

Spiritual Relationships

Relationships are important to God.

*"But God demonstrates His own love toward us,
In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

Romans 5:8, NASB

God reached out to us while we were His enemies.
What an amazing example of sacrificial love!

This study looks at how to express God's love in various relationships.



Relating to God

► KNOW God

*"Thus says the Lord: Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom,
let not the mighty man boast in his might,
let not the rich man boast in his riches,
but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me,
that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth.
For in these things I delight, declares the Lord."*

Jeremiah 9:23-24, ESV

- ❖ Circle *three* things we should not "*boast*" in.
- ❖ Underline *three* things that the Lord "*practices*" (or does).

Knowing God enables us see our blessings and our hardships from His perspective.
This brings meaning and fulfillment to life.

► LOVE God

*"This is love for God: to obey His commands.
And His commands are not burdensome."*

1 John 5:3, NIV

- ❖ Circle how we show our "*love for God*."
- ❖ Underline what God's commands are *not*.

God's commands are not a burden when we realize they were designed for our protection and provision.

► SERVE God

*"No one can serve two masters, for
either he will hate the one and love the other,
or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.
You cannot serve God and money."*


Matthew 6:24, ESV

- ❖ Underline *two* examples of what happens when we try to "*serve two masters*."



When you **KNOW** God, you will **LOVE** Him.
And when you **LOVE** Him, you will want to **SERVE** Him.

*If you don't want to **Serve** God, maybe it is because you don't really **Love** Him.
And if you don't **Love** God, maybe it is because you don't really **Know** Him.*


 "Do not have your concert first and tune your instruments afterward.
Begin the day with God."

~ Hudson Taylor

*"If you love me [Jesus],
keep my commandments."*

John 14:15, NKJV

"God gave you a gift of 86,400 seconds today.

 Have you used one to say, "Thank you?"

~ William Ward

*"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added to you."*

Matthew 6:33, NKJV

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Relating to Authorities

► Parents

“...A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.”
Proverbs 10:1, ESV

- ❖ Underline what makes a “glad father.”
We please our parents by obeying them, making wise choices, etc.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise),
that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”
Ephesians 6:1-3, ESV

- ❖ Circle why children should obey their parents.
Obedience to parents and other authorities is always right—*unless they ask you to disobey God.* (Acts 5:28-29)
- ❖ Underline *two* rewards for honoring your parents.
These blessings make it worth the effort to honor your parents.

► Officials

“For the one in authority is God’s servant for your good.
But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason.
They are God’s servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.”
Romans 13:4, NIV

- ❖ Underline *two* times that “God’s servants” are mentioned.



God established all of our authorities, which is why He calls them His *servants*.

- ◆ When we do what is right, we do not need to be afraid of God’s Servants.
- ◆ For example, you only get a speeding ticket if you exceed the speed limit!

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all,
supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks,
be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority;
that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”
1 Timothy 2:1-2, KJV

- ❖ Circle *four* things we should do for our authorities.
Instead of complaining about your authorities, try praying for them.

► Employers

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
as working for the Lord, not for human masters,
since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.
It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”
Colossians 3:23-24, NIV

- ❖ Underline *how* we are to do our work.
- ❖ Circle *who* we are really “working for” and “serving.”

Working with all your heart means doing your best even if your boss is not watching.
Your goal is to please Christ—who sees everything!



“Your **best resume** is not what you write, but **how you live.**”
~ Unknown

“Honor your father and
your mother, as the Lord your
God has commanded you,
so that you may live long
and that it may go well
with you in the land the
Lord your God is giving you.”

Deuteronomy 5:16, NIV
The Fifth Commandment

✦ When I submit to the
leaders God places over me,
I do so not in **trust of them**,
but in **trust of God** who
placed them.

✦ My trust is not that they
will always make the **right
decisions**, but rather, that
God is able to work in their
hearts and in my life **even
in their mistakes**.

✦ The bottom line of
submission on every level is
not “**Can I trust this leader,**”
but “**Can I trust God** to work
*in, through, and in spite of
this leader?*”

~ Eddie Rasnake

“Let everyone be subject to
the governing authorities,
for there is no authority
except that which God has
established. The authorities
that exist have been
established by God.”

Romans 13:1, NIV

“Opportunity is missed
by most people because
it is dressed in overalls
and looks like work.”

