

# God Ordained Relationships

**“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”**

Matthew 22:37 NAS

Our relationship with God and with others is vital to our success in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. God intends that our relationship be a witness of Him to a dying world (**Matthew 5:16**). It is important to note that developing relationships as God has designed them will alienate us from the world (**1John 3:1**). Those in the world, even those in the church who have adopted the thinking of the world, will not understand. In order for any of our relationships in life to work to God’s glory we need to acknowledge that all relationships are established by God for His purpose. God made us the way we are. He has made us to be **“individually members one of another”** (**Romans 12:5**) Having been established by Him, we need to also confess that He has ordained the order of our relationships and their position regarding authority. It is only as we yield our life to His definitions of authority and relationships that we can function in the manner for which He has designed us. As long as we function within relationships based on man’s standards and understandings we will not be able to be **“the proper working individual part”** (**Ephesians 4:15**) for which He has made us.

When I say that relationships are God-ordained I mean that it is The way God has established us to exist. Therefore, it is the way in which we are to relate to others. As such, any relationship not fitting that which has been established by God is sinful. For example, it is not optional for a husband to love his wife (**Ephesians 5:25**). The manner in which he is to love her, has also been defined and ordained by God. Therefore, the relationships we will be discussing here are those defined by God in His Word.

## God and Man

Every relationship we have springs from our relationship with God. Every relationship begins with how we are relating with God. If, through our selfishness and pride, we are rebelling against God every relationship we have will reflect that rebellion. If, however, we are allowing Christ to live in us, that too will be reflected in our relationship with everyone else.

The scriptures are real clear about our relationship with God. Sin has separated us from God. Our sins have earned us death and eternal damnation. Yet, His love for us is so great that He gave His only Son as a sacrifice for our sins. Jesus bridges the gap between God and man, abolishing the death we deserve and places us in new relationship with God.

That relationship is beyond our comprehension. John recorded, **“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”** John 1:12-13 NAS In Romans Paul says, **“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.”** Romans 8:16-17 NAS “Children of God”, “Fellow heirs with Christ”, do you grasp the significance?! Without Christ we have no relationship with God. With Christ we are God’s children and heirs of His kingdom. This relationship brings with it both blessing and responsibility.

The blessing are obvious: fellowship with God, the indwelling of His Spirit, forgiveness for sins, eternal life. These are all the things Christians talk about, trying to convince others of the “worth” of being a Christian. Few, however, are living in the richness of these blessings. The things of the world crowd out the reality of these blessings.

There are also responsibilities associated with being a child and an heir. Let me just mention a few. As His children we have a responsibility to honor Him in all we say and do. This is reflected in our obedience to Him in word, thought and deed, “. . . if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7 NAS The manner in which we “walk”, live our life, reflects our relationship with God. Even the “fellowship” we have with one another reflects that position. As our Father, God is due our honor and respect {also reflecting the honor due our earthly fathers} (Luke 5:23).

The scripture in Romans (above) tells us that with the position of children and heirs comes the opportunity to “**suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.**” This is consistent with what Jesus said, “**If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.**” Luke 9:23 NAS

So what is your relationship with God like? Are you giving Him the honor due a Father? Have you thought about it lately? Do you give it serious consideration every day? Are you cultivating it through talking to Him, listening to Him and obeying Him? How is your relationship with Him impacting your relationships with others? Do you weigh your relationship with others through His eyes? I am not beginning to say that if your relationship with God is what it needs to be that everything will be coming up roses for you in your other relationships. No, instead I am saying that if your relationship with God is primary, all other relationships flowing from that one will solidly ground you with those in your life.

### Parent and Child

We don't send this newsletter to any youth so it may be you are thinking the discussion of this relationship is one which you can skip over. Before you do so, however, let me ask you, “Are you a child?” Not just a child of God but a child of human parents. (If you aren't please let me know, I'd like to discuss where you came from and if there are others like you.) Each of us has a set of human parents. Regardless of our age we have a responsibility to have a God-ordained relationship with those parents. What is God's design for the relationship between parent and child?

The relationship between parent and child is an important one to God. This is reflected by the fact that one of the Ten Commandments is, “**Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.**” Exodus 20:12 NAS For those who would say that is an Old Testament standard under which we are no longer held accountable, let me point you to the words of Jesus, “**For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.'**” Matthew 15:4 NAS Paul reiterated the command in Ephesians 6:1. Sorry, this is one you won't be able to avoid. God says to honor your father and mother.

The seriousness of a child's respecting their parents is reflected in Deuteronomy 21:18-21, “**If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, he will not even listen to them, then his father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his home town. And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey us, he is a glutton and a drunkard.' Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall remove the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear of it and fear.**” NAS God says that “. . . rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry.” 1 Samuel 15:23 NAS Rebellious children are the beginning of the downfall of civilization. For the sake of the community as a whole, a child must not be allowed to rebel.

You wonder why the family has fallen apart? It is because the parent/child relationship is not reflecting the principles of God. Not only are the children rebelling against parents but parents are not fulfilling their responsibility to raise up children in the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). As such fathers are breaking the command given in Ephesians 6:4, “**And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**” NAS

“You don't understand. I haven't been under my parents roof since my late teens!” Okay. What does ones age have to do with our relationship with our parents? I have found nothing in Scripture which says that ones' relationship with parents is changed due to age or maturity. The only change in relationship with parents, as far as I can tell, comes about when a man marries, “**For this cause a man shall leave his**

**father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.” Genesis 2:24**

NAS This does not mean that a son is now “free” from his parents, that he no longer must respond to them as a son. The word “leave” means to loosen, i.e. relinquish. It does not mean to abolish. The responsibility to seek their counsel, to accept their instruction in the Lord, is still there. The responsibility to honor and respect them is a life time responsibility.

How are you doing as a child? Are you honoring your Father God by honoring your earthly parents? If you are not an obedient child you cannot hope to raise obedient children. Is there any rebellion in your life? If there is, it is tearing at your relationship with God, with your spouse, with your children and with your community.

Our culture has been about the task of raising up individuals and abolishing God-ordained relationships such as parent and child. Even in the church today the child is addressed as an individual at a younger and younger age. What role do the parents in your congregation play in the Spiritual development of their children? Do the parents take responsibility for their child’s spiritual development or do they leave it to the “church”? Is anyone monitoring in any way the “spiritual climate” within the households of the congregation? Do the Sunday School teachers and youth leaders recognize they are an extension of the home and thus servants of the parents or are they operating independently of the parents? Do they keep parents informed as to what they are teaching and how they are measuring the child’s spiritual development to establish future teaching? Do they talk with the parents regarding the Spiritual need parents see in their children?

We live in a society demanding answers to serious questions regarding relationships. Too often as Christians we want to give simple answers to complex questions. Why are there so many problems in marriages and families, within the community and the church? Everything flows back to your relationship with God. Are your relationships, beginning with Him, God-ordained? Are you relating to those around you based on His definition of those relationship or are they based on cultural norms?

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### **God Ordained Relationships II**

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