



RESOURCE DOWNLOAD

4 Biblical Principles to Positive Relationships

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Communication

Communication is to relationships what blood is to life. It is impossible to have any kind of relationship without communication.

In relationships, communication is both verbal and nonverbal. More often it is not what you say, but what others hear you say. To be a successful communicator you must be able to do more than speak clearly. Many times, breakdowns in communication occur because you are so focused on what you want to say, that you do not pay attention to what other people are saying to you. To be a successful communicator, you must also be a good listener and look at situations from other people's point of views, recognize their needs and concerns, and assure them that you understand what they are saying. When you listen, you need to look past other people's communication styles and focus on the content of their message. Too often, it is easy to dismiss what people are saying, even if it has validity, because you may not like the way in which they say it.

Communication is a skill that can be learned and developed. Some of the best advice on communication can be found in the New Testament, where James writes, "**...be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.**" James 1:19 (NLT) Developing and improving your relationships is a lifelong process, and as you learn how to be a better listener and better communicator, you will see those relationships grow like never before.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict is a normal part of relationships. Whether it is with family, friends, co-workers or casual acquaintances, every relationship will eventually experience conflict. But why do we experience conflict in our relationships? The Bible clearly states that conflict comes from within us, and it is fueled by our selfish desires, goals and expectations. (James 4:1-2) Conflict occurs when our desires, goals and expectations are counter to those of the person with whom we have the relationship.

We cannot avoid conflict in relationships. The fact is, conflict in our relationships is not the problem, but it is how we react when conflict occurs. The Bible calls us to "**...live peaceably with all men.**" Romans 12:18 (KJV) Learning how to successfully resolve conflict is one of the most important skills we can acquire, because the process of working through and

successfully resolving conflict helps us become more like Christ and actually strengthens and improves our relationships.

Encouragement

Another key element to healthy relationships is encouragement. Although encouragement is vital, and is oxygen to our souls, most people are starved for this component in their lives. Mark Twain once said that he could live two months on one good compliment. Encouragement replenishes lives. The truth is, we all need more encouragement, and we all need to be more encouraging to others.

We have such a tremendous opportunity to build each other up. The Apostle Paul wrote that this shared encouragement is the secret to creating a loving community, and he urged us to **"make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification."** Romans 14:19 (NIV) Paul instructs us to make the "building up" of other people one of our top priorities. To encourage, literally means we are putting **courage in** the lives of others as opposed to discouragement, which takes **courage out** of their lives. By giving encouragement, we will spur other people on in their faith and in their life. Receiving encouragement will give us the strength we need to face all of life's pressures.

Grace

Grace is a wonderful thing. Grace is unmerited favor that we do not deserve, much like a surprise present someone gives us out of the goodness of their heart. It is a free gift that we are not required to pay for. The greatest example of grace is God's free gift of salvation through His son, Jesus Christ. We cannot earn salvation by what we do; it is based upon what God has done for us. (Ephesians 2:8-9) He did it because He loves us unconditionally. When we understand we cannot earn God's grace, we should be profoundly grateful.

Grace is not simply something to be received; it is to be shared. Grace forms the foundation for our friendships and sustains our relationships. Sharing grace means we accept people for who they are, not how they perform. Sharing grace means we develop a self-giving attitude versus a self-serving attitude. The Bible tells us to **"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."** 2 Peter 3:18 (NIV) When we remember to see others through the grace of the cross, we will see our relationships move up to the next level.