~ Thomas Edison

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Relating to Christians



- Coals burn hotter and longer when they are piled together. When one coal is separated from the other coals, it soon becomes cold.
- In the same way, Christians who join together in spiritual fellowship will *stoke* one another's faith in God, and *inflamm*e each other's love for Him!

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."
Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV

- ❖ Underline *two* things we should do for "one another."
We often find it easier to criticize, shame, or judge another person who does not measure up to our standards. But God asks us to encourage those who are struggling.
- ❖ Circle what we should *not* neglect.
It is important to regularly attend a church that teaches God's Word.

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."
Galatians 6:10, NIV



- ❖ Circle the people for whom we should especially "do good."
God wants us to make it a priority to help other Christians.

Relating to Others

"Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."
Philippians 2:4, NASB

- ❖ Frame whose "interests" we should look out for.

"Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."
Romans 12:15, NKJV

- ❖ Underline what we should do with "those who rejoice."
- ❖ Circle what we should do with "those who weep."

Rejoicing with those who rejoice can be especially difficult when you were hoping for the same thing yourself.



What if your friend got a promotion or special recognition and you didn't?
~ **Congratulate** your friend and **thank** God for all the blessings He has given you.



Write what these verses say to do for "one another." (ESV version)

- 📖 **JOHN 15:12** "This is My commandment, that you _____ one another as I have loved you."
- 📖 **EPHESIANS 4:32** "Be _____ to one another, tenderhearted [compassionate], _____ one another as God in Christ forgave you."
- 📖 **1 THESSALONIANS 5:11** "Therefore _____ one another and _____ one another up just as you are doing."
- 📖 **1 THESSALONIANS 5:15** "See that no one repays anyone evil for evil but always seek to _____ to one another and to everyone."

? *What are some ways to encourage your Christian friends?*



"It is the mark of a hypocrite to be a Christian everywhere but home."

~ Robert Murray McChesney

? *How can you become more involved in your local church?*

"Do to others as you would have them do to you."

Luke 6:31, NIV

"If I am not satisfied with what I HAVE, I will never be satisfied with what I WANT."

~ Ralph Guthrie

"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Colossians 3:13, NIV

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► Friends

"Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, Lest you learn his ways and set a snare [trap] for your soul."

Proverbs 22:24-25, NKJV

- ❖ Circle *two* types of people we should not choose for friends.
- ❖ Underline what may happen after spending time with angry people.

"He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed."

Proverbs 13:20, NKJV

- ❖ Circle what happens when you walk with wise people.
- ❖ Underline what happens to a "*companion of fools*."

These verses from Proverbs show the importance of choosing friends wisely. *Our friends influence us more than we realize.*

"Do not be misled: bad company corrupts [destroys] good character."

1 Corinthians 15:33, NIV

- ❖ Circle what we should *not* be.

"Misled" means to *be led astray from the truth*. Scripture frequently warns about the dangers of going our own way—instead of God's way.

- ❖ Underline what "*bad company*" does to "*good character*."

"*Do not be misled!*" We become like the company we keep! If our goal is to be more like Christ, then we must spend time with Christians who are growing spiritually.



"You will be the same five years from now as you are today except for two things,



- the books you read, and
- the friends you make."

~ Charles "Tremendous" Jones

► Enemies

"But I [Jesus] say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you."

Luke 6:27-28, ESV

- ❖ Underline *four* ways Jesus said to respond to those who mistreat us.
 - ◆ These are not natural or easy responses. But if we ask, God will give us the ability.
 - ◆ Jesus already showed this kind of love to us when we were His enemies.

Corrie ten Boom (a Holocaust survivor) said:

"When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives along with the command, the love itself."

- ~ Several years after Corrie's release from Ravensbruck concentration camp, one of the cruelest Ravensbruck guards asked her to forgive him.
- ~ With God's help, Corrie was able to **forgive her former prison guard**.

In all our relationships, what matters most is that we value and treat others as God in Christ would.

"Associate yourself with people of good quality, for it is better to be alone than to be in bad company."

~ Booker T. Washington

"A friend loves at all times..."

Proverbs 17:17, NKJV

? What are specific ways that unwise friends **corrupt** good character?

"Bitterness is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die."

~ Unknown

"Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my **friends**?"

~ Abraham Lincoln

PRAYER

Father, I am grateful You love me and provided an example of how to love others. Enable me to relate to those around me as You would. Amen.

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