

Lesson 9: Relationships

"How should Christians get along with other people?"

As we learned in Lesson 3, spiritually, you now have a new family with many brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. This lesson is designed to help you in your relationships with two main groups of people, those in the family of God and those who are a part of the unsaved world. The goals of this lesson are two-fold:

- To cover how to love fellow Christians, and
- To cover how to love the unsaved.

Jesus said in John 13:34-35 that **LOVE** is an identifying mark of a Christian. The proof of our relationship to Jesus Christ is in the way that we love one another. We will begin by covering our love for fellow Christians.



Relationships with other believers

The Bible uses the word **fellowship** to describe the foundational relationship between fellow Christians.

What is fellowship?

1. The Bible describes fellowship as communion, a sharing in common, association, community, joint participation, and partnership.
2. "Fellowship" is a term often used by Christians generally referring to getting together for activities or times of sharing common interests, often expressed as a verb "to fellowship". However, this is only a small part of true fellowship. True biblical fellowship goes FAR BEYOND just a meal or an activity. **It is the sharing of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ with other believers.**



3. Also, the essential elements of true biblical fellowship are not physical matters such as social status, friendship, common interests. It is amazing that God brings diverse people together in Christ.

Let's examine two biblical uses of the term **Fellowship**.

1. **Fellowship of the righteous** - Read 2 Cor. 6:14-17. Christians do not have spiritual fellowship with unbelievers. In other words, these verses teach that we are called to fellowship with believers. Therefore, we must be careful under what circumstances we join together with unbelievers.
2. **Fellowship with the Spirit that produces a Christ-like humility** - Look up Philippians 2:1-5. It is clear that believers are to have a humble attitude toward each other. Because we have fellowship in the Spirit, we can have a Christ-like and humble attitude with each other that puts the needs of others

before our own needs.

How are we related to other Christians?

We are related as a **family**... As we discussed in Lesson 3, God places us in a true family of believers. We are brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. (I John 3:1-3, I John 4:21)

New Testament Instructions for Getting Along with Other Christians

The New Testament is full of passages that use the phrase **one another**. These verses give us insight in how to relate specifically to one another. The following is a list of "one anothers" from the Scriptures.

1. **Love one another** - John 13:34-35 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."



2. **Serve one another** - John 13:12-17, Gal 5:13, *You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.*

3. **Speak truthfully to one another** Eph 4:25 *Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.*

4. **Show hospitality to one another** – Rom 12:13, Titus 1:8

5. **Be fellow laborers together in serving Christ.** I Corinthians 3:5-10

6. **We are to pray for each other.** I Thessalonians 1:2-3; II Timothy 1:3

7. **Giving to one another's needs.** Romans 12:13, Acts 11:29

8. **Be "doing good" to one another.** Galatians 6:10

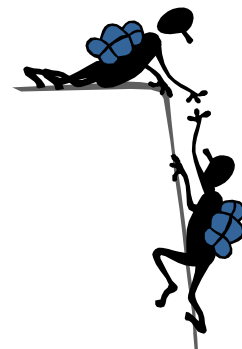
9. **Restore one another, carry others' burdens.** Galatians 6:1-2

10. **Build each other up, and encourage one another.** Romans 15:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 5:11

11. **Consider others more highly than ourselves.** Philippians 2:3-4

12. **Be likeminded toward each other.** Romans 15:5-7

13. **Lay down our lives for one another; and be sensitive to their needs.** 1 John 3:16-17, James 2:15-16

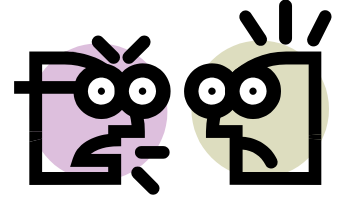


14. **Be forgiving of each other.** Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13

It is clear from Scripture that God intended for believers to be involved in each other's lives. "One anothering" is the oil that helps the machinery of the church run smoothly.

What if Christians disagree and need reconciliation?

Disagreements, differences of opinion and hurts do happen in the body of Christ. If and when this happens, the Bible gives a definite progression of principles to deal with these matters. How should you respond in such a situation?

