



# HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Explore God's way for building strong  
successful relationships.

WORKBOOK

## CONTENTS

<b>PART ONE - GOD'S INTENTIONS CONCERNING RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SESSION ONE - GOD'S DESIGN FOR RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>3</b>
DESIGNED FOR RELATIONSHIP	3
<b>PART TWO – LOOKING AT SELF</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SESSION TWO – WHO AM I?</b>	<b>6</b>
SELF IMAGE	7
WHY AM I MEANT TO BE ME?	8
HOW AM I MEANT TO BE ME?	8
ACCOUNTABILITY	8
<b>SESSION THREE – IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL MATURITY</b>	<b>10</b>
MENTAL	10
SOCIAL	10
EMOTIONAL	10
FINANCIAL	11
PHYSICAL	11
SPIRITUAL	11
PROGRESSION OF SONSHIP	11
<b>PART THREE – EXAMINING OUR RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>SESSION FOUR – MOTIVES FOR RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>13</b>
INCORRECT MOTIVES FOR RELATIONSHIPS	13
CORRECT MOTIVES FOR RELATIONSHIPS	15
<b>SESSION FIVE – THE REALITY OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART FOUR - FOUNDATIONAL KEYS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>SESSION SIX – KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>18</b>
1. LOVE – IT'S A CHOICE!	18
2. CARE & KINDNESS	18
3. EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE	19
4. HONOURING	19
5. LOVE LANGUAGES	21
<b>SESSION SEVEN – KEY RELATIONSHIP PRINCIPLES</b>	<b>24</b>
BEING EQUALLY YOKED	25
LOVE	25
<b>PART FIVE – MARRIAGE VS. BEING SINGLE</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>SESSION EIGHT – MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP</b>	<b>27</b>
ROLES WITHIN A MARRIAGE	27
<b>SESSION NINE – EMBRACING SINGLENESS</b>	<b>31</b>
1. FRIENDSHIPS – BUILD FRIENDSHIPS	31
2. VISION FOR YOUR LIFE – KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING!	31
3. GROWTH	31
4. BOUNDARIES	31
5. TIMING – GOD'S TIMING OR YOURS?	32

## **PART ONE - GOD'S INTENTIONS CONCERNING RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Session One - God's Design for Relationships**

**Question:** Are we designed for relationships?

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** In small groups, find scriptures that confirm that we are created for relationships

GOD      →      US      →      OTHERS

#### **Designed for Relationship**

Relationship is a part of God's design, we were created to be in relationship with one another. There are many different relationships that we have; close relationships, intimate relationships (marriage), family and father/son relationships.

Satan's ploy has, and always will be, to break relationships. He will use any situation to bring destruction and to misrepresent the Father's heart towards ALL relationships. Satan's plan is to break up families and marriages because he knows the knock-on effect it will have.

For some of us the thought of a relationship (any type) can have a negative connotation because of prior hurts!

**Because of this some will choose to cut themselves off, isolate and separate themselves as a protective coping mechanism (retract and isolate)**

#### **WHILST OTHERS**

**will push themselves into relationships to find that love, acceptance, affirmation and for guys – prove their masculinity.**

God has come to heal you in these areas because it is the Father's heart that you should be in healthy relationships.

We have been designed to have a deep relationship with the King of Kings and with each other.

### Read Matthew 22:36-40

From this scripture we can see that it is important that we are investing in our **vertical** and **horizontal** relationships.

There are at least six levels of relationships:

- 1) God
- 2) Self
- 3) Spouse
- 4) Children
- 5) Family
- 6) Church/Church Friends

Unless this order is honored in our lives, our lives will become out of balance and happiness will elude us.

How many of us put our relationship with our children above our married partner? How many of us put our friends above God? Where do many Christian leaders place their relationship priorities – firstly with Church, or primarily with God?

**If our relationship with God is not a priority, we will not show the correct fruit in our relationships with each other. If we make people our foundation they then become our god.**

We will then expect too much of the person we have made our foundation and will feel let down and disappointed when they don't come through for us.

If we build a solid foundation on Him, our relationships with others will fall into place and will become more effective.

