

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

By Beatrice Ofwona



Relationships are about love and interactions. Human beings tend to hurt one another all the time. This is because we all come from different backgrounds and therefore tend to look at things differently. When I got saved, I learnt that this was going to be one of the most challenging things for me; that I had to learn to love everyone despite my natural inclination to prefer some over others. In my walk with Christ, however, I have been humbled to learn that God's in-dwelling presence is what makes this possible. This kind of love is the kind that only God makes a reality for us and it is made so by the renewing of our minds. That we may change all those perceptions that we have held throughout our lives and embrace others

We really can live in harmony if we only could love one another unconditionally. Psalms 133:1 tells us that it is a good and pleasant thing for brothers to live in unity. Our God desires that we live in harmony; caring and supporting one another.

Many things destroy relationships. By practicing envy, gossip, malice, jealousy or lack of respect we create friction amongst ourselves. This then affects the way in which we relate to each other yet God places great emphasis on relationships to the extent that He asks us to forgive a brother seventy, seven times. In Mathew 5:23 He even asks that we may not bring any gifts to the altar before we are fully reconciled with those that we have differed with. He knows that this is the only way we can continue to be built together to become His dwelling place (Ephesians 2:22).

We can foster good relationships in several ways. Firstly is to have the right attitude towards one another. In this way, we will be able to love, look out for, acknowledge and protect one another. If we desire love, we too must learn to love others. Do unto others as we would have

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Written by admin

Monday, 18 July 2011 16:17 - Last Updated Wednesday, 24 October 2012 07:16

them do unto us and we will thrive in any relationship. Also remember that we must always watch our attitudes, some of which may be hard to let go of even after salvation.

Secondly is striving towards forgiveness. Ephesians 4:32 asks that we may be kind, compassionate and forgiving to one another, just as Christ forgave us. Let us ask God to give us a forgiving heart towards our brethren no matter what they have done to us. Is it not interesting how Christ called Judas friend even when he came with soldiers to arrest him? In Mathew 26:49-50 we are amazed at the forgiving heart of Jesus.

Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi" and kissed him. Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for."

At the height of betrayal, Jesus Christ chose to call Judas his friend. Behold, what manner of man is this? Yet we strive daily to be more like him in our walk, because that is what it means to be a Christian. Anger, resentment and evil in our hearts will hinder us from praying effectively.

Thirdly is to honor one another by being first to forgive. We should not wait to be asked to forgive before we can do so. God commands us to be humble. It is only in humility that we will be able to take the first step towards making things right.

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