

Building Relationships

Today, we continue with part 3 of the series on Christian family, we will talk about “building relationships”.

Mankind is, by
nature, sociable.

We are creatures of
relationship. We are
family and society
oriented. We live,
move, and operate
in and around
relationships.

We live in organized cities, raise families, have social friends and work in organizations. In every stage of our existence, we enter into relationships.

We have relationship with friends, families, parents, spouse, siblings, uncles, aunts, cousins, in-laws, superiors, peers, colleagues, subordinates, neighbors and church mates.

The list can go on and on.

It is the **quality of our relationship**
that determines the measure of our
happiness.

Relationships can be a fulfilling and exciting experience. Our relationships are an **important part of life**, be it relationships with our family or friends.

But relationships don't just happen – healthy relationships **require** time and energy from involved parties.

Many people aren't aware that there are practical skills we can learn to develop and further strengthen relationships.

Relationships **grow** and **change** over time,
so it is important to nurture the
relationship to keep it happy and healthy.
And of all these relationships, the **family**
relationship is most important.

Family Relationship

There is a particular verse in the New Testament that we read so often and yet take it so lightly, when in fact, it carries great significance. It is often overlooked, but when studied, reveals a wealth of spiritual insight.

Mark 1:11

And a voice came from heaven:

"You are my Son, whom I love; with
you I am well pleased."

In this declaration, the Father reveals that God is a Family and that a close relationship exists between the Father and the Son.

God is a Family. This is a divine truth.
It is in this divine family structure that
the **human family** takes its form.

The integrity of the **family system** is essential to human development and survival. It is in **this environment** that the human character is constructed and relationship is nurtured.

The human family system is unique. It works as an intricate network of **dependency, support, collaboration and understanding**. It is a unit that works towards a common goal fostering a common good.

The family unit is the basic building block of society - the foundation of any civil society. And the Kingdom of God is no different.

The Kingdom of God is a family unit.
With God the Father and Jesus Christ
working for the expansion of the divine
family.

Hebrews 2:10-13

10 In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Hebrews 2:10-13

11 Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. **12** He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises..

Hebrews 2:10-13

13 And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me."

It is the objective of the Father and
Jesus Christ to bring many sons unto
glory.

The author of relationship is God. **He desires to have a relationship with us.** The covenant we enter into is a covenant of relationship.

As the term is written in Hebrews 8:10
**"...God to be our Father and us to
be His people."**

Hebrews 8:10

10 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

We are here to **learn and develop**
Godly character.

**Like a college or university, we are
enrolled in God's School,
Sonship Academy.**

Hebrews 12:5-11

5 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, **6** because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

Hebrews 12:5-11

7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? **8** If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.

Hebrews 12:5-11

9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!

10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

Hebrews 12:5-11

11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

We are here to learn the ways of the Lord
so that we may eventually enter into a
divine relationship with the Father as His
children in the Kingdom He prepares for us
from the foundation of the world.

Yes, we are called to enter into
a **family relationship** with God.

Ephesians 1:4-6

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love **5** he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—**6** to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

**What makes a
healthy relationship?**

According to research one of the most important things in a relationship is friendship, and of course the other is "Love."

That is why Jesus said 'I call you friends.'

John 15:14-16

14 You are my friends if you do what I command. **15** I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

John 15:14-16

16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

It is in friendship that relationship, trust
and closeness develop.

Jesus had a close relationship with the disciples. They talk through things, share their feelings openly (positive or negative), share their concerns, hopes and dreams and encourage one another.

This close and genuine relationship that Jesus shared with the disciples is evident in the Last Supper discourse and the intercessory prayer of Jesus in John 17:24-26.

John 17:24-26

24 “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. **25** “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.

John 17:24-26

26 I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

People need to be able to have fun in a relationship. Relationship must offer opportunity to learn and grow.

And the need to understand each other's
expectation in a relationship
should not be set aside.

This relationship is clear to Jesus' disciples
and it should also become clear to us.

God is willing to bring you into His
Kingdom as a son.

**The question is what
can you offer in return ?**

Divine Relationship

Why is our earthly relationship
important to God?

It is important because **God is a Family**
and we are being trained to enter that
divine family.

The relationship between Jesus and God the Father is an **excellent model** for building healthy relationships within the divine family and our own family as well.

At the baptism of Jesus, God the Father said something extremely profound.

Mark 1:11

11 As Jesus came up out of the water the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him like a dove. A voice from heaven spoke: "You are my son, whom I love; with whom I am well pleased."

What is the significance of this statement?

In this occasion, God takes the time to validate that Jesus is his Son, as a member of the Eternal Family.

Basically, God is saying:

**"You are mine; I love you;
I am proud of you."**

In a relationship three
(3) things are required.

