

Developing Good relationships Among Brethren

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Introduction: The content of our heart is revealed in how we treat other people.

- A. If a person helps others throughout their lives they are likely motivated by God!
 - 1. Jesus emphasized the connection between our work with others and the final judgment! **(Mt 25:34-36)**
 - 2. This heart must be among Christians in their relationship with each other. **(1 Cor 12:23-27)**
- B. We will reflect in our attitude towards our brothers in Christ if we are learning the wisdom of God or the wisdom of the world. **(Jas 3:14-18)**
 - 1. The wisdom of the world is easy to learn!
 - 2. To find the wisdom of God we must pursue it every day.
 - 3. We have a tendency to quickly forget God's truths under difficult times. Our relationships with our brethren fall into this category.

I. Develop a greater love for God

- A. How will I know if I am in fellowship with God? **(1 Jn 4:13)**
 - 1. Why not take the test to know "that we abide in Him, and He in us?"
 - 2. The love of God must become a part of me to the extent that it is shown towards my brethren! **(1 Jn 4:8-12)**
 - 3. Are you in fellowship with God?
- B. Do I really love God or am I a liar? **(1 Jn 4:19-21)**
 - 1. It is easy to talk but what is really in my heart?
 - 2. God's proposition is simple: "If one man loves God and another man loves God, then these two men will love each other!"
 - 3. A failure to have the proper attitude towards my brother is a failure of my love for God.
- C. Are you begotten of God? **(1 Jn 5:1-2)**
 - 1. John showed the hypocrisy of the Gnostics who, while claiming great Knowledge they despised those outside their elitist sect.
 - 2. What will everyone who is begotten of God do?

II. Develop a positive attitude towards others

- A. It is easy to become negative towards other people.
 - 1. Elisha gave up on Israel when God knew better! **(1 Kgs 19:14, 18)**
 - 2. I have not known anyone very long that did not disappoint me in some way.
 - 3. If you are not careful you will have a negative attitude towards that person where you magnify and imagine faults while becoming blinded to the good .
- B. With a negative attitude we will become partial with our brethren. **(Jas 2:1-4,9)**
 - 1. Two men may have the same fault but we are positive towards one and negative towards the other. This ought not to be!
 - 2. Which wisdom puts away this partiality? **(Jas 3:17)**

- C. A positive attitude does not overlook faults but it does seek the best for everyone.
1. What does the love of God do for us? **(1 Cor 13:4-8)**
 2. How did Jesus deal with the faults of His apostles?

III. Develop a "togetherness" spirit.

- A. What kind of things should Christians be doing together?
1. Why was the early church effective in reaching the lost? **(Acts 2:44-47)**
 2. After persecution they prayed together. **(Acts 4:23-24)**
 3. In famine they shared and gave together. **(Acts 4:31-35)**
 4. At the burial of Stephen they mourned together. **(Acts 8:2)**
 5. This church did not forget these occasions! This is how closeness develops among God's people. (Ex. Tragedies we have shared)
- B. Do you take advantage of opportunities to be with other Christians?
1. Have you gathered with other Christians to pray? **(Acts 12:5)**
 2. How is it possible that we weep together without being together at some time? **(Rom 12:15)**
- C. We must have the attitude of "we" and not "they." **(Col 2:1-2)**
1. We must reach out to others within this congregation!
 2. Let's not be a complainer who talks about what "they" are doing!
 3. Every person makes a contribution to this work. If you are not involved please step out of the fringes and get into the middle of things.
- D. Three things we must do.
1. Push aside our timidity and take risks for God.
 2. Cast aside our selfishness and look to the needs of others.
 3. Put away the negative attitudes in our own heart. **(Jn 13:34-35)**

IV. Develop a forgiving spirit.

- A. Consider the example of the prodigal son.
1. He returned home with a deep sense of unworthiness and found the love and forgiveness of his father. **(Lk 15:21-24)**
 2. A bad relationship still existed between his older brother. Why was this? **(Lk 15:25-32)**
- B. Two important steps to forgiveness.
1. We must always have a sense of unworthiness. **(Lk 15:29; 1 Tim 1:15)**
 - a. When we think too much of ourselves we will not forgive.
 - b. Have you recognized your own sins? This will bring more tolerance.
 2. We must have a forgiving spirit.
 - a. We must forgive all who seek it.
 - b. Our goal is to restore, not to get even. **(Gal 6:1)**

Conclusion: God has and will bless this church to the extent that we abide in Him!
(Adapted from Bill Hall)