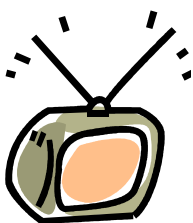


1. Take the problem directly to the other person first, privately, and humbly try to settle it between yourselves. Matthew 18:15
2. If the matter is not resolved privately, take it to a leader in your church to attempt to mediate the situation. Matthew 18:16; I Corinthians 6:1-5
3. Do NOT go to the unsaved to settle a problem within the body of Christ. I Corinthians 6:6
4. If this matter still cannot be resolved:
 - Personally accept the wrong. I Corinthians 6:7-8
 - Commit the situation to the Lord Jesus Christ. He will handle it justly. I Peter 2:19-23
 - Forgive your brother/sister. Colossians 3:13
 - Pray for your brother/sister. Matthew 5:43-48; Romans 12:14

Relationships with those who are unsaved

The Bible is very clear that we live in a world that is opposed to the purposes of God. It is important to note that Jesus told us that we would face opposition. See John 15:18-21. The opposition that we will face may come from one or all of the following groups.

- ⊗ People who are close to you including family, friends, co-workers and acquaintances. See Matthew 10:35-36
- ⊗ From unsaved people in general. See Galatians 4:29 - We, who are born of the Spirit, can expect persecution from the world.



- ⊗ From society in general. The nature and the course of this present world system are against God and those who believe His Word. The best way to illustrate this is to note how our popular culture and media are directly opposed to godly values and godly living. See I John 2:15-17 & James 4:4. The believer must beware of how he/she is subtly influenced by the world around them.

- ⊖ The master mind behind this opposition is Satan, himself. He is our adversary, (I Peter 5:8) and currently at work in the world (Ephesians 2:2).

How should the believer overcome opposition?

1. Love those opposed to you and help them. The best illustration of this is Jesus; He loved and died for His enemies. The world cannot understand this kind of love, and those who are seeking for truth are drawn to this kind of loving action. (Romans 12:14, 20-21)
2. Pray for your enemies. (Matthew 5:44)
3. Give a soft answer to those who would provoke you. (Proverbs 15:1, Romans 12:18) Try to avoid conflict whenever possible.
4. The best offense is a good defense! Immerse yourself in the Word of God. (Romans 12:1-2) Renew your mind by reading and meditating on the Bible.
5. Associate with people who love God and want to serve Him. (Proverbs 13:20 & I Corinthians 15:33)

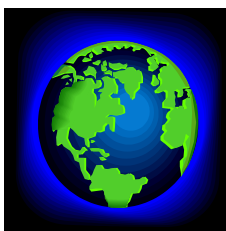


How should I view the unsaved world?

1. Remember that the believer has his/her citizenship in heaven. You are a alien, or a stranger on this earth. (Hebrew 11:13, I Peter 2:11 & Philippians 3:20)
2. The world is your place of ministry for Jesus Christ and a place for you to share the good news of the gospel of Christ and evangelize those who do not know Christ as their personal Savior. (Acts 1:8 & Matthew 28:18-20)

How should I, as a believer, walk in the world?

1. A believer's life should display a love for God and a love for others. (John 13:34-35)



2. A believer's lifestyle should separate you from the world because the believer should not think or act the way that the world thinks or acts. (II Corinthians 6:14-18 & I Peter 2:9) Please note this does not mean the believer is to so peculiar so that he/she would lose influence in the world. See Philippians 4:5 & I Corinthians 9:22.
3. A believer should have a good testimony in the world's eyes. This is critical to our ability to share the gospel with unbelievers. (We will cover the subject of sharing the gospel in our next lesson. (Colossians 4:5-6)



Homework

1. What is the identifying mark of believers found in John 13:34-35?
2. What is fellowship?
3. List three of the "one anothers" we discussed and how you can put them into practice in your own life.
4. From whom/what should the believer expect opposition?
5. What are the two ways that you should view the world?

Key Memory Verses:

I John 3:14-15

Our next meeting will be: _____

Daily in the Word

It is important to spend time reading and meditating on the Word of God. Read each day's passage and answer the two questions for each day. As you read these passages, remember that these are God's words to YOU and that He wants you to learn more about Him by reading His Word.

DAY 1 John 13:31-35	What is the Word saying?	How does this apply to me?
DAY 2 Philippians 2:1-11	What is the Word saying?	How does this apply to me?
DAY 3 Romans 12:1-8	What is the Word saying?	How does this apply to me?

DAY 4 Romans 12:9-21	What is the Word saying?	How does this apply to me?
DAY 5 Matthew 5:43-48	What is the Word saying?	How does this apply to me?
DAY 6 John 15:18-27	What is the Word saying?	How does this apply to me?
DAY 7 I Peter 2:9-12	What is the Word saying?	How does this apply to me?