

EXPLORING THREE KINDS OF RELATIONSHIPS

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There are three kinds of relationship that every believer should be involved in. These relationships run simultaneously. All are essential for the believer and richly rewarding. A neglect of any of these relationships will create an opening for the enemy, slow down progress, and bring untold suffering to the believer and his family. The three relationships are:

1. Relationship with God our maker,
2. Relationship with our spiritual father (Pastor),
3. Relationship with our spouse.

In this study we are going to closely examine these relationships so we can gain insights that will enable us to build strong relationships that will enhance our lives.

1. YOU AND YOUR GOD

The essence of creation the Bible teaches us is for fellowship with our maker. God did not create man to just work for him or fill the earth or roam about, do nothing and have fun. He created man to live for His glory. He created man to have close communion with Him and through the close communion live for His honour. So it is essential that all of God's creation remember that we are on earth for God and not for ourselves.

Rev 4:11

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

KJV

2 Cor 5:15

15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

NIV

We belong to God and therefore, we must live for Him. By creation, He owns us. By redemption, He owns us. He created and also redeemed us from sin and judgement that we may be His. It is essential therefore, that we give attention to fellowshiping with God. Give attention to learning about Him and how to relate with Him.

1 Cor 6:17-20

17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

KJV

1 Cor 7:23

*23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.
KJV*

We belong to Him. He owns us completely. An understanding of this will energize you to seek Him with all your heart and make pleasing Him your number one priority in life. Let God be first in your life and all other things second. Let your relationship with God take centre stage or number one position, while other relationships come after.

COUNSEL

1. Build your relationship with God. Give attention to being intimate with God.
2. Daily, study and meditate on the word of God.
3. Practice what you learn from Him daily in all things.
4. Shed old leaves and manifest new ones in Christ – drop all sinful thoughts, language and lifestyle and put on Christ.
5. Break off from bad company. Change your circle of friends and move with godly minded people who have a strong desire to please God with their lives and make it to heaven.
6. Fellowship regularly with God’s people that you may keep learning about God and be encouraged and motivated to serve Him better.
7. Fill your mind with thoughts of God and never allow evil imagination to come in or take over your mind.
8. Love the Lord with all your heart, mind (intellect, imagination, thoughts), emotions (feelings), will, physical strength, finance, skill, training and gifts.
9. Get busy for God. What ever you can do to promote the kingdom of Christ on earth do it with all your might and joy.

Be committed to your relationship with God

No relationship or enterprise succeeds without commitment and faithfulness of the persons involved. It is your input into the relationship that determines what you get out of it. If your relationship with God is to succeed and produce the desired result, it is essential that you commit yourself to building it by devoting yourself to digging deep in God and practicing what you learn. It is your dogged commitment to your relationship with God that makes it interesting and productive. Being passive about your relationship will not yield any good to you. Do not be a visitor in the presence of the Lord, dwell in His presence. Love His presence and His word.

Ps 84:1-2

How lovely is Your tabernacle, O LORD of hosts! 2 My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

NKJV

Ps 91:9-16

*9 Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling place,*

10 No evil shall befall you,

Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;

*11 For He shall give His angels charge over you,
To keep you in all your ways.
12 In their hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.
13 You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.*

*14 "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him;
I will set him on high, because he has known My name.
15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and honor him.
16 With long life I will satisfy him,
And show him My salvation."
NKJV*

Exercise the gifts He has given or deposited in you to His glory and expansion of His kingdom. Set your heart, mind and affection on Him. Be willing to obey God, live for Him, and go anywhere He will have you go and do whatever He demands of you.

Mark 12:30

30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'
NIV

Identify His purpose for your life and be committed to fulfilling it like Jesus our Lord was committed to fulfilling His God-given purpose of liberating mankind through His death and resurrection.