- **A Sense of Belonging**

- **The Nurture of Love**

- **The Praise of Confidence**

Therefore, to belong, to be loved, and to be praised are indispensable components for **healthy relationships** for they provide a clear sense of identity, security and confidence for the relationship to grow, bloom and flourish.

Sense of Belonging

The need to belong is basic in each of us. It gives us a sense of identity. We know who we are and no one can take that identity from us.

Often, at the root of emotional disturbance is alienation, **the loss of one's identity**. If you do not know who you are you are lost emotionally.

That is the most common problem with illegitimate, adopted and step-children - they lose their true identity. Identity crisis affects normal emotional growth and inhibits normal relationship with others.

When God says,
"You are my son,"
Jesus' family identity is affirmed.

Jesus is the Son of God. Each of us needs a sense of belonging. We know who we are by our family names.

I am a Corpuz, he is an Anselmo, etc. This may not always be a positive experience, but you know who you are and to whom you belong. That gives any relationship a good start and stability.

A few years ago at the National Prayer Breakfast held in Washington, DC, Congressman Tribble told of how his little daughter was constantly being associated with him wherever she went.

People would say, "*Oh, you must be Congressman Tribble's little girl.*" She quietly explained to her parents that she wanted to be herself, not just known as someone else's daughter. Her father told her not to worry about it.

Her mother, on the other hand, who was more understanding, said to her, "The next time that happens, just stand right up and say, *'I am Constance Tribble!'*"

A few days later, a group of people met her and when they heard her name, they said, "*Why, Congressman Tribble must be your father!*"

The little girl looked right at them and said, "*Oh no! That's not what my mother says!*"

God gives to Jesus the assurance,

"You are my son...you are mine.

You belong to me."

This reveals that Jesus is the natural Son of God. In our own family, we must let our children feel the sense of belonging.

They need a **clear identity** of who they are and to whom they belong. Not only do they belong to us, most importantly they belong to God.

When God declares Jesus as his Son, He sets the stage for our adoption into the family of God. To belong gives us our sense of identity. Yes, we belong to God. We are His children!

That to us is our identity. In our own family, our children need a **strong sense of belonging** - that they are ours and we are theirs – and they are our children.

Nurture of Love

We need to be nurtured in love for our security. Imagine the strength of security Jesus felt as he heard the words,
"You are my Son, whom I love."

Tragedy stalks any relationship where belonging is without love. Dale Galloway tells of a husband and wife interviewing a little boy they wanted to adopt. In glowing terms they described the many things they could give him.

To their amazement, the little boy said, "If you have nothing to offer except a good home, clothes, toys, and the other things most kids have, I would just stay here." "What on earth could you want besides those things?" the woman asked. "I just want someone to love me," replied the little boy.

Love is severely tested in human relationships. **A son** may choose to rebel and forsake his parents.

A daughter may make choices that lead to disaster.

A parent may withhold love and acceptance from a child.

A spouse may attack with words that wound the soul.

In family relationships there is an immense need for an unconditional 'agape' love that endures.

A young husband stood by the hospital bed of his wife as they listened to the doctor tell how in order to remove a tumor, he had to sever a facial nerve that controlled the muscles of her mouth.

She asked the doctor, "*Will my mouth always be like this?*" The doctor said yes. The husband looked at his wife, smiled, and said that he found her mouth "kind of cute." Then he bent over and kissed her, twisting his own lips to meet hers. Love binds the belonging and make it secure!

1 John 3:1-3

1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

1 John 3:1-3

2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. **3** Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

Praise of Confidence

The third component of healthy relationships is praise. Praise releases a sense of confidence in our lives.

Jesus heard these words:

"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

The Scriptures reinforce the idea of praise.

One example is where the Apostle Paul cautions us to "not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Ephesians 4:29).

We are often quick to criticize, but slow to praise. This is particularly true with those who are closest to us. How often do we praise our children? Come to think about it we criticize them more often than we praise. The ratio might be 10-to-none.

How about our spouse? When was the last time we praised our lifetime partner.

How often do we say: I love you. I appreciate you. I love your cooking. I love the way you smile at me.

We know we need to praise people, but often in practice we don't, **why?** It should not be because of shyness. Praise is something nice and uplifting.

We need to **be more sensitive** with people who are close to us. We think since they are close they can understand us better. But, that is not usually the case.

We need to be careful that we do not hurt the people we love. The way we treat our immediate family members, our parents, spouse and children.

- Parents need to praise their children. Praise their effort if not their results.
- Examples:
- **Passing grade of 75%.** Oh, pasang-awa son, I know you can do better.

- **Varsity tryout.** You are too small. You can't make center play. Are you trying out as water boy? Or he might be good as a guard in dribbling and assisting.

- **I want to learn ballet.** Why, you have two left feet? It's a waste of money. Or great, you might be a good dancer.

- **Son going to competition.** Why are you home early? You lost again, right? Am guilty. Or how many games did you win? I won two dad, I won two! That's wonderful. Keep it up.

