



Relationships/Friendships

When many people hear relationships, all that comes to mind is romance or physical intimate type of relationships. There is more to relationships than that. One of the most important and valuable assets in life is relationships.

Success is a relationship game.

If we want to excel and fulfill the call of God in our lives, we need to build, nurture, and value relationships. We can't overlook relationships. My Pastor, Rick, told me that the kingdom of God operates on two wheels—Relationships and Revelation. I couldn't say it better.

It will take sacrifice and a lot of effort to make relationships work and also build deep relationships. We need to be active participants, relating to, sharing with, and caring for others.

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."

We need to build relationships, not just what we can get out of it, but also what we can offer. What we get out of relationships or any benefits must rather be the fruit, but never the goal.

1. Relationship with God.

The most important relationship is our relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. If we want to have successful relationships with people, we need to start with having one with the Lord. As goes our relationship with God, so will our relationship with people.

The success of our relationship with people hangs on our personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

A. Born again and Eternal life

- a) John 17:3 "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

i) We are candidates of heaven and eternal life because we have a relationship with God through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

b) Relationships are important. Everything is about relationships.

i) It is whether we have a relationship with God that will determine if we spend eternity with our Lord Jesus or apart from Him.

ii) It is all down to relationship or relationships.

B. Everything is about and hangs on relationships. It's all about relationships.

a) Job

b) Spouse

c) Ministry.

God works through relationships. He is in the relationship business. This is the most vital department of our lives.

Relationships will either open doors for you or keep them shut.

2. Ministry

A. There are certain things you cannot be able to do without relationships and there are certain things you could not be able to achieve without relationships.

Ministry is built on a relationship with God and with people.

a) If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, you need relationships.

b) Whether or not you like it, we need relationships. We cannot operate independently of them.

i) You need Jesus in your life

ii) You need your wife.

iii) The day you stop depending on the Lord and on one another, is the day your relationship will begin to stumble.

- None of us is self-dependent. No man is an island. Example: You can't have children by yourself.
- c) When God calls someone in Ministry, He does that based on relationship. Only those who are in a relationship with Him can enter His kingdom and can be called to serve Him.

“Relationships will get you where you are going or keep you from it.”—Pastor Lawson Perdue

Just like in a marriage, interdependence is crucial to the success and blossom of any relationship.

B. Could do nothing of Himself

John 5:19- 20 “Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.”

- a) Jesus had a daily relationship with the Father.
- b) Jesus lived His daily life dependent on the Father. He did not do it on His own. He needed help.
- c) Without His relationship with the Father, He was powerless. He could not do anything, but what He saw the Father

C. Paul and Onesimus

Paul writes the book of Philemon to plead Onesimus' case before his former slave master Philemon. Paul did this only because of the relationship he had with Onesimus. This relationship saved Onesimus, but it also could not have been possible had Paul not had any relationship with Philemon.

- a) Relationships will either open doors for you or close them.
- b) To some of us, what is hindering certain doors in our lives is because of a lack of relationship.

3. Body of Christ—Church.

One of the places we need to look to build and develop relationships is in church.

- A. Hebrews 10:23-25 “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 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.”
 - a) Edification
 - b) Encouragement / Strengthening
 - c) Someone else’s story and testimony could be what will help manifest your answer.
 - d) Iron Sharpening Iron. Proverbs 27:17 “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”
- B. Most of the answers to your problems are found in relationships.
- C. Concede your need for others (Genesis 2:18).
- D. You can’t build relationships on TV. This underscores the need for church. You need to make friends and build relationships. There is a lot of good that can come out if it.

You will succeed in life to the degree of the relationships you have and build.

4. Effects to relationships—Positive and Negative

Relationships have both positives and negatives.

- A. Proverbs 14:4 Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.
 - a) Relationships can be messy, but they we can’t achieve success without them. As messy as they are, there is value in them. We need relationships.
 - b) You need to take some risks to make money. If you open a business, it can fail, but it can also succeed.

Example: I run and managed a store business to profitability solely on integrity and relationships. Once I left, the business started to go down because it was built on relationships and the person that took over was not trusted like I was and had no relationship with the people.

- c) Your relationship with your pet or dog is not a replacement or substitute for relationship with people.

