



**BETHEL AG CHURCH**  
INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP CENTRE

# **CHRIST CENTERED** *Relationships*

*"Woman, Behold your son! Then He (Lord Jesus) said to the  
disciple, "Behold your mother!" John 19:26*



# THE THIRD STATEMENT FROM THE CROSS

# CHRIST CENTERED

# RELATIONSHIPS!

After He endured six hours of excruciating pain, the Son of God died at the Place of the Skull. His body was suspended on the Cross and held in place only by square iron spikes through His hands and feet. Yet, during His hours of agony, Lord Jesus never lost control of His emotions, never showed signs of bitterness, and never cursed. To add to this, even at this time, Lord Jesus thought of others and not of Himself. First, He thought of the ones who had gone all out to crucify Him and said, *"Father, forgive them"*. Then Lord Jesus looked across to the thief, who hung beside Him, and as a response to the man's plea for salvation promised, *"Today, you will be with Me in paradise"*.

Now we come to the most touching and tender of all the scenes that took place at Calvary. It happened when the Lord Jesus addressed His mother.

*"When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home." (John 19:26 - 27)*

Lord Jesus valued relationships. Here's something interesting - spiritual bonds are stronger than natural bonds. Lord Jesus cared for His mother. Although He had natural brothers and sisters, who were sceptical about Him being the Messiah (**Matthew 1:25, Matthew 13:57-58, John 7:5**), Lord Jesus did not hand over His mother to be taken care of by them, but to His beloved disciple John whom He loved. Spiritually, John was instructed and mentored by Jesus and therefore it was not a surprise to see Jesus entrust His mother to John's tender care.

A longstanding principle finds its origin in the pages of the Bible: God rewards those who care for others and who honour others in relationships. We express our vertical connection with the Lord in our horizontal relationships with one another.

## How do you define relationships?

Relationships are the connections and associations that we have with God, with our self, with others, and with things. There are different kinds of relationships that extend into family, marriage, friendships, church, work place colleagues etc.

## How do you define relationships biblically?

For a relationship to be biblical, it must be in accordance with the teaching of the Scriptures. For instance: in marriage, it would be a relationship that follows the truths of the passages like **Ephesians 5:22 & 1 Peter 3:1-7**; in a family, honouring parents is priority (**Ephesians 6:2**).

## Is God relational?

Yes, God is love and He treasures relationships. His very nature is personal and relational, so He identifies Himself in family terms: Father, Son, and Spirit (Holy Trinity).

## What did our Lord Jesus teach about relationships?

Lord Jesus taught us that nothing is more important than relationships. He gives us the most important statement about relationships that you'll ever hear.

*"Jesus answered (the teacher of the law), The most important command is this: 'Listen, people of Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second command is this: 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself.' There are no commands more important than these."* – **Mark 12:29-31 NCV**

From the beginning to the end of creation, nothing is more vital than relationships. In the beginning, God created you for relationships. He made you to relate to Him and to others. If you miss out on relationships, you will miss the core reason for which God put you on this planet. And in the end, nothing is more important because nothing will last longer than relationships. Your relationship with God and with others will last all the way into eternity.

What Lord Jesus taught us can be uttered in just two sentences but takes a lifetime to put into practise: *Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Love your neighbour as yourself.*

## Who is my neighbour?

Based on the story in **Luke 10:25-37** – the story of the Good Samaritan, narrated by Lord Jesus, teaches that we cannot limit the extent of our love. Neighbour includes everyone!

Any person or group is a Samaritan – Jesus meant them. Human love may be a

*"some people/some places/some of the time"*

kind of love. God's love is an *"everyone/everywhere/everytime"* kind of love.

God wants us to depend on Him to express His kind of love to others.

God will never command you to do something He will not give you the power to do. **John 13:34**, *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."*

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## How can I love everyone?

You may get frustrated by the fact that you can't love every one practically and meet everyone's needs. Trust in the greatness of God, that He will put the right people in your path on the journey of life, where God will enable you to extend your arm of love.

**1 John 4:11**, *"Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other."*

**1 John 4:20**, *"Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen."*

## What are the enemies of relationships?

- **Selfish ambitions** – Nothing kills a relationship more than selfish attitude. Stop looking for what to get in a relationship rather be willing to give.
- **Unforgiveness** – A good relationship is not the absence of misunderstanding but the ability to forgive without strengthening the wound of the past or hurts.
- **Wrong motives** – If you get into a relationship for the wrong reason, you will get wrong results that spring from wrong foundations.
- **Wrong judgements** – It easier to see the faults of others than your own.
- **Blame** – When you blame others for anything that goes wrong!
- **Mistrust** – Absence of trust leads to doubt, suspicion, anxiety, and fear.
- **Miscommunications** – Miscommunication is like a poison that spreads feelings of hurt, anger, frustration, and disgust

**Romans 15:7**, *"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."*

A healthy relationship with God and healthy relationship with others will keep our lives in balance.