From Rejection to Genius

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born on July 4, 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts. After his father was lost at sea when he was only four, his mother became overly protective and pushed him toward more isolated pursuits. Hawthorne's childhood left him overly shy and bookish, and molded his life as a writer.

Hawthorne turned to writing after his graduation from Bowdoin College. His first novel, Fanshawe, was unsuccessful and Hawthorne himself disavowed it as amateurish. However, he wrote several successful short stories, including "My Kinsman, Major Molyneaux," "Roger Malvin's Burial" and "Young Goodman Brown."

However, insufficient earnings as a writer forced Hawthorne to enter a career as a Boston Custom House measurer in 1839.

After three years Hawthorne was dismissed from his job with the Salem Custom House. By 1842, Hawthorne married Sophia Peabody and move to The Manse in Concord.

Hawthorne returned to Salem in 1845, where he was appointed surveyor of the Boston Custom House by President James Polk, but was dismissed from this post when Zachary Taylor became president. Nathaniel, broken hearted and dejected, went home to tell his wife that he was a failure and had been fired again from his job at the Custom House.

She surprised him with an exclamation of joy, "Now," she said triumphantly, "*you can write your book!*" "Yes," replied Nathaniel with sagging confidence, "*and what shall we live on while I am writing it?*"

To his amazement, she opened a drawer and pulled out a substantial amount of money. "*Where on earth did you get that?*" he exclaimed.

"I have always known you were a genius," she told him. "I knew that someday you would write a masterpiece. So every week, out of the money you gave me for housekeeping, I saved a little bit. So here is enough to last us for a year."

From her trust,
confidence and most of
all ENCOURAGEMENT
came one of the
greatest novels of
American Literature,
THE SCARLET LETTER.

Hawthorne then devoted himself to his most famous novel, *The Scarlet Letter*. He zealously worked on the novel with a determination he had not known before. His intense emotions infused the novel with imaginative energy, leading him to describe it as the "hell-fired story."

On February 3, 1850, Hawthorne read the final pages to his wife. He wrote, "*It broke her heart and sent her to bed with a grievous headache, which I look upon as a triumphant success.*"

The Scarlet Letter
was an immediate
success and allowed
Hawthorne the
distinction of being
one of the greatest
American Novelists.

Praise

Very often parents criticize their children for failing. The truth is trying is better than failure. Praise their initiative, if not their results.

Praise gives confidence, **criticism** discourages. We want our children to have the confidence and positive optimism to face the world.

As parents, we must **be proud of our children** in the small achievements and their hard work. So when they grow up, they will have the confidence to succeed.

When God says to his Son,

"I am proud of you,"

he commends his character, honors his achievements, and encourages him to accomplish the task at hand. Family members grow faster in the direction of our praise than in the path of our criticism.

Summation

As we develop a close and warm personal relationship with our family members – our parents, siblings, spouses and children – God wants and is developing a spiritual relationship with each one of us.

Jesus said in John 14:15-26

that God the Father desires to have a close relationship with us by sending His Holy Spirit to be with us.

John 14:15-26

15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command. **16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—**17** the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

John 14:15-26

18 I will not leave you as orphans;
I will come to you. **19** Before long,
the world will not see me anymore, but
you will see me. Because I live, you also
will live. **20** On that day you will realize
that I am in my Father, and you are in me,
and I am in you.

John 14:15-26

21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.

He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” **22**

Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"

John 14:15-26

23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

John 14:15-26

25 "All this I have spoken while still with you. **26** But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

The **in-dwelling** of the Holy Spirit changes the way God interacts with His people. God takes an active participation in our life. He sends His spirit to guide us and to teach us in righteous and led us to the right path.

**The Holy Spirit, as representation of
God the Father and Jesus Christ,
comes to dwell within each one of His
chosen people – us.**

Our whole relationship with God changes.
For whomsoever the Holy Spirit dwells,
have entered into a covenant relationship
with God, and bound by the Holy Spirit.

You have the seed, the deposit of God's spirit, and that makes you a son and a daughter. Romans 8:14-17.

Romans 8:14-17

14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "*Abba*, Father."

Romans 8:14-17

16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

The three indispensable components of a healthy relationship are a sense of belonging, nurture of love, and confidence in praise. **Work** on applying these components in relationships within your family and friends.

Affirm them by saying and showing that they belong to you or you belong to them, love them, and be proud of them.

As God the Father said to Christ:

**"You are My Son, whom I love with
whom I am well pleased."**

The Father said to us in

Galatians 4:4-7.

Galatians 4:4-7

4 But when the time had fully come,
God sent his Son, born of a woman, born
under law, 5 to redeem those
under law, that we might receive
the full rights of sons.

Galatians 4:4-7

6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "*Abba*, Father." **7** So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

**You are a son and
an heir of God.**

**That is our divine
family relationship
with Christ and our
Heavenly Father.**