

7. Spiritual Relationships

You cannot help studying God's Word without concluding that **Relationships** are a high priority with God. *He cares about His creatures!* Love permeates His very Nature and every aspect of His Person. Indeed, *Love is the cornerstone of His Will for us!*

The Christian is one in whom God abides and is manifested. A major part of manifesting God in our lives is the expression of God's Love in our relationships with others. This study looks at various **Relationships** and how God's Love is expressed in each.

Man ~ God

► Know God

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

John 17:3

✓ Underline Jesus' description of "eternal life".

Eternal Life to Christ meant knowing "*the only true God*" and His Son Jesus Christ. **Knowing God** is what gives life *meaning* and *fulfillment*.

► Love God

"Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment."

Matthew 22:37-38

✓ Underline Christ's command for us.

✓ Frame three descriptions of the extent of our love for God.

This passage describes the "*first and greatest commandment*" of our Lord. It establishes the basis for the premier Relationship in our lives ~ *our Relationship with God*. Our obligation is to **place God first and foremost in our lives!**

► Serve God

"Jesus answered, "It is written: `Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

Luke 4:8

✓ Frame the requests Jesus recites from Scripture.

Responding to Satan's temptation to get Christ to worship him, Jesus quotes *Deuteronomy 6:13*. There, we are *commanded to worship and serve* God only.

Service to God is an expression of our Worship of Him!

"When you come to KNOW God, you will LOVE Him. And when you come to 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"

► Why does Christ define Eternal Life in this way? How does "knowing God" relate to experiencing His life? Are you growing in your knowledge of God? How do we do this?

► What does each of the following mean:
~ with all your heart?
~ with all your soul?
~ with all your mind?

Serving God must always be done in conjunction with **Knowing** and **Loving** Him. **Service, by itself**, is not pleasing to God (1 Corinthians 13:1-3 & Matthew 7:21-23)). It only becomes pleasing when done by one who truly Knows God, and done with genuine Love.

Man ~ Man

"The entire law is summed up in a single command:
"Love your neighbor as yourself."
Galatians 5:14

- ✓ Frame the words "entire law" and "single command", and draw an arrow from the first frame to the second.
- ✓ Underline the command that encompasses all of God's Law.

For those of us who cannot remember all of God's Laws, we need only remember this one. **We are to love** (*value, cherish, respect and honor*) **others as ourselves.** Note that it is a variation of the **Golden Rule** to "**do to others what you would have them do to you.**" Note also that this **Law** can be broken *not only* by *doing* something bad, but by *not doing* something good! We all have a *standard* on how we *expect* others to treat us. **God will hold us accountable for treating others according to that same standard!**

Husband ~ Wife

"Husbands, love your wives,
just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her"
Ephesians 5:25

- ✓ Frame God's command for husbands.
- ✓ Underline God's standard for a husband's love for his wife.

Husbands are to love (*value, cherish, respect and honor*) their wives to the *same extent* that Christ loved the Church, having given His very life for her!

"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.
Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.
For the husband is the head of the wife
as Christ is the head of the church, his body,
of which he is the Savior."
Ephesians 5:21-23

- ✓ Circle the word that describes how husbands and wives are to treat one another "out of reverence for Christ".

The word "submit" means to place oneself under another's authority, **not** that one is *inferior* to another. **Husbands submit to their wives by loving them.**

- ✓ Frame God's command to wives.
- ✓ Underline God's standard for a wife's submission to her husband.

Wives are to love (*value, cherish, respect and honor*) their husbands by submitting to them as "*head*" of the relationship, even as Christ is the "*head of the church*".

Husbands and Wives do well to remember that *it is God who holds each of them accountable* for fulfilling their responsibility in the Relationship. God *does not* hold husbands accountable for making sure their wives submit to them, but *husbands will be held accountable for loving their wives.* God *does not* hold wives accountable for making sure her husband loves them, but *wives will be held accountable for submitting to, and respecting, their husband's leadership.*

- ▶ Read the story of **The Good Samaritan** in *Luke 10:25-37*.
- ▶ What is the main lesson from this story? What impact do you think it made on Jesus' audience? Create a modern version of it.
- ▶ When was the last time you failed to treat another in a way you expect to be treated?
- ▶ What is the best thing someone can do for you?
- ▶ What is the best thing you can do for another?

- ▶ Why is this the primary commandment for the husband? What needs does a husband's love meet in a woman's life? According to Ephesians 5:25-31, how are husbands to express their love for their wives?



1 Peter 3:1

- ▶ What does it mean to submit "as to the Lord?" Why is this the primary commandment for a wife? What are the reasons for this command? What needs does a wife's submission meet in a man's life? How does one obey this command if a husband is abusive?

Parent ~ Child

- 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.
6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.
7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

Deuteronomy 6:5-7

- ✓ Frame where God's commands must reside with parents (verse 6).
 - ✓ Underline when parents should impress God's commands on their children.
- Notice that providing spiritual instruction** to our children is not just reserved for Sunday School. On the contrary, ***it is to occur every moment of the day!*** God's commands ought to fall from our lips as natural as a conversation!

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' which is the first commandment with a promise "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."
Ephesians 6:1-3

- ✓ Frame the ways we are to relate to our parents.
- Notice God's promise** associated with the command.

Employer ~ Employee

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." *Colossians 3:24*

- ✓ Underline *how* we are to do our work.
 - ✓ Circle *who* we are really working for.
- Scripture teaches** that even our work can be an *act of worship* to Christ!

"Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven." *Colossians 4:1*

- ✓ Underline an employer's responsibility to his employees.
 - ✓ Frame what employers should know.
- God will hold employers accountable** for their *fair treatment* of their employees. He will hold employers accountable *to work for their employers as hard as they would for Jesus Christ Himself!*

In all our Relationships, what matters most is that we value and treat others as God in Christ would, for Love, *God's Love, is the greatest of all!*

**"God will never ask you if you worked no matter what, but He will ask you if you loved, no matter what."
"Touched by an Angel"**

Parents as Providers

1 Timothy 5:8

Children as Providers

1 Timothy 5:4



Colossians 3:21

- ▶ How can parents encourage and instruct their children spiritually? Why does God delegate the responsibility of spiritual instruction to the parents?



Colossians 3:20

- ▶ What does it mean to "honor your father and mother"? What is the significance of the promise in relation to the command?

- ▶ How would people's attitudes and work habits change if they worked for Christ rather than their employer?

- ▶ How would employers change the way they treated their employees if they knew God will hold them accountable?

Affirmation

1. I will seek to Know, Love and Serve God, first and foremost!
2. I will love my spouse, children, neighbor and fellow Christian as Christ loved me.
3. I will honor my parents and fulfill my responsibilities at work as unto Christ!

A Prayer

"Father, thank you for loving me and showing me how to love others. Help me to relate to those around me as You would. May Your Spirit make me a blessing to others, and may I fulfill your will to love others even as Christ has loved me! Amen."