### INDIVIDUAL TIME:

1. From the 2 options above, can you identify yourself in either of these, please explain
2. How is your vertical relationship with God?
3. How are your horizontal relationships?

In John 15: 2 God calls us to show fruit in all areas of our lives including our relationships. If we are showing fruit, we need to be 'pruned' to show more fruit, so there is always room for improvement.

The majority of good relationships don't just happen by accident. There are attitudes we must own and actions we must take in order to ensure good relationships.

A problem in our relationship with one person can spoil every part of our lives. It can ruin our mood, consume our minds, and if we allow it to, control our emotions and affect other relationships.

Relationships offer us the most intense pleasures in life as well as the most intense pain. They can enhance our life or frustrate it. They can bless us or they can bother us. The worst pain in life is not a broken body but a broken heart. When we are rejected, betrayed, criticised, falsely accused, misunderstood, overlooked, ignored, unloved, unappreciated, distrusted, troubled and hated we feel the deepest hurt possible. It is a safe assumption that relationships really are at the core of living.

Our prayer is that this course will provide a deeper understanding about developing and maintaining Godly relationships....

## **PART TWO – LOOKING AT SELF**

### **Session Two – Who am I?**

We have so far looked at how God has designed us to be relational beings and the importance of being whole. Part of the journey to wholeness and maturity is understanding who we are, where our identity comes from and feeling positive about who we are.

**INDIVIDUAL TIME:** Write down the responses to the following questions:

1. Who do you think you are?
2. What would you say if someone asks you this question?

#### **Thoughts.....**

Is your answer based on what you do, where you have come from, how you have been bought up or based on your current circumstances?

Do you have your own thoughts or do you just mould to what everyone else says and to the circumstances around you?

Are you trying to be someone you're not? Are you wearing a mask?

Do you believe what people have said about you in the past? How people talk about you can falsely shape who you are (**John 8: 31, 44**)

**We need to believe God, our Father and what He says about us, not the devil. What and who are you listening too? Let's look more closely at who we are...**

#### **1. Who am I?**

**ACTIVITY:** In pairs, look up the following scriptures: Romans 8:14-15, Galatians 3:26, 28, Colossians 3:4, 12 1 Thessalonians 1:4. Whose are we? Where do we come from? Discuss

#### **2. What does God say about me?**

**ACTIVITY:** In pairs, look up the following scriptures: Ephesians 2:10, Psalm 139: 17-18 & Psalm 139: 13-14, 2 Corinthians 5:17 What are these scriptures saying? Discuss

#### **3. What has God called me to do?**

**ACTIVITY:** In pairs, look up the following scriptures: John 15:16, Matthew 5:13-14, Ephesians 2:10.

It's important that we understand that we were chosen by God, created by Him, that we are **God's sons and daughters** and He has **made us to be us** and not someone else.

**Part of becoming whole is accepting who we are and who we belong too.**

## Self Image

**ACTIVITY (Males & Females separately):** Discuss the following questions:

- How do you feel about how you look on the outside?
- If you could change anything about your appearance, what would you change?
- Do you think you are beautiful?
- Do your looks define you?
- Do you think more about how you look than what is on the inside?

God has made you to look exactly how you do, your height, shape, shoe size, nose position, colour of your hair, with freckles, short toes! You have been hand crafted by God.

Who you are on the inside and outside is how God intended. (This doesn't mean he doesn't want us to change and mature and address our character issues)

**Remember: When we criticise how we look, we offend God. We are saying that He hasn't done a good job....**

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** Does what I do shape who I am?

God loves you as you are even before you have done anything. **Before you did anything, God sent his Son to die for you and me;** this was before we started doing anything for Him and the Kingdom.

God loves you and will continue to love you just the same even if you didn't do anything for Him (ministry, serving, going to church etc) This isn't an excuse though to get lazy!

Our motivation to do things for God should come from the love we have for Him.

