

Unity Through Relationship

Introduction

- How does relationship impact unity?
 - Relationship with God
 - Relationship with brethren

Relationship With God

- Much focus on “relationship with God” recently
 - Rules Vs. Relationship
 - Avoid extremes!
- Fellowship with God is based on truth!
 - 1 John 1:1-7
- Relationship with God can be hard to identify
 - It is not palpable
 - Different than human relationships!
- We do want a relationship with God!

Relationship With God

John 14:15

15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Relationship

Rules

Relationship With Fellow Christians

- Relationship with God means fellowship with everyone else that has that same relationship with Him
 - Our focus is on relationship involving interaction—the local body!
- Relationship
 - What does it mean to have a good relationship?
 - What can we do to forge good relationships?
 - What can we do to maintain good relationships?

Christian Relationships...

- What type of relationship does God want us to have?
 - Brotherhood: “band of brothers”
- Familial relationship
 - Matthew 12:46-50
 - Not just something we say...something we are!
- Paul’s Relationship with the Philippians
 - Evident from the beginning of the letter
 - Philippians 1:3-11

Christian Relationships...

1 Peter 2:17

17 Honor all *people*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God.
Honor the king.

Christian Relationships...

1 Peter 5:9

9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

Elements That Develop Relationships

- Love one another
 - Not just an emotional feeling!
 - Based on knowledge and good judgment
 - Must be pure, and sincere...not selfish!
 - 1 Timothy 1:3-7
 - This type of love is the foundation of the relationship we should have with one another!

Elements That Develop Relationships

Matthew 22:35–40

35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked *Him a question*, testing Him, and saying, 36 “Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?” 37 Jesus said to him, ‘*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*’ 38 This is *the* first and great commandment. 39 And *the* second *is* like it: ‘*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Elements That Develop Relationships

Philippians 1:9

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment...

Elements That Develop Relationships

Philippians 1:9–11

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, **that you may be sincere and without offense** till the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Elements That Develop Relationships

1 Peter 2:1

1 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking...

Elements That Develop Relationships

1 Peter 1:22

22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart...

Elements That Develop Relationships

Ephesians 4:1–3

1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Elements That Develop Relationships

- Pray for one another
 - Paul prayed for the Philippian brethren a lot!
 - Philippians 1:3-5
 - Paul asked the brethren to pray for him
 - Ephesians 6:17-20
 - James addressed the power of prayer
 - James 5:13-18

Elements That Develop Relationships

Ephesians 1:15–16

15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers...

Elements That Develop Relationships

1 Thessalonians 1:2–4

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, 3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, 4 knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

Elements That Develop Relationships

- Have confidence in one another
 - Paul had confidence in the Philippian brethren
 - This was not uncommon in Paul's epistles
 - 2 Corinthians 7:13-16
 - We need to follow Paul's example!

Elements That Develop Relationships

Philippians 1:6

6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ...

Elements That Develop Relationships

Philemon 20–21

20 Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord. 21 Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

Elements That Develop Relationships

2 Thessalonians 3:3–5

3 But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard *you* from the evil one. 4 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you. 5 Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

Elements That Develop Relationships

- Have a desire to be together
 - Paul expressed such a desire
 - Philippians 1:8, 19-26
 - 1 Corinthians 4:18-21
 - Paul could encourage the brethren by being with them
 - Hebrews 10:23-25

Elements That Develop Relationships

Philippians 4:1

1 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

Conclusion

- Relationship is vitally important to creating and maintaining unity
 - Cause us to strive for the “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”
 - Love keeps us from causing harm to one another
 - Drives us to pray for one another, to show confidence in one another, and to spend valuable time together!

Conclusion

Galatians 5:13–15

13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* 15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!