

A Woman's Heart: Keys to Christ-like Relationships

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Why have relationships?

1. God is **relational** in His nature. Genesis 1:26
2. The **power** of God is shown through connection and community. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
3. Our relationships with others **mirror** our relationship with Christ. John 15:10-14
4. The quality of our relationships is the **truest** measure of our lives. Luke 10:27
5. God gets **glory** when our relationships are out of His love and example.

Our relationships with others will be a mess unless:

1. We have a clear picture of **God**.

He is full of grace and mercy.

His forgiveness is for all sin, for all who call on His name.

He is all-powerful, all-wise, all-knowing.

He is infinite and eternal.

He is intimate and close.

His love is completely unconditional.

Ephesians 2:8, Romans 5:17

Colossians 2:13, Romans 5:8,

Psalms 103:3, Acts 2:21

Hosea 14:9, 1 Corinthians 1:25

Jeremiah 10:10

Romans 8:15, Hebrews 13:5

Psalms 25:10, Romans 8:39

2. We have a clear picture of **ourselves** in God because of Christ.

See handout: daughter of God, righteous, temple of the Spirit, part of His body

Object of God's favor

Specially selected

Have a very big purpose

Have everything we need

1 Timothy 1:17

Ephesians 1:5

Ephesians 2:10

Philippians 4:19

3. We understand the nature of **spiritual battle**.

Rev. 12:10

■ always working against God's glory

■ seeking to divide and conquer

■ primary weapon is lies in multiple forms

■ constantly pulling toward discontent

■ our past is raw material often used in the battle. That and future fears.

1 Peter 5:8

John 8:44

If we do not have these, we:

Live from a foundation of insecurity, not security.

What you view as your **source** will determine your course.

If God is for us, **who can be against us?**

Do not live from a posture of gratitude.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Thankfulness is a transformative element in life.

A shock value way to get this: **to hold death closely.**

Look to others for things they cannot give us, like identity, purpose, meaning, value

This is essentially **idolatry**. Jeremiah 2:13

Concept of "**vats**" - we look to wrong people for the wrong things

We cannot look to people for what only God can give.

Whose approval of us matters most? Why?

Galatians 1:10

"Anytime our sense of self-worth or security becomes attached to something or somebody, we set ourselves up to be controlled by that thing or person." Stanley

RELATIONSHIPS ARE LIKE GARDENS.

Fertilize them with:

Ephesians 5:1

To "fertilize" relationships is essentially the crucial act of looking to give and not get.

John 12:25

1. **Grace** in abundance

1 Peter 4:10

Hebrews 12:15

2. Unconditional **love**

1 John 4:19

John 13:34

3. Total **acceptance**

Romans 15:7

Who they are

Where they are

4. **Forgiveness**

Colossians 3:13

Ephesians 4:31, 32

Proverbs 19:11

If we do not, bitterness will grow.

Proverbs 4:23 - we must watch over our hearts diligently.

It is a **decision** and it is primarily between **God** and I.

5. Longsuffering or **patience**

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Ephesians 4:2, 3

6. Assume the **best**

Romans 12:10

Romans 14:19

Righteousness of Christ has been imputed to believers. 2 Corinthians 5:21

Attitude of horizontal grace

We never know the whole story

7. **Humility**

Philippians 2:3,4

Every person is my teacher.

May have entertained angels

Hebrews 13:2

Weed out the things that choke real relationship (Get rid of! Go after! Refuse to allow to exist!!!)

1. Self-protection

Unwillingness to trust others or God because of previous hurt, disappointment or betrayal or fear of being so again.
Being safely distant or hidden.
We control because we don't trust God to do it "right."

2. Vows

We often make vows as a result of hurt, violation, betrayal, or disappointment.