**The more we do doesn't mean God is going to love us that little bit more....It's about who we are and not what we do.**

**CONSIDER...**

- We have to practically put things in place to transform our thinking about how we see ourselves
- We need to have faith but we need to draw a line under our past
- God is greater than the lies we have been told by the enemy
- When we start to believe God about who He says we are, that's when change comes
- When we know God's love, it changes our motives about why we do what we do

## Why am I meant to be me?

### 1 Corinthians 12:14-19

- God places us within the body just as he desires. The 'me ' has such a crucial part in the bigger picture
- God has plans and purposes for our lives and when we start to walk in who we are created to be, we will start to walk in the plans and purposes God has for our lives (**Jeremiah 29:11**)

**ACTIVITY:** In two groups, answer the following questions: What role do you think you have to play in the body of Christ? What do you think God may be calling you too?

It's important that we stop comparing ourselves to one another and competing against one another. Each of us has a vital role to play to bring God's Kingdom here on earth.

God knows what he has planned for each of us, we can choose to fight against it or face those issues in our lives so that we can walk fully in what God has for us.

You may not know what God has for you yet, which is ok, but the more you walk in who you are the more God will direct you to your destiny.

## How am I meant to be me?

- Lay yourself open and allow God to undertake a work in you; know Father
- Start accepting and liking who you are and what you look like
- Renew your mind and embrace the truth
- Be excited and celebrate who and whose you are

## Accountability

Be accountable to leaders, talk about yourself – hopes, dreams, struggles, decision-making choices etc.

This should be a natural part of living out godly relationships. It's about sharing around all aspects of life

The dictionary defines it as: Answerability, responsibility, and liability.

Hebrews 13:17 says ...' **17** Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.



Proverbs is filled with advice about listening to the council of a father.

**It is a choice to be made.**

Walking in accountable relationships (with spiritual Fathers/Mothers, older brother/sister) helps you in the things of God because:

**It permits them to ask the hard questions**

- They can lift your arms up when you're overcoming,
- They can encourage you.

**IT IS NOT –**

- making a decision on our own and then expecting God and/or our oversight to bless it or
- when things have gone wrong, then asking for help.

**Let's put this in the context of our relationships:**

- We may believe that it is our right to pursue anyone within the body of Christ. This is a misconception.
- God has an order for His children to follow that applies to ALL our relationships
- The leaders of the local church have a responsibility BEFORE GOD for the safety of the people who have been entrusted to them.
- It is therefore out of respect that we keep our leaders in the loop.
- Our relationship choices have a knock-on effect. Give eg of the youth group back in 1994

**Practical ways to walk accountably:**

- Build trusting relationships with your small group leaders/ youth leaders/godly family members/ people who walk in experience but will always seek God's counsel rather than give their own opinions on things.
- Make times to sit with them, either as individuals or even as a group (if relevant to do so) in order to talk around specific issues.
- It is all about communication
- Talk sooner rather than later in order to avoid decision making out of pressure
- Have an open mind to hear counsel
- Realising that it isn't just about you.

Those who walk in accountability flourish! It is a blessing and there is such freedom.

## Session Three – Importance of personal maturity

It is important that we come to a place of wholeness and maturity in all aspects of our lives. This will then have an impact on our close relationships.

We should identify areas of our lives that need change....

### **Mental**

#### **Proverbs 8:9-13**

**QUESTION:** How are you doing in these areas?

- Studies
- Reading
- Hobbies
- Skills
- Thought life

### **Social**

#### **2 Corinthians 6:11-18**

**QUESTION:** How are the following relationships looking?

- Family
- Peer to peer – those walking with you
- Next generation – those following you
- Older generation – those you are following

### **Emotional**

#### **Ephesians 4:26**

There is nothing wrong with emotions (they are God given). It's what you are doing with them, how you are dealing with them, if you are facing them that's worth considering.

**QUESTION:** Who do you go to with the emotions that arise from the following people?

- Families/Leaders
- Same sex (friends)
- Opposite sex

How well do you think you handle your emotions?

Are you Spirit led or emotions led?

## **Financial**

### **Matthew 25:23**

**QUESTION:** How are you with money with regards to these three areas?

- Earnings
- Outgoings
- Tithing
- Saving

## **Physical**

### **1 Corinthians 3:16-17**

**QUESTION:** How are you doing in the following areas?

- Diet – what are you putting into your body?
- Exercise – how are you looking after your body?
- Hygiene – how are you maintaining your body?