- Praise God for pets, but Jesus never died for a pet. The most important thing is people.
- d) Yes, there are challenges in relationships, but there are also positives and good things. True, we have to be cautious about the relationships we build.
- i) We just can't have relationships with everyone, but we can't afford not to have any.
 - ii) Some relationships are not healthy, but some are.
 - iii) Although relationships can be great, a disappointment or betrayal from people we have relationship will hurt more than those we don't have relationships with.
- B. 1 Corinthians 15:33 "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."
- a) We need to watch our company and the relationships we build. We don't want to be corrupted by them.
 - b) Some relationships are unhealthy.
- C. Proverbs 13:20 "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."
- a) Choose your relationships based on your destination.
 - i) Fools are not the best people to hold walk with. We need to look for the wise. Birds of the same feather flock together.
 - ii) We need to be intentional in keeping and walking with the wise if we want to be wise.
 - b) Your relationships and associations are the most important choices you will ever make. Proverbs 13:20; 22:24-25; 29:3
- D. Proverbs 22:24-25 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.
- a) We need to watch who we become friends with. We will end up learning the ways of that person. This passage gives an example of an angry man but we can also say wicked man, ungodly man, unfaithful, a cheat and so forth.

- b) This reveals that we cannot be a friend to everyone. We need to choose wisely our friends and relationships.
- E. Proverbs 29:3 Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.
- a) This passage warns against keeping company with harlots or prostitutes. If we do, we will spend all our substance. This kind of relationship is not only ungodly, but it will also cost us. We need to stay clear of these kinds of relationships.
 - b) The principle is teaching us not to be keeping company with the ungodly or taking their counsel (Psalms 1:1), not just harlots. This includes the angry man (Proverbs 22:24), the wicked and so forth. The ungodly should not be our closest or best friends. I'm not saying we should not talk to them. We can talk to them, but we need to ensure that we are always in the driver's seat when dealing with them. We need to be influencing them, not the other way around. We if aren't the chief influencers, we need to remove ourselves from such relationships.
- F. Proverbs 27:9 "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel."
- G. Psalm 41:9 "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."
- a) Judas

5. Jesus.

- A. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. "
- a) God did not send anyone to die in the cross for our sins. He did not send a stranger or Satan. Why? There was no relationship.
 - b) He sent Jesus. They both had a relationship with one another. Without it, this would not have happened. God primarily works within the boundaries of relationship. Those who know Him and those who want to, are the ones He will use mightily for His glory.

6. Salvation; How do most people get born again?

- A. Most people got born again through relationships. As great as evangelism is, it is more effective through building rapport and relationships with people.

7. David and Jonathan

- A. 1 Samuel 18:1, 3 “And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.” Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.”
 - a) One of the most outstanding friendships or relationship that we see in the Word was one of David and Jonathan. This relationship or friendship was one like no other.
- B. 2 Samuel 9:1 “And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?”
 - a) Mephibosheth was a beneficiary of the relationship between David and Jonathan. Our relationships will benefit others, including our loved ones and friends.
 - b) We need to value relationships.

Relationship Etiquette

A. Love

- a) God’s kind of love is the main key to building stronger and lasting relationships (1 Corinthians 13:1-8).
- b) Ephesians 4:15 “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:”
 - i) What does it mean to speak the Truth in love? This is not referring to just speaking the truth, period. This truth has to have a heart of love—God’s kind of love. It ought to suffer long, rejoice not in iniquity, think no evil, kind, and so forth.
- c) Leviticus 19:17 “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him.”
- d) Proverbs 10:12 “Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.”
- e) Proverbs 27:5 “Open rebuke is better than secret love”
- f) Proverbs 17:17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

B. Thank God for godly relationships

- a) Godly and good relationships are not easy to come by. You don't just find them in a supermarket.
- b) Godly relationships on many occasions are God birthed. These are divine connections and relationships that need to be valued.

C. Honesty and Trust

One of the major foundations to building friendships and relationships is honesty and trust. If a relationship is going to thrive, it must be built on trust and honesty.

- a) Proverbs 28:24 "Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer."
 - i) It is wrong to take advantage of your loved ones.
- b) Psalm 85:10 "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."
 - i) Mercy and truth. We should never hold back the truth in an effort to be merciful.
- c) Pro 27:6 "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."

D. Conflict resolution

In all relationships, conflict will arise. Be ready and willing to deal with it in a godly way.

- a) Matthew 18:15-17 "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."
 - i) Go and tell him his fault (One on one first)
 - ii) Go to him [or her] not to your friends!
 - iii) Alone
 - Talk to them privately.