About them:

- solemn promise or assertion
- no such thing as a vow made apart from prayer
- always made voluntarily
- once made must be kept
- evil one "honors" this prayer made outside God's will

Examples of self-protective, inner vows or hiding places:

I will never let anyone have my heart again.	I will not allow myself to need.
I'd rather die than be like my father/mother.	I must always stay totally in control.
I will never be taken advantage of again.	I will never give without getting back.
I cannot let my deepest sins be known, or I'll be rejected.	I must be strong.
I must never completely trust.	I'll never be that vulnerable again.
I must always be nice.	I will never let a man control me.
I must not show weakness.	I will never allow myself to be dependent on anyone.
I will not feel pain.	I will never amount to anything.
I will always be an outsider.	I will never be poor again.

3. Masks

We don them to cover up what is truly going on inside us.
They are relational hiding styles used to deflect.
They come out of our personality so are only wrong when they are used to hide.
They paralyze us in isolation from those who would love us most.

Common examples:

Humor	Have it all together	Super spiritual
"I'm fine"	Lone Ranger	Low self-esteem
Aloof	Rescuer	Porcupine
Chaotic	Tough gal	Answer person
Party girl	Martyr	Sarcastic

4. Comparison

2 Corinthians 10:12

You MUST deal with your stuff or it WILL deal with you!

5. Getting beyond outward presentation

1 Samuel 16:7
Proverbs 27:19

Look beyond
Resolved determination to look at heart

6. Fear of conflict

2 Corinthians 5:18

7. Judgment

Romans 14:10

We can't read motives
We don't know the facts and lack the big picture.
We live with blind spots of our own. (**Ask someone to tell you yours**)
It is impossible to be totally objective.
We ourselves are imperfect and inconsistent.

8. Expectations

Too high.
Of what a friend should be or should do.

Gardening tools to help fertilize and weed:

Christifying

-- Like putting on a pair of glasses

Empathy

Philippians 2:2

-- Tuning into another's feelings.
-- What is it like to be her with her background and personality?

Listening

James 1:19

-- Listening does not come naturally to most of us, but is a **skill** that needs to be developed.
-- Not waiting to speak.

Reflecting and Clarifying

-- Reflect back both thinking and feeling
-- "It sounds like you feel _____, because _____."

-- Clarifying questions:

Are you saying...?
Tell me more about...
I'm confused about...
Let me see if I understand...
Who? What? When? How?
Avoid asking yes or no

Encouragement

1 Thessalonians 5:11
Ephesians 4:29
Proverbs 15:4

- The more specific, the better
- Remembering details
- Following up
- Taking an interest
- Know another's language
- Recognizing another's uniqueness
- Best when it is unexpected.
- What can I honestly admire?

Can't ever underestimate the formative power of speech

Clear Communication

Amos 3:3
Ephesians 4:15
Proverbs 12:18

- Straight forward communication
- When in doubt, check it out.
- Don't over-personalize.
- Direct not dropping hints, asking questions
- No metessages or second guessing
- "Should" is a dangerous word because it's almost always associated with shame and guilt.

Visioning

Philippians 1:6

- Project in progress - old house under renovation
 - God never gives up on us
- John 14:26, Philippians 2:13

Diversity

1 Corinthians 12:6

- Intentionally
- Appreciate uniqueness and differences

Gardening tools boils down to wearing your armour of God (big girl panties)!!

What is the most basic thing a garden needs to grow? Water John 4:10

What this means:

I must be full of water (nourished by Christ myself) before I can pour out nourishment in my gardens. If I'm pressing into Christ, my relationships will be loving, godly, and fulfilling. If I am looking to others to fulfill what only God can, then my relationships will suffer.

*"We need a safe place for weary pilgrims... We need to dive into the unmanageable, messy world of relationships, to admit our failure, to identify our tensions, to explore our shortcomings."
"A spiritual community, a church, is full of broken people who turn their chairs toward each other because they know they cannot make it alone. These broken people journey together with their wounds and worries and washouts visible, but are able to see beyond the brokenness to something alive and good, something whole." Larry Crabb*

What is something I am committing to right now for my gracious God?

What is the biggest thing I have felt God speaking to me about myself and my relationships?

What is at least one Scripture I must hide in my heart?

TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONSHIPS, WE MUST KNOW WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST
IF WE DON'T, WE ARE SUNK!!

Who am I?

From *Victory Over Darkness*, by Neil Anderson

I am the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13).

