. Keep God's Word handy and read it often. Through it you will come to know God and know his love for you. Hide its verses in your heart so that you will follow the right path. If you have trouble understanding the current version of the Bible you have, get an easier one. There are many different translations out there, some that read as simple as a newspaper. Make His Word your owner's manual.

Serving:

To serve God is to flesh out what He has asked in His Word to you. Get involved with your local church or charitable organization. Begin today doing for others as you would have them do to you. What you know to be what God wants from you, give to Him. Share Him with others. Never be ashamed of your relationship with God. He is the One who is healing you right now. It is not the power you have that keeps you sober. It is a much higher power that you have to thank for your new life. The least He requires is that you serve Him by helping others in His Name.

The Bible speaks of Abraham who lived a life that was marked by altars of stone that he built as a pattern of his pursuit of God's purpose for his life. We all process God's purpose in our life through our communication, our relationship with our Creator and in how we respond to Him. Through our recognition of God as our power we have assumed a responsibility to worship, communicate, know and serve Him. Without this outcropping of your sobriety, you will surely fail. If you lose hold of the Anchor that holds you fast, you will drift away and slide back into the spiral God has lifted you from.

Thank you for your time today.