

5: *Relationally Fit* ▷ *New Year, New You*

From the very beginning of Christianity has amplified the importance of relationships. Instead of jockeying for position, followers of Jesus are to demonstrate love by serving others, because **our relationships reveal if our love is for real.**

It's all about Relationships!

1 John 3:11 (NET) For this is the gospel message that you have heard from the beginning: that **we should love one another.**

* Read the entire letter to see how foundational Christian relationships are.

1 John 4:20–21 (NET) ²⁰ If anyone says “I love God” and yet hates his fellow Christian, he is a liar, because the one who does not love his fellow Christian whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.²¹ And the commandment we have from him is this: that **the one who loves God should love his fellow Christian too.**

BIG TRUTH OUR RELATIONSHIPS REVEAL IF OUR LOVE FOR GOD IS REAL.

Our love for God is seen in how we love others; and loving others is more than what we SAY - it's demonstrated in what we DO, in how we treat others, from our immediate family, to our Christian family, and beyond.

Wives to Husbands

1 Peter 3:1–6 (NET) ¹ In the same way, **wives, be subject to your own husbands.** Then, even if some are disobedient to the word, they will be won over without a word by the way you live,² when they see **your pure and reverent conduct.**³ Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes—⁴ but the inner person of the heart, the **lasting beauty of a gentle and tranquil spirit**, which is precious in God's sight. ⁵ For in the same way the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves by being subject to their husbands, ⁶ like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You become her children when you do what is good and have no fear in doing so.

Ladies, respect your husband's position as leader of the home & affirm him when he does well. Pray for him & serve him. The way you treat your husband will prove you love God.

OUR RELATIONSHIPS REVEAL IF OUR LOVE FOR GOD IS REAL.

Ladies, how would your husband answer if he was asked to be honest about how you treat him?

Husbands to Wives

1 Peter 3:7 (NET) Husbands, in the same way, treat your wives with consideration as the weaker partners and **show them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life. In this way nothing will hinder your prayers.**

The way you treat your wife will prove you trust God, because...

OUR RELATIONSHIPS REVEAL IF OUR LOVE FOR GOD IS REAL.

Men, how would your wife answer if she was asked to be honest about how you treat her?

Kingdom Family

1 Peter 3:8 (NET)

Finally, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, affectionate, compassionate, and humble.

harmonious The NAS = NET “harmonious” while the ESV = “united”.

Romans 12:16a NET *Live in harmony with one another...*

sympathetic Believers are to enter into each other’s world - victories & defeats.

Romans 12:15 NET *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.*

affectionate This word is *philadelphoi* = “brotherly love” translated that way in ESV & NAS.

compassionate NAS, NIV, NLT = tender/kindhearted.

Brothers & sisters in Christ should have a genuine care for each other.

humble This is the attitude of a servant.

We shouldn’t think less of ourselves, but we should *think of ourselves less*.

Romans 12:16b NET *do not be haughty but associate with the lowly. Do not be conceited.*

James 2:1–4 (NET) ¹ *My brothers and sisters, do not show prejudice if you possess faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.* ² *For if someone comes into your assembly wearing a gold ring and fine clothing, and a poor person enters in filthy clothes,* ³ *do you pay attention to the one who is finely dressed and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and to the poor person, “You stand over there,” or “Sit on the floor”?* ⁴ *If so, have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil motives?*

There ought to be a difference in the way believers treat each other - as FAMILY:

harmonious, sympathetic, affectionate, compassionate, and humble

THAT is attractive to a watching world!

OUR RELATIONSHIPS REVEAL IF OUR LOVE FOR GOD IS REAL.

Don’t RUN FROM others; rather RUN TO RESTORE others. That is the heartbeat of Jesus.

Restoring Relationships

Matthew 5:23–24 (NET) ²³ So then, if you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ **leave your gift** there in front of the altar.

First go and be reconciled to your brother and then come and present your gift.

☛ **Craig Blomberg** “How many of our churches would or should be temporarily emptied if these commands were taken seriously?”¹

☛ **Kent Hughes** “It is so natural to try to make up for our integrity with ceremony.”²

Don’t wait on the other person to approach. WE are to be first responders; We make the first humble move.

Are you out of fellowship with another believer? Have you humbled yourself, prayed for him/her, and approached with a gentle spirit desiring restoration? Jesus taught that we were to stop worshipping the God we can’t see until we attempt to make things right with the one we CAN see.

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 103.

² Ibid.

Finally, Peter addresses how believers should treat unbelievers, even those who treat them poorly.

Believers to All Others

1 Peter 3:8 (NET)

Do not return evil for evil or insult for insult, but instead **bless others** because you were called to inherit a blessing.

Again, an echo from Paul:

Romans 12:14 (NET) *Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse.*

Romans 12:17–18 (NET) ¹⁷ *Do not repay anyone evil for evil; consider what is good before all people.* ¹⁸ *If possible, so far as it depends on you, **live peaceably with all people.***

OUR RELATIONSHIPS REVEAL IF OUR LOVE FOR GOD IS REAL.

If that sounds almost impossible to do in your own power, that's because IT IS.

☀ **Charles Stanley** [loose quote] *“God never intended for YOU to live the Christian life. God intended for you to allow Jesus to live the Christian life through you.”*



Husbands & Wives: Plan a date night THIS WEEK Take time to share what you appreciate about each other. Ask this tough question and be ready for an honest response: *“What’s ONE thing I can do to better serve you?”*

Parents & Children: Turn off the TV, put down the cell phone, and *share WHY you love each other so much.*

Christians:

- **Affirm another believer.** Write a letter/text OR pull him/her aside and communicate how much he/she means to you. You don't have a Christian friendship? PLEASE CONTACT us this week! (Jackie 850-673-1582; TJ 423-991-2793; Shannon 850-528-6488; Betty 850 464-1769)
- **Take the initiative to restore a relationship prayerfully & humbly.** Ask God for help and humbly approach the person to make it right. Don't wait on him/her. GO!
- **Bless the one who has harmed you** (kind action/words).