I am the light of the world (Matthew 5:14).

I am the child of God (John 1:12).

I am part of the vine, a channel of Christ's life (John 15: 1, 5).

I am Christ's friend (John 15:15).

I am chosen and appointed by Christ to bear His fruit (John 15:16).

I am a daughter of light and not of darkness (1 Thessalonians 5:5).

I am a holy partaker of a heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1).

I am a partaker of Christ; I share in His life (Hebrews 3:14).

I am one of God's living stones, being built up in Christ as a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5).

I am a member of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession (1 Peter 2:9, 10).

I am an alien and stranger to this world in which I temporarily live (1 Peter 2:11).

I am an enemy of the devil (1 Peter 5:8).

I am a child of God and I will resemble Christ when He returns (1 John 3:1, 2).

I am born of God, and the evil one -- the devil cannot touch me (1 John 5:18).

I am not the great "I am" (Exodus 3:14; John 8:24, 28, 58), but by the grace of God, I am what I am (1 Corinthians 15:10).

I am a slave of righteousness (Romans 6:18).

I am enslaved to God (Romans 6:22).

I am a daughter of God; God is spiritually my Father (Romans 8:14, 15; Galatians 3:26; 4:6).

I am a joint heir with Christ, sharing His inheritance with Him (Romans 8:17).

I am a temple -- a dwelling place -- of God. His Spirit and His life dwells in me (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19).

I am united to the Lord and am one spirit with Him (1 Corinthians 6:17).

I am a member of Christ's body (1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 5:30).

I am a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

I am reconciled to God and am a minister of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18, 19).

I am a daughter of God and one in Christ (Galatians 3:26, 28).

I am an heir of God since I am a daughter of God (Galatians 4:6, 7).

I am a saint (Ephesians 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:2).

I am God's workmanship -- His handiwork -- born anew in Christ to do His work (Ephesians 2:10).

I am a fellow citizen with the rest of God's family (Ephesians 2:19).

I am prisoner of Christ (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1).

I am righteous and holy (Ephesians 4:24).

I am a citizen of heaven, seated in heaven right now (Philippians 3:20; Eph. 2:6).

I am hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3).

I am an expression of the life of Christ because He is my life (Colossians 3:4).

I am chosen of God, holy and dearly loved (Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4).

FORGIVENESS

What it is not:

- 1) It is not the same as forgetting. You can forgive even if you can never forget.
- 2) It is not saying that what happened to you was okay. You don't want to soften or deny the reality of the act or the damage.
- 3) It is not asking for retribution, restitution, or atonement. Forgiving means to let go of vengeance.
- 4) It is not allowing repetition of the hurt. Forgiveness does not mean that you then need to put yourself in the same hurtful situation.
- 5) It is not between you and the other person. It is between you and God.
- 6) It is not using the past against the other person. It is a willingness to stop punishing or judging the other.
- 7) It is not dependent upon the other person's response. We can't make forgiveness dependent on an apology or recognition from the other person that what they did was wrong.

What it is:

- 1) Forgiveness is a choice and decision. You decide to forgive because it is the right thing to do.
- 2) It is an act of obedience. We are clearly called to forgive no matter how we may feel.
- 3) It is a spiritual event. It can, as a consequence, have positive psychological and physical effects.
- 4) It is agreeing to live with the effects of what someone else has done to you. You need to forgive even if the offense has caused you long-term or ongoing damage.
- 5) It is allowing justice to be handled by God. It is a choice to let go of attempting to control the consequences to the offender.
- 6) It is a process that often needs to be repeated. With new memories of old offenses and renewed anger, you may have to repeat as necessary.
- 7) It is without limits. We are urged to forgive all things, even the worst.
- 8) It is allowing the mercy of God to work through you. It is a recognition that you alone are incapable of having the love and grace to forgive without letting the love of God flow through you.
- 9) It needs to be done with thoroughness. We need to attempt to forgive all people for all things as God brings them to mind.
- 10) It is a choice to forgive transgressions whether they were intentional or not. The criterion is: Did their actions result in you being hurt some way?