## Can I have a life without any relationships?

A life without relationships may well be a simpler life, but it is also an empty life. The path to the greatest life possible and the greatest joy possible is found in the priority that Jesus taught us to keep at the top of the list: Place the highest value on relationships. It is statistically proven and scripturally promised that people with good relationships live longer and healthier.

## Are all relationships good?

Not necessarily. Scripture is full of warnings to avoid foolish and wicked friends precisely because of their ability to lead us to great harm. Bad friends can lead us astray (**Proverbs 12:26**), shame our parents (**Proverbs 28:7**), and lead to the squander of time/ talents/ treasure (**Proverbs 29:3**). Scripture is unequivocal when it comes to the power of friends: *"Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals'"* (**1 Corinthians 15:33**). On a lighter note, even demons have good relationships among themselves, so defining good in every relationship is very important.

## What is the role of money in relationships?

Importance of money in relationships can't be ruled out. However, it is not wise to believe that money can buy you good relationships.

Jesus spoke about money and relationships in his most famous sermon – the Sermon on the Mount. *"No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other.*

*You cannot serve both God and money."* (Refer the whole passage:

**Matthew 6:24 -33 NLT**). Lord Jesus taught that values which compete cannot coexist. One will overwhelm the other. Make priority for relationships over money. Always recognize and avoid the evil that money can cause in relationships. (Refer: **Proverbs 14:20, Proverbs 19:4, 7, Proverbs 22:1, Proverbs 28:11, James 2:11**)

A healthy relationship with God and healthy relationships with others have the power to help us keep our commitments to the things (money and other material things) and the tasks in our lives from getting out of balance.

## What's the role of trust and intimacy in relationships?

A high level of primary trust is crucial for personal growth and for healthy connections or bonds with others. The level of trust and intimacy differs from one relationship to another. For example, there is higher trust and intimacy between marriage, parent–children, and siblings compared to interpersonal relationships in work, school acquaintances etc. Intimacy means being known authentically and knowing another, sharing, being loved and valued by another. The relationship that exists within the Trinity (Father, Son, and Spirit) reflects the intimate nature of God, fully balanced and fully functioning.

## What are the boundaries of purity in all relationships?

Purity means a choice to love God more than you love anything or anyone else and to express that love with a wholehearted devotion of your life to God. It's important to pursue purity because the more pure you become, the more you'll grow into the person God intends you to become. Recognize that God's goal for your relationships is much more than that they make you happy; God wants your relationships to help you become more holy. With that in mind, regularly evaluate your relationships to honestly consider whether or not they're drawing you closer to God or farther away from Him. Ask God to give you the courage and wisdom to set boundaries in your relationships to protect yourself from people who tempt you to sin.

Apostle Paul mentions in **Ephesians 5:3**, *"But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people."*

Also, a word of caution - when we allow purity or virginity to become our identity rather than our relationship with Christ, we can begin to act in legalistic and unnatural ways. As we abide in Christ, we must rely on the Holy Spirit to convict us when our interactions with others stray outside of holiness and purity.

## How to grow in relationships?

Growth in any relationship is not automatic. For any relationship to grow there must be investments into the relationships.

- Be Patient – I Corinthians 13:4 *“Love is Patient.”*
- Be Kind – I Corinthians 13:4 *“Love is Kind.”*
- Don’t be proud – I Corinthians 13:4 *“Love does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.”*
- Don’t be Selfish – I Corinthians 13:5 *“Love is not rude, it is not self seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.”*
- Don’t give up – I Corinthians 13:7 *“Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”*
- Be Respectful – Philippians 2:3 Value others more than yourself!
- Be humble – I Peter 5:5-6 Humility is the daily decision to think of others as more important than yourself!

*“The greatest among you will be your servants. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” Matthew 23:11-12*

### The Golden Rule

**Treat Others as You want them to treat you. (Luke 6:31)**

## What are soul ties in relationships?

A soul tie is an emotional bond or connection that unites you with someone else. You can become bound to a person through your soul. In the Bible, it doesn't use the word soul tie, but it speaks of souls being knit together, becoming one flesh, etc.

Godly soul ties are formed when a couple is married and the godly soul tie between husband and wife is God intended as they two shall be one flesh. (**Genesis 2:24**) Good friendships can cause good soul ties like King David and Jonathan (**1 Samuel 18:1**). When two people come together in prayer in a good soul tie, the power of God intensifies. (**Matthew 18:19**)

However, when a person has ungodly sexual relations outside marriage, an ungodly soul tie is then formed (**1 Corinthians 6:16**). Ungodly soul ties fragment the soul and is destructive. Ungodly soul ties also happen through unhealthy relationships with friends that lead you to addictions, occult or witchcraft practices, and obsessive entanglement with some one or some things that you idolize.

