

Session 5

Relationships – Trust, Forgiveness, Communication, and
Conflict Resolution

Psalm 1:2-3

“...but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.

³That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither - whatever they do prospers.”

Romans 8:28

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Luke 16:10

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.”

Proverbs 3:6

“...in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Psalm 28:7

“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.”

Trust

Trust is an important part of any relationship; it draws you closer to God, your family, and your friends. Without trust we will never have the intimate relationships that God designed for us.

The most important form of trust we can have is our trust in God; not trust in ourselves or our plans, and not the world’s wisdom and devices.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6

Your trust in God is the first, most important step. Psalm 1:2-3 says that the man who delights in the law of the Lord is blessed. When we seek God and His ways first, we will draw closer to Him and our trust in Him will increase. This will help us become trustworthy people ourselves.

Being a person others can trust involves honesty and integrity. This involves keeping our word, not belittling others, admitting when we are wrong, seeking forgiveness, and being willing to forgive as we have been forgiven in Christ. As we do these things, we learn to trust others more freely. Ask God for discernment in whom to trust and then trust the results He reveals.

Putting our trust in God is the way forward. Read the following verses to learn what God tells us about trust.

Romans 8:28. Why is it important to have trust?

Luke 16:10. What does the Bible say about earning trust?

Proverbs 3:6. What does it mean to trust and acknowledge God in everything?

Psalm 28:7. Why should I put my trust in God?

Psalm 118:6 (ESV) says, *“The Lord is on my side, I will not fear. What can man do to me?”* When we understand that no matter what man does to us, God will always be there, faithful, true, and trustworthy, it is easier to handle disappointments. If we find ourselves reluctant to trust someone, we would be wise to do some introspection and, if necessary, ask God to heal our hearts.

There is no substitute for faithful friends and Christian community. When we live in trusting relationships with one another, we can build up and encourage each other.

Three Practical Steps to Trust God Completely:

- ▶ Saturate your heart and mind with the Word of God.
- ▶ Constantly monitor your thoughts and feelings.
- ▶ Decide not to worry.

Forgiveness

We ALL need forgiveness. We are all born with a sin nature, eternally separated from God; and we would be lost forever without His forgiveness.

“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...” Romans 3:23

Forgiveness can be one of the hardest things that God requires us to do. But the good news is He does not leave us to do it on our own. He gave us Jesus as an example.

“When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴ Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.” Luke 23:33-34

God stands ready and willing to forgive us, but He asks that we extend that same forgiveness to others. Matthew 6:14-15 says, *“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”*

Each time we find ourselves having trouble forgiving someone, we need to stop and think about all the times we have messed up, yet each time God was there with open arms to offer His forgiveness. Considering the magnitude of that thought, every situation in our lives where we are hesitant to forgive seems trivial. Read the following verses to learn what God says about forgiveness.

Romans 3:23. Why is forgiveness needed?

Matthew 6:14-15. What does Jesus teach about forgiveness?

Ephesians 4:31-32. What does forgiveness look like for a Christ Follower?

Matthew 18:21-35. How long must one keep on forgiving?

Communication

We cannot go through life without communicating with others. What we say, how we say it, and how we listen is important to God. He warns us that "...death and life are in the power of the tongue..." (Proverbs 18:21 ESV).

When speaking to a family member or a stranger, our communication should always be delivered in a loving manner. When we speak softly, kindly, wisely, truthfully, and with love, we can promote positive relationships and defuse tense situations.

Having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and modeling His actions allows us to improve our communication and relationships with others.

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." Ephesians 4:2

God's primary ways of communication with us are through His Word (Romans 10:17), and through the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). Read the following verses to learn what God says about communication.

James 1:19

Colossians 3:8

Colossians 4:6

Ephesians 4:29.

Here are some biblical ways that will help you truly strengthen your relationships:

- ▶ Love God with all your heart, mind, and soul
- ▶ Love your spouse
- ▶ Love your family
- ▶ Love your neighbors
- ▶ Love your enemies

Of course, our most important communication should be the fulfillment of Mark 16:15. Jesus tells us to communicate the Gospel to a world that desperately needs to hear it.

“He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.’”

Mark 16:15

Conflict Resolution

We all know that conflict is inevitable in our lives. But if we manage it biblically, it can serve as an opportunity for change and spiritual growth. We should make every effort to resolve our conflicts in a loving manner to restore the relationship.

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

Proverbs 15:1

God calls us to be peacemakers and to allow His redemptive, transforming love to pour out on our relationships. It is clear that when conflict arises, God intends us to resolve it according to His Word. In Matthew 5:9 Jesus says, *“Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.”*

One thing we need to be aware of is that Satan will take advantage of our unresolved issues, especially anger, bitterness, self-pity, and envy to create strife among us. We cannot let Satan rob us of the joy healthy relationships can bring. We must do all we can to resolve these issues so we can have peace.

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.”

Ephesians 4:31

Read the following verses to learn what God says about resolving conflict.

Proverbs 19:11. What does God's Word encourage us to do?

Matthew 7:1-5 (NLT). What is Jesus telling us about the beginning of this process of resolving conflict?

Philippians 2:3. What does this passage remind us to do as we resolve conflict?

Ephesians 4:15. What does the passage tell us will happen as we speak the truth in love?

A Christ Follower's maturity is marked by the ability to communicate and share difficult truths and resolve conflicts in a loving way.

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

Summary Points:

- ▶ We ALL need forgiveness.
- ▶ Having a personal relationship with God helps us to have good relationships with others.
- ▶ God’s Word is clear on how to start the process of resolving conflict.

Next Steps:

- ▶ Spend time in prayer, asking God to help you grow in your relationship with Jesus and others.
- ▶ Read James 1-4 to learn how your actions mirror your faith.
- ▶ Memorize Philippians 2:4-5.

“Be kind and compassionate to one another,
forgiving each other, just as in
Christ God forgave you.”
Acts 22:16