



## Christian Life Fellowship

Becoming fully devoted followers of Christ



### Fit for Life – Relationships

February 3, 2008

Rev. David Koch

#### Introduction:

This morning we complete our series on getting fit. As I mentioned last week, each of these areas that we have been studying requires discipline and will power. We cannot get fit in any area of our lives without making decisions and acting on those decisions. Getting fit never happens automatically; it is something that is intentional and happens because of determination, diligence and commitment to improve.

So what does it look like to be fit relationally? What does God's Word have to say about relationships and what steps can you and I take to be sure that we are fit relationally? When we are talking relationships there are always two personalities that are involved. Relationships are work but they are worth the effort. To build relationships means at times I have to deal with issues that are uncomfortable to me.

So here we go. God's word gives us directives as to how we are to treat others. It doesn't matter if people are good to us or cruel to us. There is a basic principle that is foundational to building any relationship. How would I want to be treated?

**Luke 6:31-35 - Do to others as you would have them do to you. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.**

God has given us the example of His own begotten Son to pattern our lives and relationships after. Jesus, when He was hated and misused, lied about, rejected, ridiculed, crucified, only loved back. There is great discipline in restraining oneself from retaliating and getting on the same level as your enemy.

I detest the negative campaign ads that so many politicians run these days. I think we stoop to a very low level when we sling mud at someone who has slung mud at us. It is not Christ-like. It is unbiblical and it will never build a solid foundation for a healthy relationship with anyone.

## I. Anger

When we look at relationships we have to deal with anger. I dare say that every one of us in this room at sometime at least once in our life has been angry with someone with whom we had a relationship. Anger, left unresolved, will interfere with any healthy relationship. In [Ephesians 4:26](#) we read these words: In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.

Ask yourself these questions. Why did I get angry? Was it something someone said or did to me or someone I love? Was it unjustified in my mind? Did I overreact? How can I get rid of this anger?

In [James 1:19-20](#), we read that: **Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.**

## II. Forgiveness

It is so important that we learn to forgive quickly so the offense is released. We want justice but it is usually outside our ability to bring justice to someone who has offended us. Those who are followers of Jesus Christ are to forgive because we have been forgiven so much ourselves. The Lord taught in his model prayer that we receive forgiveness from Him only to the degree which we are willing to forgive others.

Does the offense hurt? You bet it does. To be left out, to be overlooked, for someone to say something unkind always will wound and hurt. But if we choose to forgive, the wound will heal, and the relationship does not have to be permanently broken.

In [Mark 11:25-26](#) we read these words about prayer and forgiveness: **And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.**

If we desire to have healthy relationships, we will have to learn how to forgive others and ask for forgiveness when we have offended others. *A true friend loves always.*

Some people are fair weather friends. When things are good and pleasant they are friends, but when

things are not so pleasant, they can no longer be counted as friends. We read in [Proverbs 17:17](#) - **A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.**

## III. Relationship to God

Every one is created with a need to connect and relate to God. People look to fill that need with many other things. People turn to drugs, alcohol, sex, material things and yet the core relationship with God is what needs to be addressed. If a relationship is going to work and be fit and healthy, it must include love and trust. No relationship can survive and thrive without those elements present.

In [Mark 12:30](#) - we read these words of instruction about a loving relationship with God. **Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.** The relationship with God is meant to engage every part of the entire being. The entire part of your devotion and passion from your emotion is to be loving God. The entire part of your passion with your entire soul is to be loving God. The entire part of your entire mind with your thoughts is to be loving God, and the entire part of your physical strength.

Let me talk about marital relationships for a few moments. God's word is clear with how a husband is to love his wife.

## IV. Relationship to wife

Look with me this morning at a few verses from [Ephesians 5:25](#). **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Ephesians 5:28-29 - In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church.**

The love of a husband toward his wife should be patterned after the example that Christ showed in the way He loves the church. He loves with unrestrained passion, determination to overlook her weaknesses and flaws and with courage to serve her with His best. He gave His life the – ultimate sacrifice for His church.