## **Spiritual**

### **James 4:10**

**QUESTION:** How are you doing with the following:

- Intimacy with God
- Studying scripture – feeding on the truth
- Memorising scripture – to hold your sword up

**INDIVIDUAL TIME:** Where do you think you are with these/how are you doing in these areas?  
What do you think you can do to bring change in each of these areas?

## **Progression of Sonship**

We are all sons/daughters – it's not an earning thing, a tick list! Just as a Father and Mother have a baby, it is their child (son/daughter). That child grows up and develops. This is the same as our walk spiritually as sons/daughters of our Heavenly Father.

### **Question: Why is understanding this walk so important?**

We have to know where we are at in order to progress. Most people find themselves in places of responsibility (in relationships) but are not mature enough to handle them and end up hurt and burnt out.

As Christians we are called to grow into maturity (Hebrews 5:12-6:2, 1 John 2:12-14.)

**ACTIVITY:** In pairs, consider the five stages of sonship below and look at where you think you are at with regards to emotional maturity and handling relationships. Discuss.

1. Napios – baby stage
2. Padian – toddler stage
3. Teknon – teenager stage
4. Huios – mature adult
5. Pater – father

**Remember to discuss these stages & where you're at with your leaders**

## PART THREE – EXAMINING OUR RELATIONSHIPS

### Session Four – Motives for Relationships

#### Being whole is vital

A good measure of wholeness is when our past isn't affecting the way we respond now. This will automatically affect our future in a positive way. People who hurt or are holding on to offense and have not dealt with their past will react to situations and will enter relationships with the incorrect motives to fulfil their own needs. Un-whole people are inward looking, selfish and cannot reason from the whole to the part.

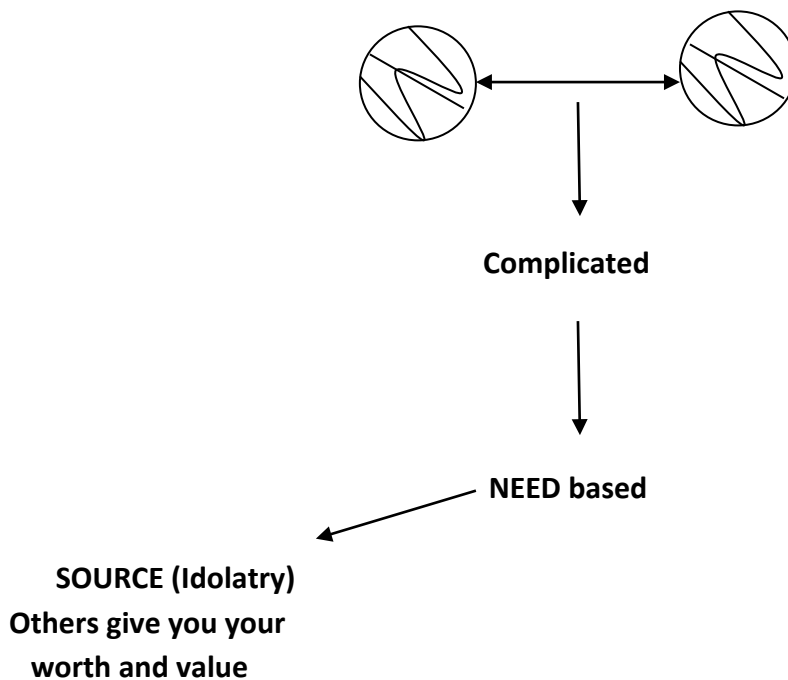
#### Incorrect motives for relationships

**Question:** What could some of these be?

##### 1. Need driven

- 2 halves don't make a whole – contrary to what the world says
- 2 WHOLE individuals make 1 whole unit

#### Two people (broken)



The NEED issue contributes as one of the most key factors that leads to divorce:

The disappointment that comes with this....

“I thought this would be it, the one who meets my needs”  
“I thought he/she would change when we got married”

You can't give what you do not have!!

The sad thing is that this need will take you out! It will take you away from the path God has mapped out for you. (Will seem like you are going round the mountain)

Use your time of singleness to become whole so that you won't need to deal with this heartache.

