

## Conversations about Relationships that work Part 1

**Opening Text: Hebrews 12:14-15** (AMPC – Amplified Bible)

*<sup>14</sup> Strive to live in peace with everybody and pursue that consecration and holiness without which no one will [ever] see the Lord. <sup>15</sup> Exercise foresight and be on the watch to look [after one another], to see that no one falls back from and fails to secure God's grace (His unmerited favour and spiritual blessing), in order that no root of resentment (rancour, bitterness, or hatred) shoots forth and causes trouble and bitter torment, and the many become contaminated and defiled by it*

**Introduction:** Relationships can be rewarding but they can also be challenging at times. To live in peace with everybody, like the passage says, is no easy feat. Friction, misunderstandings, difference in personalities or cultures are some of the many factors that can lead to those challenges, as we interact with one another.

Relationships can be hard work, but they can work!

The Bible has much to say about relationships that work. We will be sharing over these next couple of weeks principles that transcend cultures, are timeless and that apply to any type of relationship

Today we would like to basically lay a foundation to this topic and look at **why it is so important that we talk about relationships.**

### 1. Our faith is relational

Our faith is about a Father and His family. When you embrace faith in Jesus you become part of a family: God's family. It is not about religion anymore it is about a relationship with God and with those around us.

That is why we read in **Hebrews 10:25** '*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some*'. We belong together, our faith is relational.

- The first sin resulted in the breaking of relationship between man and God,
- the second sin the breaking of the relationship between two brothers: Cain and Abel
  
- The first commandment is to love God,
- the second is to love one another.

**Matthew 22: 37-38** *<sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." <sup>38</sup> This is the first and great commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'*

*“and the second is like it”* – in other words, the second is not less important than the first one. No. It is like it – as important as the first.

Our faith is essentially relational: our relationship with God counts as well as our relationship with others. They’re both intertwined. We need to do both well.

## **2. We can short-circuit our relationship with God if we don’t have a proper relationship with others.**

**Matthew 5:23-24** - *<sup>23</sup>Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*

Some may say, ‘well first my relationship God, of course’. However, in this context, God says, ‘*first reconcile with your brother*’.

**Matthew 6:14-15:** *“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup>But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

## **3. The devil is the relationship breaker**

Relationships is one of the most common areas where the devil tries to get to people.

He will try to use strife, offense and hatred to get you back into his domain:

**1 John 2:9-11** - *<sup>9</sup>He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. <sup>10</sup>He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. <sup>11</sup>But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*

The bible says not to give place to the devil. Interestingly one of the ways that something like that can happen has to do with relationships:

**Ephesians 4:25-26** *<sup>25</sup>Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbour,” for we are members of one another. <sup>26</sup>“Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, <sup>27</sup>nor give place to the devil.*

When people give place to the enemy, they experience torment. That is why we read in our opening text:

**Hebrews 12:15b** Amplified Bible: *“that no root of resentment (rancour, bitterness, or hatred) shoots forth and causes trouble and bitter torment”*

## **4. Our prayers can be hindered**

**1 Peter 3:7 (TPT Passion translation)** - *<sup>7</sup>Husbands, you in turn must treat your wives with tenderness, viewing them as feminine partners who deserve to be*

*honoured, for they are co-heirs with you of the “divine grace of life,” so that nothing will hinder your prayers.*

This one applies directly to husbands, in the context of married life, but it still proves the principle that if things don't work relationally, they won't work spiritually.

## **5. The 3 C's of meaningful relationships**

Because the topic we are covering is about 'relationships that work' let us share with you what has worked for us, as a couple – married now for 32 years. We want to share 3 very simple keys that we have applied to our marriage but can also be applied to any type of relationship

- **Commitment**

We made a commitment that we would never use the 'D' word (divorce) in the context of any argument. Since God hates divorce, we determined early in our marriage to never go there – in any of our words or even our thoughts. We are committed to make our relationship work – no matter what. Relationships at any level require work and they require a firm commitment to make them work.

Selfishness is often at the root of the breaking of so many relationships. You have to rise above that and make the decision to make it work.

- **Communication**

We talk a lot! Interaction and conversation is absolutely crucial to make any relationship work: the sharing of thoughts and ideas is so important.

The quality of our conversation is just as important, the kinds of words we use. For instance, use words that build up and edify, never words to pull one down. Use words of praise and affirmation. Life and death are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21) so speak life!

Speak blessing and not curse (Jesus said to even bless our enemies)

Don't believe the 'silent treatment' – nothings gets treated or resolved by withdrawing and not talking. It just opens the door for toxic emotions to ferment and eventually poison the relationship.

- **Conclusion**

Always resolve conflict. Deal with what needs to be dealt with... and preferably before sunset. Leave nothing unresolved or unspoken. Always reach a conclusion and seal it with a prayer that affirms the presence of Jesus and His lordship.

### **Conclusion words**

We trust that this foundational session on relationships that work, was helpful to you.

A few points to remember:

1. Our faith is basically relational
2. We can short-circuit our relationship with God if we don't have a proper relationship with others
3. The devil is the relationship breaker – give him no place
4. Your prayer life is connected with your relationships
5. Remember the 3 C's of a meaningful relationship