

STUDY FIVE: BIBLICAL RELATIONSHIP PRINCIPLES AND PATTERNS

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Jesus affirmed that the two greatest commands are to love God and to love others [Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-42]. The two go hand in hand. If we love God we cannot avoid loving others. Jesus said everything else “hangs on” this [Matthew 22:40]. The foundation therefore of all relationships between people is firstly relationship with God. The result of right relationship with God is the potential for right relationship with others. Indeed, when our relationship with God is restored through Jesus Christ, we are liberated to then love others.

God designed us for this connection with himself and others. We are designed, created and re-created to live in relationship. With love for God as the basis, measure and motivation of our love for others, we can know the strength He provides to love people with the love of God.

‘Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children’ [Ephesians 5:1]

‘Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification’ [Romans 14:19]

Note: Most of the content of this study is discovered by you as you study the Scriptures in the Worksheet. You will also be directed to other studies on this site for more extensive input.

A. THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

Jesus Christ commands us to follow him, and in particular to love as he loved. He knew and understood people far more accurately and fully than we ever will. He knew even the inmost thoughts of their hearts. He knew their sins that none but themselves knew. And still he loved them.

Complete Section #1 in the Study Five Worksheet now.

B. THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

The Greek word for encourage (exhort), *parakaleo* means to call someone along side to strengthen and comfort them. The noun *parakletos* is translated ‘comforter’, ‘counsellor’ and ‘advocate’. The noun *paraklesis* is translated ‘comfort’, ‘encouragement’, .

Consider the following use of this principle in the New Testament:

Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the ‘Counsellor’ [John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7].

Jesus is called our ‘advocate’ [1John 2:2].

Comfort, consolation, exhortation, encouragement is described as

Coming from God [Romans 15:5; 2Corinthians 1:3; 2Thessalonians 2:16,17]

Coming from Jesus Christ [Philippians 2:1]

Coming from the Holy Spirit [Acts 9:31]

God’s gift within the body, the church [Romans 12:8]

Coming from the Scriptures [Romans 15:4]

Resulting from the proclamation of the Word of God [1Corinthians 14:3, 31]

Expressed by believers to each other [2Corinthians 1:4-7; Philemon 7].

Those who believe in Jesus Christ are commanded:

To encourage one another with God’s truth [1Thessalonians 4:18; 1Timothy 6:2; 2Timothy 4:2]

To encourage one another and build each other up [1Thessalonians 5:11]

To encourage the timid and help the weak [1Thessalonians 5:14]

To devote themselves to reading the Scripture, to *encouragement* [Greek text] and to teaching [1Timothy 4:13].

To encourage one another daily [Hebrews 3:13]

To encourage one another all the more as the return of Christ approaches [Hebrews 10:25].

Complete Section #2 in the Study Five Worksheet now.

C. THE PRINCIPLE OF INTEGRITY

Integrity is fundamental honesty and trustworthiness.

You can study the Principle of Integrity here. (</living-for-jesus/setting-biblical-foundations/897-christian-spirituality-and-money.html>)

Here are some questions to help you measure your integrity.

- Am I committed to telling the truth?
- Am I honest in relation to money?
- How well do I treat people from whom I can gain nothing?
- Am I transparent with others?
- Am I the same person in the spotlight as when I'm alone?
- Do I quickly admit wrongdoing without being pressed to do so?
- Am I considered trustworthy?

Complete Section #3 in the Study Five Worksheet now.

D. THE PRINCIPLE OF OTHER-CENTREDNESS [THE ONE ANOTHER PRINCIPLE]

We have already looked at the Priority of the Other in Section D in this study. (</living-for-jesus/setting-biblical-foundations/889-god-s-priorities-for-my-life.html>)

People are precious to God on two counts: firstly because God created human beings in his image, and secondly, because God redeemed human beings through the death of his Son.

The Ten Commandments, after focusing on our relationship with God, then set boundaries around our treatment of others. The Two Great Commandments, first tell us to love God, then tell us to love our neighbour as ourselves.

As well as expressing the principle of love [see below], this principle of other-centredness expresses the pervasive biblical principle of 'submission' – a principle in which we are commanded to put our own perceived 'rights' aside for the well-being of the other. Check this out here. (</living-for-jesus/setting-biblical-foundations/891-spiritual-principles-that-defuse-our-quest-for-power.html>)

Complete Section #4 in the Study Five Worksheet now.

E. THE PRINCIPLE OF FORGIVENESS

There are several studies on this website focused on forgiveness, you may like to check out one of the following:

Short Study. (</bible-studies/salvation/55-forgiveness.html>)

Long studies: Forgiveness Part I (</bible-studies/salvation-and-the-work-of-christ/818-study-10-forgiveness-part-1.html>) and Forgiveness Part 2. (</bible-studies/salvation-and-the-work-of-christ/819-study-11-forgiveness-part-2.html>)

The only way we can really forgive, the only way we can implement the principle of forgiveness, is to live as one who knows they are forgiven by God.

Complete Section #5 in the Study Five Worksheet now.

F. THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE

Check this out here. (</living-for-jesus/setting-biblical-foundations/891-spiritual-principles-that-defuse-our-quest-for-power.html>)

Complete Section #6 in the Study Five Worksheet now.

G. THE 'IN CHRIST' PRINCIPLE

This principle is encapsulated by Paul in 2Corinthians 5:16, where he writes 'So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view ...' and goes on to teach about the incredible change in our perception and attitude that should occur in relation to anyone who is 'in Christ'. This 'in Christ' principle is treated at length here, (</bible-studies/developing-christian-community/595-4->

the-significance-of-the-in-christ-concept-3.html)and you are strongly encouraged to study it now. It has in-built research and discussion tasks.