A man must love his wife and care for her with the same degree of care that he gives himself. Scripture teaches us that a husband and wife are one flesh; the two have become one.

## V. Relationship to husband

Scripture tells us that a wife needs to show her husband respect and submission. Every man desires the respect of his wife. Through her respect and submission, she indicates her love for him.

**Ephesians 5:33** - However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. **Colossians 3:18** - Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

The relationship between husband and wife should be one that is loving, honest, caring, supportive, self-sacrificing, respectful and submissive. With these qualities in place, that relationship will grow, flourish, and be protected from external challenges to the relationship.

## VI. Relationship to children

Like any healthy relationship, relationships with your children takes work. Healthy relationships also take time. Spend time with your kids. Find out about their lives; what they like and dislike, who their friends are, what their world is like, etc. God's Word tells fathers to not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

## VII. Relationship to parent

**Ephesians 6:1-4** - Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise-- "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Children, you may not realize it, but you can drive your parents crazy. They only want the best for you. They want you to find your complete potential and achieve all you can for the glory of God.

Unless you are willing to obey your parents and honor your father and mother, there will be some very difficult things in life for you. Life will not be as easy and prosperous as it could, and your life will not be as long on this earth as you might like. Listening and obeying your parents is not a bad thing and it might save you some heartache and learning lessons the hard way in life.

## VIII. Relationship to enemies

**Matthew 5:43-46** - "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?"

Most of the time, when someone is considered an enemy, they are not loved, not cared for, looked down on, talked bad about and treated unkindly. But Jesus says in relating to an enemy, we should love our enemies, and pray for those who persecute us.

Let me ask this of you. Have you ever prayed for your enemy? You cannot hate someone you are praying for. It is impossible. I challenge you to try to hate someone you are praying for. You will be unsuccessful. Your actions speak much louder than your words. You can say, "I love you and I care about you", but we demonstrate true love by what we do. If I love you, I'll go out of my way to help you. If I love you, I'll give you a ride to work or school, even though I have to get up earlier than usual to do it. If I love you, I'll baby-sit for your children when I know that you're not feeling well. True love turns words and feelings into action.

People who care about each other enjoy doing things for one another. They don't consider it servitude. "Love is friendship that has caught fire. It is quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. It is loyalty through good and bad times. It settles for less than perfection and makes allowances for human weaknesses."

## **Conclusion:**

God wants us to have healthy relationships. I challenge you to take some steps to be relationally fit this week. Think of one relationship in your life that can be improved. Then do something to improve it. Here are some suggestions:

### How to Get Along With People- by Ann Landers

Keep skid chains on your tongue; always say less than you think. Cultivate a low, persuasive voice. How you say it counts more than what you say.

Make promises sparingly, and keep them faithfully, no matter what it costs.

Never let an opportunity pass to say a kind and encouraging word to or about somebody. Praise good work, regardless of who did it. If criticism is needed, criticize helpfully, never spitefully.

Be interested in others, their pursuits, their work, their homes and families. Make merry with those who rejoice; with those who weep, mourn. Let everyone you meet, however humble, feel that you regard him as a person of importance.

Be cheerful. Don't burden or depress those around you by dwelling on your minor aches and pains and small disappointments. Remember, everyone is carrying some kind of a load.

Keep an open mind. Discuss but don't argue. It is a mark of a superior mind to be able to disagree without being disagreeable.

Let your virtues speak for themselves. Refuse to talk of another's vices.

Discourage gossip. It is a waste of valuable time and can be extremely destructive.

Be careful of another's feelings. Wit and humor at the other person's expense are rarely worth it and may hurt when least expected.

Pay no attention to ill-natured remarks about you. Remember, the person who carried the message may not be the most accurate reporter in the world. Simply live so that nobody will believe them. Disordered nerves and bad digestion are a common cause of backbiting.

Don't be too anxious about the credit due you. Do your best, and be patient. Forget about yourself, and let others "remember." Success is much sweeter that way