

RELATIONSHIPS

Definition:

The mutual dealings, connections, or feelings that exist between two countries, people, or groups

I. Relationships

- A. The family unit has its basis in the plan of God. (Gen 2:18,22)

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." (Gen 2:18)

Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. (Gen 2:22)

- B. God established the first family unit as a pattern for all further generations. (Gen 2:23-24)

23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man." 24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Gen 2:23-24)

- C. Creation of man for fellowship / relationship with God

1. He made the way for us to be part of his family.

11 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)-- 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. 19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household,

20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. (Ephesians 2:11-22)

2. Adoption into the family of God

14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. (Romans 8:14-17)

D. Some we can choose and some we haven't been given the choice.

1. Choose husband / wife; in-laws come with the package.
2. Choose friends
3. Born into family: mother / father; brother / sister

E. Different degrees and depths

1. All relationships call for responsibility, commitment, instruction
2. In serious relationship building we need to be willing to be instructed and to learn.
 - a. What do they like, like to do, dislike, etc.
 - b. Where are they coming from: background, past disappointments or hurts, etc.
 - c. How do they think; what is their frame of reference?

--Men and women

II. Keys to building good relationships

- A. Communication
- B. Loyalty

C. Commitment of self, time and effort.

D. Love

1. *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. (John 13:34)*
2. Love covers
3. Love is the bond
4. Love is first of all a decision, then a feeling.

III. Biblical examples

A. Jonathan and David (I Samuel 18)

1. Commitment and giving (sharing)
 - a. Jonathan (prince)---David (peasant), only Jonathan could take the initiative
 - b. Jonathan gave---of himself, who he was, what he had
 - c. He also freely gave up what was rightfully his in position
2. Loyalty
 - a. Loyalty is one of life's most costly qualities; it is the most selfless part of love. To be loyal you cannot live only for yourself.
 - b. The conflicting demands of our relationships challenge us as. If we attempt to settle these conflicts only at the human level, we will be constantly dealing with a sense of betrayal. But if we communicate to our friends that our ultimate loyalty is to God and his truth, many of our choices will be much clearer. The truth in his word, the Bible will bring light to our decisions.

B. Ruth and Naomi

In the lives of Ruth and Naomi we see the blending of lives, cultures, family backgrounds, ages.

1. Commitment
 - a. First of all to God and then to each other

- b. Each tried to do what was best for the other.

16 But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." (Ruth 1:16-17)

2. Loyalty

- a. In times of deep sorrow and almost hopelessness; but also on Naomi's part when prosperity came to Ruth
- b. Ruth was known for her loyalty to Naomi.

3. Communication

- a. At times of decision
- b. Ruth listened to the wisdom of her mother-in-law.
- c. Shared daily what was happening in their lives....kept up-to- date.
- d. God was at the center of their intimate communication. Ruth came to know the God of Israel through Naomi. The older woman allowed Ruth to see, hear, and feel all the joy and anguish of her relationship to God. How often do you feel that your thoughts and questions about God should be left out of a close relationship? How often do you share your unedited thoughts about God with your spouse or friends? Sharing openly about our relationship with God can bring depth and intimacy to our relationships with others.