

Love Community Baptist Church

Wednesday Night Virtual Bible Study

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Part 1 - Building Relationships (Introduction)

Are relationships important? I am not just focusing on Marriage or Dating but every relationship you have with others. Should relationships be healthy? Should relationships be cultivated? Should we work to mend, restore and rebuild broken relationships? Let's look at what God says in scripture concerning our relationships with one another:

The Bible ranks healthy relationships as the most important thing in life. A Jewish religious expert asked Jesus (Matt. 22:36), "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied (Matt. 22:37-40):

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

A loving relationship with God is of first importance; but loving relationships with others is second. The Bible is all about these two important relationships.

Because the Bible emphasizes healthy relationships so highly, it's sad that there are so many believers who have hurting or broken relationships. Many Christian homes have been shattered by divorce. Some who stay married are unhappy. Their homes are a tense battle ground, not a loving refuge. Many Christian parents are at odds with their kids and the kids with their parents. On the church level, some bounce from church to church, leaving a trail of damaged relationships behind. I know of Christians who won't speak to other Christians because of misunderstandings, hurt feelings, and wrongs that have taken place. Sadly, the loving families, genuine friendships, and healthy relationships that we want most out of life often elude us.

Relationships involved more than one person. Is it possible to get along with everyone? Not everyone is relationship material and some people I choose not to deal with...

Paul acknowledged this when he wrote (Rom. 12:18), **"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."**

Sometimes, no matter what you do, some people are hard to get along with. But often if you treat a difficult person with the qualities that Paul enumerates in our text, he will change for the better in how he relates to you. But even if some relationships never improve, if you relate to others as Paul describes here, most of your relationships will be healthy.

Here Paul is telling us that there are some things we need to consider as we deal with people in and on this Christian journey.

You have a part. “as far as it depends on you” – Paul says that there is a part we must play in order to live at peace with others. That part is that we must acknowledge our part in the relationship. God wants us to treat others as we would treat ourselves. Too often we find fault in others to justify why we can abolish the relationship. I am so confident that we could salvage 90% of tested relationships if we put a little effort into it. Be intentional about restoring someone. It is easy to let them go...It is hard to work on the relationship. IT IS REWARDING to see how God works it all out.

Live at Peace. “live at Peace” – Notice the scripture didn’t say live “in” peace but to live “at” peace. If I am “at” something, then I have made an intentional effort to get to where I am “at”. We must be intentional on living at peace. We must be on the side of peacefulness and not on the side of the hell raisers. I don’t know about you, but I like to have peace in my life, my work, my home and my places of preference. There is too much chaos around this world. I need the Lord to lead me to peace, wrap me in peace, anoint me in peace and cover me in peace.

ALL Inclusive. “everyone” – Lastly, Paul says who is this for? EVERYONE! God says we can’t pick and choose who we want to live at peace with. That means we must be intentional with living at peace with the backstabber, the cheater, the offender, the destroyer and the “whatever else is left!” Don’t try to avoid the “everyone” and be the bigger person and work toward rebuilding that relationship that has been torn down. We also should be the bigger person and engage with “everyone” to live at peace.

WE ARE DESIGNED FOR RELATIONSHIPS !!!

We were made and designed for relationships. From the beginning of time, God said it was not good for us to be alone. (Genesis 2:18). Our DNA is made up that we desire some type of relationship. Whether it is with family, friends, spouse, etc. We are built to have some type of relationship with others.

If we are hardwired for relationships, then we must cultivate what’s already in us so that we will not feel disjointed in life.

When our relationships are fractured...our peace is fractured!

We were first called to have a **VERTICAL RELATIONSHIP.**

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him. (Gen 1: 26-27)

God created us and called us into relationship with Him. He provides for us, comforts us, loves us, cares for us, hears us, speaks to us and He died for us!

He wants us to be in **RIGHT RELATIONSHIP** with Him. This is why we study His Word, we work in the Kingdom and why we call on Him for what we need. We desire to be **RIGHT** with God.

Next we were called to have a **HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIP.**

From the beginning of time, God said it was not good for us to be alone. (Genesis 2:18)

It is evident that God desires us to have healthy horizontal relationships because of the commands in the New Testament on how to treat one another. Here are just a few scriptures on how God wants us to deal with one another:

Matthew 5:22-24 – “But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”

Colossians 3:13 – “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”

Hebrews 10:24-25 – “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

Sadly, it didn't take long for both the vertical and horizontal relationships to be screwed up because of that fateful day when Adam and Eve had an apple-fest in the garden. And it's been downhill ever since because we've been trying to get back to the perfect, untainted, completely fulfilling relationship with God which we were created to enjoy but were hindered by the lingering effects of the Fall; namely, the stubborn self-will known as sin.

