

Live Right in Relationships

20 October, 2010

By Rev. Lonny R. Bower

Scripture Reference – 1 Peter 2:13 – 3:12, 5:1-5

Unit Theme: Counsel for Christlike Living

Central Truth: Christians serve God on the job, in the home and at church.

Focus: Explore how we are to relate to others and reflect Christ at work, home and church.

Key Verse: 1 Peter 3:8 - *be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous*

Introduction:

Relationships, we all have them and without them we would be most miserable. It is my belief that no matter who we are, we all start life with a relationship. Even those whose mothers abandon them have a relationship with someone. The relationship I am talking about is one based on necessity. That is, we have many needs as newborns, so someone needs to meet them. Whether it's a mother, father, midwife, nurse or nanny we form a relational bond with the one who meets our needs. Our number one need in life is relationships, without them we would never have made it to where we are today. Of these relationships one stands out as the most important and that is the relationship between us and God. It is this heavenly relationship that enables us to live a full abundant life. Like it or not, we were created to be a relational people – even introverts need relationships. This is no surprise since we were created in God's image and He is an intimate relational God. Since He is a relational God, we should work on our relationship with Him first before any other, but as with many other things in life – we usually go at it backwards. Those who place their relationship with God above all others will be the first to testify that any subsequent relationship they have, whether it be with government/business, marriage or church (Christian), are far more successful as a result.

I. Government and Business Relationships – 1 Peter 2:13-25

If you think submitting to government authorities is too hard for you because you don't agree with their ideological views. Try living in the first century under Nero where the very confession of "I'm Christian" ("I'm a follower of Christ") would have cost you your life. Yet even then, it was God's will to live in a right relationship with government authorities by submitting to them. Too many so called Christians today are actually living in rebellion to God by not submitting to government authorities. Peter then goes on to speak of servants and masters, we can view this simply as employer, employee relationships. As God's people we have a moral responsibility and divine expectation to live right in our relationships, when we do we are able to point the way to Christ more convincingly. Moreover, if we did live right in our relationships, more employers would hire Christians first, because they would know they would be getting one who would serve them honestly and wholeheartedly. Unfortunately, all too often Christian relationships are hardly any different than the non-Christian ones.

Note Taker: How can Christian freedom be misused?

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II. The Marriage Relationship – 1 Peter 3:1-7

The marriage relationship is probably the most misunderstood of all. Its primary purpose is to glorify God and since it was God’s idea and not man’s who can argue? As with anything God created, the devil can take it and misuse it, warp it and seemingly turn it against us. However, he can only do this when given the authority to do so, that is, he has to receive it directly from God as in the case of Job, or he can get it from us. We give him authority when we do not follow God’s plan for our lives and for our relationships. The most important thing to understand in all this is God wants us to glorify him in our marriages. When men do not love their wives as Christ loved the church they fall out of right relationship with God and in fact Peter says that their prayers will not be heard. Not to leave the wife off the hook, when the wife does not submit to, or honor her husband she falls out of right relationship with God and will not ever experience the fullness (God fullness) of the marriage relationship until she gets right with God and her husband. One thing to note here is that when either uses the others actions to justify their own, they are only making matters worse and prolonging the broken God relationship. Here is the key as Peter paints the picture - husband, wife, get right in your relationship with God and He’ll take care of the rest, period. Finally, if husbands and wives truly seen each other as being created in the image of God, most of their relational problems would go away.

➤ **Note Taker:** What is genuine beauty? Can it impact a lost husband? If so, How?

III. Church Relationships – 1 Peter 3:8-12, 5:1-5

Be of one mind...what does it mean, and why is it important? I believe this is one of the greatest failures of the church throughout the 20th and now into the 21st century. Yet it is the key to right relationships, Amos said it best – “can two walk together lest they agree” (Amos 3:3)? Jesus prayed (John 17) that the Father would make us one; speaking of the universal church and not a local or denominational church I believe that He has made us one. Where we are under the greatest attack

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however is in our local congregations. The devil knows that if he can cause us to be divided that we will not be right in our relationship with God, so he works overtime to ensure that we don't become one. The underlying cause of division in any body is a lack of love and pride, both of which are about as opposite of God and a relationship to God as one can get. If you'll remember from a previous lesson that John 13:35 says that the world will know ye are my disciples by your love for one another. Then Peter says, that God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. What that literally means is God works against the proud – Lord have mercy on us all! What I often find myself praying is, “Lord give me more love...”love is the key to living right in relationships to our brothers and sisters.

➤ **Note Taker:** Describe the proper relationships between believers.

Conclusion:

Relationships are something we can all work on, however if we leave Christ out of the equation, all the work in the world will do us no good. He is not only King of kings, He's King of all relationships, whether they be government, business, marriage, church or friends – He must be at the head! Only then will we be able to live right in any of the aforementioned relationships. For those of you who are struggling in a relationship I want to encourage you to refocus on Christ, work on your relationship with Him. Once that is solidified, ask Him to help you in your specific relationships. This is where you really have to work at it; you may not want to pray for the one that you're having contentions with, but if you do God will bring about resolution and oftentimes reconciliation. Now to conclude, I'd be remiss of I didn't reemphasize the reason for relationships – to glorify God. When our relationships are right it gives glory to God; how can the world accuse you of living wrong when your relationships are so right? I will never get over the fact that God desired to have a relationship with us so much that He demonstrated His unconditional love by giving us His Son, thereby allowing us to enter into an eternal relationship with Him that will compare to nothing we have ever known. Top that – God Rocks!

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Except where I have paraphrased all scripture is taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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