Connection between your relationship with God and your father in the lord

It must be made clear that God is a God of order and very meticulous in the way He does His things. In His infinite wisdom, He appointed and commissioned some to be leaders over His people to shepherd, feed, care and lead His people, and the way we receive and relate with them determines how God blesses His people. Since He has delegated His power and authority to his servants, the treatment given to them by the people they are sent to is seen as the treatment been given to Him who sent them, so their deliverance, healing, miracle, salvation, and prosperity is tied to the way they relate with His messengers (servants).

Eph 4:11-13

*11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists,
and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so
that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the
knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the
fullness of Christ.
NIV*

Matt 10:1-16

*10:1 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. 2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. 5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. 7 As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. 9 Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; 10 take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep. 11 "Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. 12 As you enter the home, give it your greeting. 13 **If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you.** 14 **If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town.** 15 I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. 16 I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.*

NIV

Matt 10:40-42

40 "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. 41 Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."

NIV

To receive (believe in, respect, serve, and minister to) your pastor is to receive (believe in, respect, serve, and minister to) to Jesus Christ, and to receive (believe in, respect, serve, and minister to) the Father who sent Jesus Christ. That is why when they are not received, the grace they carry does not work in the life of the unbelieving.

- Your relationship with God is not complete without a close relationship with your pastor.
- Your relationship with your pastor who is your father in the Lord enhances your relationship with God because of his God-given role in helping you walk with God and in life.
- Your success with God is connected to your relationship with your father in the Lord – what you do with his teachings, counsel, your faith in him and his prayers for you, your gifts to him and how you value him in your life.

2. YOU AND YOUR FATHER IN THE LORD

Another important relationship that everyone who intends to succeed in life needs to have is the relationship with your spiritual father. Your Pastor is important to you, because he is the messenger of God sent to you to lift you up and prosper you. He is there to teach you the ways of God, help you understand Him and minister to your spiritual needs. He is there to support you in your journey to glory here on earth. How you receive him determines what you get from him. How you treat him determines how God blesses you under him.

1. You need to have faith in your father (Pastor).

Jesus said, *"Have faith in God, have faith also in me. (Jn 14:1)* In the same way you have faith in God the Father, have faith in Christ, and have faith in the servants of God (messengers of Christ) also. If you do not believe that your Pastor is called of God and has the mandate of God to bring you close to Him and help solve your numerous problems and challenges through the teaching and preaching of God's word, counseling and faithful ministrations, you will not receive from him and prosper under him.

Jesus could not do many miracles in his home town of Nazareth because the people did not believe in Him. They looked down on Him because of the background knowledge they have about Him.

Matt 13:53-58

53 When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. 54 Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. 55 "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? 56 Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" 57 And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor." 58 And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

NIV

If faith in Jesus Christ as the sent messiah to Israel was necessary for healing and miracles to take place, it therefore means that if you do not believe in your pastor nothing will flow from Him to you. Faith in the pastor is faith in the one who sent him.

2. The Apostles succeeded because the brethren believed in them and held them in high regard.

Your pastor will not succeed in raising you for God except you believe in him as God's messenger of change in your life. Do not allow what you know about his past life stop you from believing in him. Do not allow the fact that you are more educated than him to stop you from believing in him. Do not allow the fact that you are wealthier than him to stop you. Do not allow the fact that you grew up with him to stop you from believing in him as the messenger of God. Since he did not call himself, trust in the wisdom of the God who called him that He knows what He is doing by calling and anointing him. If you believe, you will be blessed and prosper under him.

3. You need a prophet in your life.

Hos 12:13

13 The LORD used a prophet to bring Israel up from Egypt, by a prophet he cared for him.

NIV

Your pastor is your prophet. Receive him by faith and you will draw from what he carries and better your life to the glory of God. By your pastor God will deliver you and care for you.

