

Relationships that work

Part 3: God's way of doing relationships

Our foundational scripture for this series is **Hebrews 12:14-15** Amplified Bible (AMPC):

14 *Strive to live in peace with everybody and pursue that consecration and holiness without which no one will [ever] see the Lord. 15 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 favor and spiritual blessing), in order that no root of resentment (rancor, bitterness, or hatred) shoots forth and causes trouble and bitter torment, and the many become contaminated and defiled by it*

Relationships that work are relationships built on the principles of God. Jesus was the embodiment of those principles. When we see Jesus and how He dealt with people, we see an example we are to follow in our own relationships.

What about when relationships go bad, when wrong has been done against us, or we have been mistreated or treated with contempt?

Let us see what Jesus did in this next passage:

Luke 22: 47-53: **47** *And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. 48 But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" 49 When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" 50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus answered and said, "Permit even this." And He touched his ear and healed him. 52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? 53 When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."*

V 51 (NIV) "no more of this"

1. **Sometimes we want to take matters into our own hands:**

Peter struck the servant of the high priest. Sometimes we don't cut people's ears, but we use words that cut. Either way sometimes we want to take matters into our own hands. 4 basic reasons:

- a) We give in to the flesh – we revert to our old adamic nature
- b) Because of fear
- c) Often our desires or acts of retaliation come from our instinct of self-preservation
- d) The fact is that sometimes we find it hard to trust in God. Sometimes we see God as someone who created the planet, set the universe in motion, but is far removed from our individual lives (that's called 'deism').

We think we are on our own and we think we need to protect ourselves. No: Jesus is there - Jesus was right there with Peter.

2. God's Kingdom operates differently

In the kingdom we don't cut peoples ears off, we heal them like Jesus. Good overcomes evil!

a) Love is the supreme sign of the kingdom

John 18:36: *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."*

God does not always flex his omnipotent muscles to get things done, He uses love because good overcomes evil!

b) God's servants don't fight people

1 Corinthians 11:16: *But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.*

We don't fight each other; we only fight the flesh and we fight demons.

1 John 3:14: *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.*

- Love is the paradigm of the Kingdom of God. Jesus healed the ear of the soldier – that's how Jesus responded when he was threatened.
- When we respond in love, we put God in control of the situation.
- Love is a decision and love is evidence that we trust God!

3. Is it worth doing good?

Yes!

Ephesians 6:8: *knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.*

Isaiah 3:10-11: *"Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.*

Ecclesiastes 8:11-12: *Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. **12** Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him.*

God gives people time to repent (like we see in **Revelation 2:21**).

Galatians 6:7-9: *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*

Psalm 37: 1-9, 12-13, 27, 28, 34, 37, 39-40

Verses 1-8 - *Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. 3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. 6 He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. 7 Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. 8 Cease from anger and forsake wrath; do not fret—it only causes harm.*

Verse 37: *Mark the blameless man and observe the upright; for the future of that man is peace.*

This works in ‘real life’ - this very message originated from times when we have had to seek God about this, and we have seen that it really works.

4. Protect your heart

In order to never grow weary of doing good and what is right, it is crucial that we guard our hearts. The enemy will work extra hard to get you out of the love walk.

Proverbs 14:30: *“A sound heart is life to the body, but envy is rottenness to the bones.”*

- a) Guard your heart from the words of ‘others’. Don’t take to heart what other people say. It’s really not that important...

Ecclesiastes 7: 21-22:

Also do not take to heart everything people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you. For many times, also, your own heart has known that even you have cursed others.

We have to resist the addiction to the approval of others or maybe the excessive concern with other people’s acceptance or rejection of us.

- b) Watch what’s coming out of your mouth

Proverbs 13:3: *He who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.*

Mathew 7:1 *“Judge not, that you be not judged”*

- c) Identify and reject any unforgiveness

Mathew 18: 23-35

V.35: *So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.*

d) Reject bitterness

Hebrews 12: 15: *looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;*

e) Walk in the spirit

Galatians 5: 13-16: *For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! 16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*

A few thoughts to remember from today's message:

1. Let's always choose love over retaliation and reaction
2. It is worth doing good and what is right
3. We cannot blame someone else for what we allow to develop in our hearts. So, above all else protect your heart!