**OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

Sunday School Lesson 1

*Building Right Relationships*

Hebrews 5:12

3/5/2023

**Introduction:** The Bible gives the two greatest commandments to be loving the Lord God with all your heart and loving your neighbor as yourself. Clearly, the Lord places an emphasis on how we treat others. In fact, all of the other commandments hang on these two commands. This thought leads us to the start of our new Sunday School series on building right relationships. We know that we are commanded to love the Lord and others, but what does that realistically look like in our relationships? We’ll seek to examine the answer to that question during this lesson series. Each week, we will tackle a different potential relationship and how to spiritually handle that relationship. Of course, we will start this morning by considering our relationship with the Lord. In later lessons, we will consider our relationship with our spouse, children, adult parents/grandparents, other family members, co-workers, leadership, subordinates, friends/church family, enemies/critics, acquaintances, and maybe a few others. As we consider our relationship with the Lord, we will note some common attributes that should be a component of every relationship that we have. There are key items that make up almost every healthy relationship in this world. Let’s take some time this morning to consider how healthy our relationship with God really is:

1. **OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD IS BASED ON MUTUAL TRUST (FAITH).**

* ***Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Luke 24:21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. 1 Thessalonians 2:4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.*** Trust is a foundational component of every relationship. Certainly, our relationship with the Lord is no different. We cannot please Him if we do not exercise faith toward Him. He desires and delights in our faith in Him. Of course, it should be easy to trust Him since He is always and completely trustworthy. His Word is faithful and true. Perhaps, our relationship with the Lord is not good because we do not trust Him as we should. When this happened to the disciples, they all deserted Him. They had trusted that He was the Messiah, but that trust failed when He went to the cross. Let’s not let our trust in Him be shaken. On the other side of this, consider also how Christ trusts you. He has trusted you with the Gospel. He has trusted you with life. Do we abuse His trust in us?

1. **OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD IS BASED ON MUTUAL SELFLESSNESS.**

* ***John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Matthew 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*** The second important quality of our relationship with the Lord is based on mutual selflessness. Again, this is needful in our other relationships as well. The Lord shows us His selflessness on the cross of Calvary. He put our needs above His own comfort. He put our needs above life itself. It is reasonable and expected then for us to mirror that dynamic in our relationship with the Lord. We ought to be willing to take up our own cross and follow Him. We ought to be willing to die to self. Our relationship with the Lord will only be as strong as our willingness to this area is. Flesh cannot please God. He has no interest in our sinful flesh other than to redeem it by the blood of His Son.

1. **OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD IS BASED ON MUTUAL COMMUNICATION.**

* ***2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*** As we add in communication, we sum up the three main tenants of every successful relationship. Trust, selflessness, and communication make for a healthy relationship. Aren’t you thankful that the Lord communicates with us? He has given us His Word. He has also given us His Spirit who speaks to us and teaches and comforts us. Is it too much for Him to ask for us to communicate back with Him? We are commanded to pray without ceasing. We need to get away from routine prayers and instead give in to an overall life of prayer.

1. **OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD IS NOT BASED ON WHAT OTHERS THINK.**

* ***Galatians 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. 1 Samuel 16:7b for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.*** We cannot judge our relationship with the Lord based on what others think. Now, this thought is a two-way street. Some would like to use this to justify their sin before the Lord. They will tell you that their relationship with God is great despite their clear disobedience to His Word. While your relationship with the Lord isn’t necessarily based on what I think, it is based on what the Lord thinks and what His Word expressly says. On the other side of this, we also need to be reminded that pleasing others does not indicate a healthy relationship with the Lord. There are some folks who are great at presenting a healthy relationship on the outside. Ultimately, the Lord knows the truth about our relationship with Him.

1. **OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD SHOULD HAVE CONTINUAL MAINTENANCE.**

* **Revelation 2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Matthew 13:15a For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed;** The nation Israel had everything given to them from the Lord. Think of where they started with Abraham who was a friend of God. By the time we get to the New Testament, we find a very cold people. Their hearts had waxed gross, and their ears were dull of hearing. How did this happen? It happened because the nation had not maintained their relationship with the Lord. By the time their Messiah came, they could not even recognize Him. Our relationship with the Lord requires regular maintenance. It does not take much for us to get away from Him. Of course, iniquity causes the love of many to wax cold. We must be in continual maintenance mode when it comes to our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

1. **OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD SHOULDN’T BE EMOTIONALLY SUPERFICIAL.**

* ***1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*** A famous television personality announced on her show one day that she believed that God is a feeling experience, not a believing experience. This is the mantra of the new age church movement. It places a heavy emphasis on the emotional aspect of our relationship with the Lord. It certainly is true that there is an emotional aspect of our relationship. We are called to love Him. Again, it is the very first commandment. Yet, Jesus also said that if you love Him, you will keep His commandments. How are we to love the Lord? We are to love Him in deed and in truth. Love can be a cheaply used word. We use it in our relationships, but do we back it up with real action and substance? Would a wife be content if her husband mistreated her all of the time, but then he always came back to tell her how much he loves her? Let’s pour out our hearts in love to the Lord, but let’s back that love up by obeying His commandments.

1. **OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD SHOULD REFLECT ITS IMPORTANCE.**

* ***Deuteronomy 6:5 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Mark 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*** As we close, let us consider that our relationship with the Lord should show out its importance. If He is truly in first place in our lives, that ought to be reflective in our relationship with Him. It also ought to be reflective in our relationship with others. There can only be one first place. As a comparison, a spouse would naturally expect to be held in a higher regard than that of a spouse’s friend. If not, you can expect some problems. The same is true in our relationship with the Lord. Make Him first and keep Him first.