The difference between a Mentor and a Father

1 Cor 4:15-16

15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

KJV

A Mentor

- 1.** A mentor is a wise counselor and teacher.
- 2.** A mentorship is a supportive relationship established between two individuals where knowledge, skills, and experience are shared.
- 3.** The mentee or protégé is someone seeking guidance in developing specific competencies, self-awareness, and skills in early intervention.
- 4.** The mentor is a person who has expertise in the areas of need identified by the mentee and is able to share their wisdom in a nurturing way.
- 5.** In this relationship, the mentee has the opportunity to ask questions, share concerns, and observe a more experienced professional or parent within a safe, protected environment. Through reflection and collaboration between the mentor-mentee pair, the mentee can become more self-confident and competent in their integration and application of the knowledge and skills gained in the mentorship demonstrating best practice.
- 6.** A mentor is a role model to the mentee in the area of mentorship.
- 7.** A mentor is basically a teacher and trainer and not a spiritual father.
- 8.** You can have many teachers or mentors, but only one father.
- 9.** You can learn from a mentor through his or her books without even meeting the person face to face, but no one can father you spiritually without physical meetings and fellowship.
- 10.** You can have different mentors for different areas of your life. A mentor for your career, another for your relationship, another for speaking ability, another for leadership etc.

A Spiritual father

- 1.** A spiritual father may be the one that led you to Christ and may not be, but contributed immensely to your establishment as a faithful Christian.

2. A spiritual father lays the foundation for your spiritual growth and maturity through his teachings and guidance.
3. A spiritual father is always there to counsel one on one with you, pray with and for you to see that you are well and prospering spiritually, mentally, emotionally, financially, academically, in all of life pursuits, and in your relationships.
4. A spiritual father helps birth the kingdom of God within you.
5. A spiritual father is more than a mentor.
6. While a mentor helps you acquire competencies, a spiritual father touches the deepest part of you. He helps mould you spiritually to become the son that God wants you to become through teaching, counseling and exemplary lifestyle.
7. A spiritual father is a role model to his spiritual son or daughter.

1 Cor 4:14-16

14 I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. 15 Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 16 Therefore I urge you to imitate me.

NIV

EXAMPLES:

1. Moses and Joshua
2. Elijah and Elisha
3. Jesus and the twelve apostles
4. Paul and Timothy

How to get connected to and relate with your father

1. Believe and respect your spiritual father.
2. Plant seed faith of intercession for your father. The more you pray for him, the more the grace of God on him works for you.
3. Plant seed of loyalty. Never think or say anything evil about your spiritual father no matter what you hear, see and experience. Don't join people to criticize and condemn him.
4. Serve him.
5. Plant financial seed to him from time to time. Make sure your prophetic offerings reach him regularly (monthly).
6. Be concerned about his welfare and that of his family always.
7. Practice what he teaches you from the word of God without fail. Follow his godly counsel to you.

3. YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE

Your relationship with your spouse is very vital and cannot be taken for granted. After a man's relationship with God, his relationship with his spouse is the next most important relationship in his life. In other words, marital relationship is the most important human relationship. So, as you give attention to your relationship with God, it is important that you give attention to your relationship with your spouse. This calls for care in making a

choice of a life partner for those who are yet to be married. And this starts by preparing your person to be marriageable and successful.

In relating with the one you love, it is important that you always remember that you are not yet married and God your Father with whom you are in relationship wants you clean and holy at all times because He is holy. Your love for God must come before your love for your fiancé or fiancée. This calls for caution in your relationships. We as God's people must be principled and maintain integrity in our relationships. What is permissible for a courting Christian and what is not permitted? How far can one go? What actions can be regarded as going too far for a courting Christian? These questions will be answered in this teaching.

HOW FAR IS TOO FAR?

In many Christian relationships and courtships, many people go too far and do things that are not godly and acceptable by scriptural standards. They forget sanctity, separation and holiness for sensual desires. They strive to please themselves rather than God their creator and redeemer. For such their own happiness is more important and worth pursuing than glorifying God in their relationships. God is, and will always remain a principled and holy God, and anyone who seeks to worship Him must keep that in mind and make sure his or her life is pleasing to God and not self.

Love is real and active and need to be expressed always. When love is not expressed it appears that one does not love his or her partner. In expressing love, some times, singles do wrong things. They go too far and do things that God does not love, and offends Him. Moderation should be practiced in all things and at all times. Never overdo things. Never go too far. There are things a Christian can do and there are things a Christian should not do. There are things a Christian can say and there are things a Christian cannot say because they are not godly and holy enough for a Christian who is sanctified and kept for the Master's use.