We were made for relationship. That's what makes Christianity unique – the God we worship wants a personal relationship with us! Christianity isn't about a bunch of rules – it's about a relationship with our Creator and with each other. And only Jesus can enable this to happen, redeeming us and restoring what God intended.

FOUR BIBLICAL SIGNS OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

By Dave Deets - May 13, 2018 Relational Health, Leadership

In Philippians 4:2, Paul begins the final section of his book to the church at Philippi. He states, “I entreat [urge, plead with] Euodia and Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together...” The Bible does not share a great deal of information about these two women. Obviously, they had labored together with Paul and now they were having relational issues. Paul makes some interesting statements here in the passage regarding relational health within the body.

1. Relationships are healthy when Christ is the focus.

A.W. Tozer stated, “one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to one another.” What is Paul's urging here? It is not that Syntyche be in agreement to what Euodia wanted or vice versa. His pleading was that they agree in the Lord. What does Christ want? What is Christ's objective? Far too often, in a church setting or in our own relationships as believers, we want people to see things from our perspective and, quite honestly, we want people to do things our way. In order to have a healthy relationship, we have to say, “what does Christ want?” Our unity will come as others ask that same question. It isn't about me getting people to see things my way, it is about people being committed to what Christ wants and consequently, those who are pursuing Christ will be unified.

2. Relationships are healthy when the “one anothers” are fulfilled.

What does Paul say in verse 3? “I ask you also, true companion, help these women...” Too many times in a church setting, two people are having relational problems and the entire congregation knows about it, talks about it, worries about, but seldom does anything about it! The Bible is full of “one another” phrases that give us commands that we as believers are to fulfill. We are to love, care for, encourage, edify, exhort, welcome, and be kind to one another. Here is the raw application of the commands from Scripture: it is your obligation to seek healthy relationships in your own life and in the lives of other believers. This is your obligation and my obligation as a believer. I must fulfill the one another commands of Scripture and you must fulfill them as well.

3. Relationships are healthy when accounts are kept short.

We are not told what the problem was between these two women, but here is one thing we do know: they had a long-standing issue. How do we know this? Paul had time to be told about the issue by Epaphroditus who was sent to be a blessing and encouragement to him by the people of Philippi. No doubt, Epaphroditus had brought word of these two ladies and their ongoing issues with one another. This means that they had not kept short accounts with each other. They had not made sure to take care of an issue when it arose. Possibly one of them offended the other one and that offense was allowed to fester, manifesting itself in retaliation to the other, producing a new offense that resulted in an unbiblical response, and so on, and on. These two women had gotten to the point where they could not get along because they did not handle an offense quickly. If someone has offended you, your obligation is to go to them and talk to them. You need to take care of that offense as quickly as possible.

4. Relationships are healthy when humility is present.

It is a certainty that any time there is a conflict or a breach in a relationship, pride is present on some level. In order for Syntyche and Eudia to agree in the Lord, they had to set aside their own pride and selfish ambition. They had to see themselves for who they are and they had to see God for who He is. He is supreme and He is preeminent and He demands that His will be our primary focus. Pride will keep us from having healthy relationships for pride will focus us on ourselves and it will keep us from focusing on Christ and others.

For all of eternity, Syntyche and Euodia will be etched on the pages of Scripture as two people who had struggles getting along. We can easily change their names out for our name and someone with whom we have an unresolved struggle. May we learn from them and may we agree in the Lord! May we keep Christ as the focus, may we engage in fulfilling the one another commands of Scripture, may we keep short accounts and may we be humble before God and others.

As we go through this study, I want us to be intentional on building relationships. What relationships do I need to repair? What relationships do I need to cultivate? What relationships do I need to establish?

Here is a Prayer for the Ongoing of this Series:

Dear God, I want to thank you for designing me for relationships. God you created me and molded me to be relational in my life. Help me to restore past hurtful relationships. Help me Lord to cultivate and work on the relationships that I have now. Help me to open up to establish new relationships with you as the focus. Dear God help me to be intentional on loving one another as you have loved me. I know God that when I open up to you and others that I will become a better Christian, Disciple and Person. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen!

Types of Relationships that we will be discussing:

Introduction

Family: Mother, Father, Sister, Brother, Children

Spousal: Husband and Wife

Friend

Work: Colleagues

Church: Pastor (Clergy)

Church: Member