- Say nothing about them, you haven't said to them. You should never say anything to a person about another person that you haven't said to them first.
- iv) If the situation is not resolved, take two or three more witnesses (Matthew 18:16), not any person or friends (who you have convinced you are right) with you and try to reconcile—mature and impartial witnesses to act as an arbitrator.
- Note: A witness is someone who has firsthand knowledge of what they have seen and heard personally.
 - The difference between a talebearer and a witness is the willingness to put their name down as a witness.
 - You can't act with anonymous testimony. The difference between a witness and a tale-bearer is that they are willing to put their name to their testimony. No court of law accepts anonymous testimony.
 - Two or three witnesses.
 - Don't act on one witness unless it very serious. Do what you can to be one of the witnesses yourself as the leader.
 - Investigate privately if possible, to see if you can see what others see.
- v) The purpose is always to reconcile, not to vent.
- b) Proverbs 25:9 "Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another:"
- c) Avoid using words like "You never" or "You always"
- d) Stop correcting people you do not know, or you do not have a relationship with.
- e) There are some people you have to love at a distance to bring about peace between yourselves.

- f) God asked questions when dealing with Adam and Eve before He addressed the issue at hand
 - i) Genesis 3:9 "Where art thou?"
 - ii) Genesis 3:11 "Who told thee that thou wast naked?"
 - iii) Genesis 3:13 "What is this that thou hast done?"
 - iv) Genesis 4:6 "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?"
 - v) Genesis 4:9 "And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother?"

E. Kind and Forgiving

If we are going to have a vital and long-lasting relationship and friendship, we have to learn to be kind and forgiving. I know a friend who does nothing wrong and does not require forgiveness. This friend does not exist.

- a) Ephesians 4:31-32 "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."
- b) A lack of forgiveness is one of the reasons many relationships and friendships do not last. We all come short and will need forgiveness in any relationship we are into.
- c) Forgiveness is not synonymous to restoration.
 - i) Forgiveness is not synonymous to trust.
 - ii) We can forgive someone yet not trust that person, at least not yet.
 - iii) It is an error to consider forgiving someone as a reason to restore them.
- d) Trust is not given. It is earned. We don't have to just trust anyone. People have to earn trust again once they lose it.

F. Respect

Demonstrate a person's value.

- a) Ephesians 4:29 "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.
 - i) Mutual respect for one another is a vital aspect to deeper and healthy relationships.

ii) For example:

When you are at someone else's place and territory, you are subject to their authority, rules.

G. Build each other up

a) Proverbs 27:17 "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

i) One way we can sharpen each other with words (Proverbs 27:5-6).

ii) It takes a friend—not a stranger to sharpen and speak the truth in love to a friend in the same way it takes iron—not wood to sharpen iron.

Friendships—especially godly ones are essential to our maturity and growth. We should not take it lightly.

b) Ephesians 4:15 "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"

H. Gifts

We can't ignore the role of generosity in relationships.

a) Proverbs 21:14 "A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath."

i) You can use gifts to restore and improve relationships. Money, going out to eat and so forth.

b) Proverbs 19:6 "Many will entreat the favor of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts."

i) Gifts build bridges to relationships and friendships. The more we are givers to others, the more those relationships grow stronger and more valuable.

I. Boundaries

a) Proverbs 25:16-17 "Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it. Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbor's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee."

i) Lines and boundaries must be drawn on how much we can visit, frequent our friends' places.

- ii) There is a time for us to withdraw our feet from there dwelling. All people need some space and a breather.

J. Availability, Time, interest, and communication.

- a) Relationships thrive on time. Time is key in unlocking a person's heart.
- b) People are interested in those who are interested in them.
- c) Availability – Be present for someone in their time of crisis.

K. Value those relationships and Be friendly

- a) Proverbs 27:10 "Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbor that is near than a brother far off."
 - i) Do not forsake your friend.
- b) Proverbs 18:24 "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."
 - i) Show yourself friendly.

L. Don't abuse that relationship or take advantage of the person.

- a) Proverbs 28:24 "Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer."
 - i) It is not okay to take advantage of our relationships, be it, father or mother.

M. John 15:13 "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

N. Deuteronomy 32:30 "How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?"

- a) We accomplish more as a team than as individuals and one of the best ways to build a good team and have unity is by building relationships and friendship with each other.