A peck on the chick is ok for a courting couple, but mouth to mouth kissing going up to a minute or more should be considered to be too far for a believer, because, such action can lead to fornication. Hugging and holding your partner may be considered to be all right, but it always leads to something more. It sets those involved in the act on sexual fire that they cannot quench, and eventually consumes them. In everything, a man can go too far. It is important that we practice moderation in all that we do.

Rev 21:8

8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars-their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

NIV

1 Cor 5:9-11

9 I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people- 10 not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or

idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. 11 But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

NIV

1 Cor 6:9-10

9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

NIV

1 Cor 6:18-20

18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

KJV

FIVE DO NOTS IN CHRISTIAN COURTSHIP

1. Never sleep with your partner since you are not yet married.
2. Never undress or let your partner see your nakedness.
3. Never consider getting pregnant before marriage though your family commands it.
4. Never move in to live with your partner before marriage no matter what problems you may have.
5. Never watch a blue film, especially with your partner for this will stir you up to fornication.

FOUR PLACES YOU MUST NOT GO WITH YOUR PARTNER SINCE YOU ARE NOT YET MARRIED

1. Never go to a movie to watch pornographic movies together.
2. Never camp for a weekend with your partner all by yourselves for that will be a great temptation to fornication for both of you. You must flee all appearances of evil, especially fornication.
3. Never go to a place where sex before marriage can occur or where immorality is practiced, so you will not be contaminated and fall into such sins.
4. Never go to places where alcohol, drugs and fowl language are freely used, lest you be corrupted by them and sin against the Lord your God and Saviour.

SEVEN HEALTHY PRACTICES IN A CHRISTIAN COURTSHIP

1. Study your Bible together for spiritual nourishment and growth.
2. Always pray and fast together for your planned marriage, marital life and spiritual development.

3. Fellowship with other Christians, learning, growing and serving together.
4. Read and study about marital life in preparation for a successful marital life when finally married.
5. Attend seminars and marriage teaching sessions to prepare for a blissful marriage. Without preparation for success you will not succeed.
6. Take time to study people you know that are happy in their marriage so you can learn the secrets of their successful marriage and apply them when you get married. Study those who are not happy in their marriage that you know so you can learn why they are not succeeding and avoid the mistakes they made.
7. Train yourself to walk in faith by practicing the word of God and believing God for the miraculous.

TWELVE INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO HELP YOUR PARTNER STAY FREE FROM SEXUAL DESIRES

1. Do not wear transparent dress when you are alone with your partner or when on a date. It sends bad signals and stirs strong desire for sex which sometimes cannot be controlled.
2. Do not wear dresses that expose your breast to your partner.
3. Do not sit carelessly exposing yourself when in the company of your partner, for that will be seducing him to sleep with you. You must always remember that the mind of man always thinks based on what it sees, and desires are created based on what is thought about what is seen. When desire is strong, control becomes difficult. Help your partner not to think things that will make both of you sin against God.
4. Never sit on each other's lap in the name of showing love.
5. Never explore each others body since you are not married yet.
6. Avoid discussing sexual stories or immoral things for it will set you on fire which you may not be able to control. Rather than discuss such things discuss about your personalities, dreams and expectations of each other – get to know one another better through discussions.
7. Avoid spending too much time together.
8. Avoid late night outings and dates. You must keep away from anything that can create opportunity for sin.
9. Never wear obscene and seductive dresses so your partner is not tempted to immoral behaviour with you.
10. You as a man should avoid exposing you chest and body physic, it sometimes, turns women on.
11. Always chose clean words in communicating your love to your partner. Never use immoral words, stories or illustrations.
12. Let your discussions with each other be filled with God talk and not about your physic, beauty, and bedroom talk. What you say affects what you think and what you think determines feelings, desires, decisions and actions.