Identify and renounce all kinds of ungodly soul ties from your life in the name of Lord Jesus. The soul must choose to surrender itself to the will of God. The mind, will, and emotions must be continually renewed by washing with the Word of God and in His Spirit.

**1 Peter 1:22-23**, *“Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit... being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”*

**I Corinthians 15:33**, *“Bad company corrupts good character.”*



## Can I have friends who are unbelievers of Jesus?

Yes it's okay to have friends who are not of your same faith. However, we don't want our friendships with unbelievers to hinder our relationship with God. If we have friends who encourage sinful behaviour, then we need to be careful. We need to be sure we don't compromise our faith. We must have non-Christian friends so we can tell them about the only Saviour, in order that they might be saved. Follow the model of Jesus when you relate to unbelievers. He was called the friend of sinners not because He winked at sin, ignored sin, or enjoyed light-hearted parties with those engaged in immorality. Jesus was a friend of sinners because He came to save sinners and was very pleased to welcome sinners who were open to the hope of a Saviour. (Luke 5:31-32, Luke 15)

## Do I have to honour my parents even though they are not believers?

Honouring parents is a command which we dare not ignore even though they may be of a different faith.

*"Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you" (Exodus 20:12; also Deuteronomy 5:16).*

*"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3).*

Both our actions and attitudes should reveal our real motive for honouring our parents—to bring honour to God. When a child honours an unbelieving parent, the parent is honoured by a believing and obedient child. The child trusts in the loving purposes of a Sovereign God (**Romans 8:28**). By caring for our elderly parents, we also follow Jesus' example. Honouring parents requires that we preserve their dignity as much as possible. When you assist them with household matters, errands, and health issues, you should never consider that burdensome but as an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus, honouring the One who comforts us (**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**).

## How must I treat one another in the Church?

God established the church as a family of believers – the body of Christ. It's a community for spiritual connections where people connect with God vertically and connect with each other horizontally.

**Jesus** was a friend of **sinners** because He came to  
**save sinners**

The New Testament offers several commandments for our interpersonal relationships in a church: **love** one another (**John 13:35** - this command comes 16 times), **be devoted** to one another (**Romans 12:10**), **honour** one another above yourselves (**Romans 12:10**), **care** for one another (**1 Corinthians 12:25**), **serve** one another (**Galatians 5:13**), **bear** one another's burdens (**Galatians 6:2**), **forgive** one another (Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13), **be patient** with one another (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13), **accept** one another (**Romans 15:7**), **admonish** one another (**Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16**), **comfort** one another (**1 Thessalonians 4:18**), **encourage** one another (**Hebrews 3:13**), **stir up** one another to love and good works (**Hebrews 10:24**), **pray** for one another (**James 5:16**) and many more.

We're the body of Christ. We're His hands and feet in this world. Lord Jesus expects us to treat one another in the same way that we want others to treat us. More importantly, in the same way that He's already treated us. We can experience the vertical realities of joy, satisfaction, and contentment in Christ in a greater way when we follow His example to love one another.

## How do I deal with hurts in my relationships?

Everyone experiences the hurt of a broken relationship at one time or another. We are bound to be hurt and disappointed for we live in a fallen world. Hurts come also because of our high expectations that others may not be able to deliver. Hurts can come because of misunderstandings, miscommunications, mistrust etc. What we choose to do with that hurt and disappointment can make us stronger in our walk with the Lord. God promises to walk through the disappointments in life with us (**Hebrews 13:5**) and He wants us to know that His provision for us is sure. His grace and comfort are ours as we rest in Him. Also, we can avoid hurt by practicing wisdom in relationships.

Forgiveness of others is important to the healing process of hurt. When you hold on to bitterness or nurse a grudge, it only poisons your spirit. Yes, we may have been truly wronged, and yes, the pain is real, but there is freedom in forgiveness. Forgiveness is a gift we can give because it was given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ (**Ephesians 4:32**). (Refer our Forgiveness booklet – [www.bethelag.in](http://www.bethelag.in))

### Book References

The Relationship Principle of Jesus – Tom Holladay  
Horizontal Jesus – Tony Evans  
Enemies of the Heart – Andy Stanley  
Real Relationships – Drs. Les & Leslie Parrott  
Beyond Boundaries – Dr. John Townsend & Dr. Henry Cloud

If you have any further questions, please email us at [info@bethelag.in](mailto:info@bethelag.in) or walk into the church office for any counselling regarding this issue.

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