

Sins of Relationships

Matthew 6:14,15

The late W. Oscar Thompson stated in his book, *Concentric Circles of Concern*, “The most important word in the English language, apart from proper nouns, is *relationship*.” One might ask, What about love? The fact is, love can be expressed only through relationships.

Two Basic Relationships

Because God is **love**, he treasures **relationship**. His very nature is relational, and he identifies himself in family terms: Father, Son, and Spirit. When we place our faith in Christ, God becomes our Father, we become his children, other believers become our **brothers and sisters**, and the church becomes our **spiritual family**.

The basis for forming good relationships

The foundation for right relationships with one another is a close relationship with God. We cannot relate to God from a distance. We must spend time with Him every day. Only as God’s love flows through us to other people will we be willing to act sacrificially on their behalf. Only God can provide His servants with more tolerance, a forgiving heart, and true love and compassion. Most problems today are not **theological** - they’re **relational** - personality conflicts and clashes with others.

Relationship sins generally fall in five major areas.

1. Can you think of people you may have hurt or offended? (Matthew 5:23-24)

Mat. 5:23-24 “So if you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there beside the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. We should take the initiative and go to them when we are the offender...Go in *humility*, not making excuses, simply saying you are sorry and asking to be forgiven. Before we go to God, we need to go to each other and get right with them. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.” the primary teaching in Matthew 5:23 is that we should **not approach God until we have tried** to make things right with one we have offended.

2. Are you bitter or holding grudges against someone who has offended you? (Matthew 6:14,15)

(Let’s skip this one!!!!) **Mat. 6:14-15** “If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.” Many people hold secret bitterness against friends or family... (or) it may be toward strangers who have wronged them...we should **despise the sin but love the sinner**, and that only God can enable most of us to love an enemy. Don’t let bitterness kill a relationship – if you’re holding grudges, replace them with accepting, caring, listening, helping, co-operating, offering choice, negotiating. Bitterness toward family, pastors, friends, Christians, or God? It can cause great pain in your life- a *cancer* that eats away at you and will eventually destroy you spiritually and very probably physically! **Pray** about the situation, **Release** that person from your bitterness, **Go** to that person if *Possible* and *Appropriate*... express your pain and forgive them...Forgiveness is a Choice- not a feeling... God can help you even in the most painful situations...

Remember what the heaven is like when Jesus parable of unmerciful servant? (Matthew 18:23-35)

3. Are you involved in any improper relationship? (Exodus 20:14 and 1 Thessalonians 5:22)

Susan and David were both happily married to their spouses. They happened to work in the same office and enjoyed many of the same interests. They talked together during coffee breaks and often went to lunch together. They became good friends and saw nothing wrong with their

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growing friendship. What are some of the dangers in this kind of relationship? (a) the possibility of the close friendship taking a romantic turn; (b) rooms for rumors; (c) and the danger of unconsciously depriving one's spouse of the time, attention, and sharing of thoughts and ideas he or she deserves.

The scripture in Matthew 18:³⁵"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." Now, you must read the paragraph beginning with Verse 23 if this story has been in your distant memory. It is about an analogy of the kingdom of heaven, which is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. This illustrates the Extent of Forgiveness of our sins, even in the case of **improper relationships, which easily make us big-debt guys owing debts we can never repay.**

The **improper relationships** could be a variety of types: from adultery and fornication to simply being inappropriately close to someone, internet relationships, co-dependent relationships, people who are pulling you away from God- not drawing you to God, people who constantly cause pain or drain you of your energy. Improper relationships involve many things besides physical immorality: maybe you spend too much time with your golfing buddies and neglect your family or spouse, maybe it is too much time with TV or work and your relationship with God grew out of balance... Take action to end, or re-frame the relationship

4. Do you neglect regular fellowship and meaningful service through your church?
(Hebrews 10:25)

Heb. 10:25 tells us to not forsake fellowship with believers...*Are you regularly in fellowship- do you go to church regularly- are you involved in ministry?* Fellowship and ministry is vital to attaining Holiness. One's primary goal should not be, "What can this church do for me?" but "What can I do for the Lord through my church?"

5. Are your family relationships consistent with God's Word? (p.42)
 - God's Special Words to Husbands (pp. 42,43). Ephesians 5:23,25; 1 Peter 3:7
 - God's Words to fathers, parents (pp.43,45). Ephesians 6:4; Matthew 18:6
 - God's Special Words to Wives (p. 44). Ephesians 5:24, 33; 1 Peter 3:3,4 NIV
 - God's Special Words to Children, Youth (p. 46). Ephesians 6:1-3
 - God's Word to Adult Children (care of elderly), (p.47). Matthew 15:4-6; 1 Timothy 5:4

Col. 3:18-21 *"You wives must submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord. And you husbands must love your wives and never treat them harshly. You children must always obey your parents, for this is what pleases the Lord. Fathers, don't aggravate your children. If you do, they will become discouraged and quit trying. Each person has a responsibility to respect and love the others in their family... How do you treat those in your family? Are there changes you need to make in your role in your family? Father? Mother? Child?"*

Special Words to Husbands

1. Husband, have you taken responsibility to lead your family in devotions and prayer?
2. Do you set a loving atmosphere of spiritual nurture and training?
3. Do you put your wife's needs and desires ahead of your own?
4. Do you study to understand and meet the unique emotional needs of your wife?

Special Words to Wives

1. Wives, do you ever treat your husband with dishonor and disrespect?
2. Do you often point out his weaknesses and faults?
3. Do you patiently forgive and treat him kindly in spite of his shortcomings?
4. Do you ignore his needs and desires?
5. Have you grown careless with your health and appearance?
6. Do you have a rebellious spirit toward him?

Words to fathers, parents

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1. Parent, do you model excitement and joy about worshipping God?
2. Do you consistently express love for Christ's Church or a negative complaining attitude?
3. Parents do you lovingly and consistently communicate with each other?
4. Parent, do you model moral purity by the things you talk about?
5. Have you demonstrated holiness by the things you watch or read?

Conclusion: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Mark 12:30-31a NIV)*

Matthew 18 ²³“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. ²⁵Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. ²⁶“The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ ²⁷The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. ²⁸“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. ²⁹“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ ³⁰“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. ³²“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ ³⁴In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. ³⁵“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”