## **2. Pressure – peer pressure, worldly pressure (it's what's done)**

The **world** says try it you'll like it, test it you'll want more, touch it it's out of this world!! It's everywhere, TV, magazines, billboards but this is what the Father says....

The **word** says....

**John 15:19 (NASB)**  
**John 15: 19 (The Message)**

It's not always easy but when we align ourselves with the Father, He gives us all that we need because He is the God of all grace!

## **3. Attraction – it's physical – about the flesh, which usually results in sex**

For guys – it can be a BIG game. It's about what you can't have – the chase, the hunt, the trophy and once you've got it you'll move onto the next new trophy and the cycle continues

For girls – it can be that she wants to be chased, desired after, it makes her feel loved and beautiful and accepted. It's a way to keep the man

## **4. Picture perfect dream – to have a family and children**

You live for the dream! Thinking that when you have a husband and family, you'll find purpose, meaning to life, everything will come right and be perfect.

## **INDIVIDUAL TIME**

For singles: Review past romantic relationships and evaluate what your motives were for getting involved. If this doesn't apply to you, what do you think your motives should be?

## **Correct motives for relationships**

**Question:** what do you think would be correct motives?

### **...KINGDOM BASED**

Therefore the biggest decision we have to make is to have Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives

Have you made God your centre – Lord & Saviour of your life?

This will determine a lot of your choices in life!

Are you fitting in with Him or are you fitting Him around you?

Who is sitting on the throne...? You or HIM!

### **Matthew 6:33**

#### **What is the Kingdom?**

It is God's rule and reign in our lives – every area! God is the one who rules and reigns supreme in His Kingdom. He does not share His throne!

Kingdom motive is about:

- The KING –

- His purpose for our lives

- His plans/not ours

- His people

- His Nations

When your perspective is Kingdom you're thinking and requests begin to align with the Father's heart – wanting only what He wants. Your desires become His (Matthew 6:33)

Motives are hidden in our hearts! Man may not see them BUT the Father sees and knows about them!

### **Proverbs 16:2 (NAS)**

### **Proverbs 16:2 (NLT)**

You can make a choice to change the motives of your heart – it's whether or not you want to.

Kingdom motives – will cost you, but you will walk in the fullness of life for all that God has planned for you.

## Session Five – The Reality of our relationships

Let's look at what makes and breaks relationships.....

**ACTIVITY:** On two sheets of flipchart paper, write on one sheet positive things, attitudes or actions that can make relationships (i.e. having patience, being kind) and on the other sheet, write down negative things, attitudes or actions that can break a relationship (i.e. anger, being disrespectful).

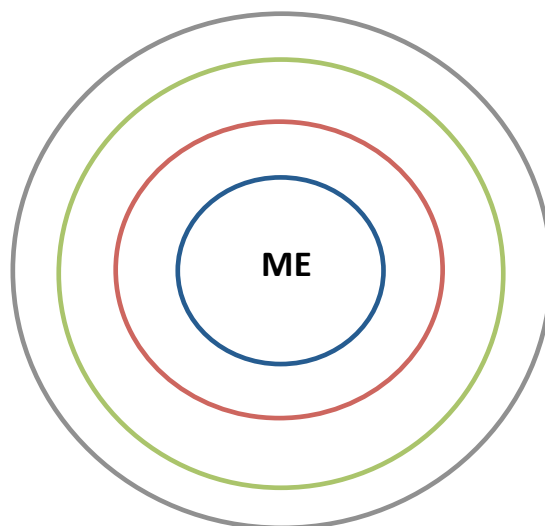
From looking at the lists, write down opposite your top three things what you think are most important to you to have/ not have in your relationships.

### GODLY ORDER

It's important that we have God's order in our relationships.

**Question:** Why do you think this is?

**INDIVIDUAL TIME:** On a sheet of paper, put yourself in the middle circle below. Then write in the next circle who you are closest too. Continue through the circles. Take time to think this through, seek God and be honest when working through each of your relationships.



**FEEDBACK** to the group and discuss how your relationships are based on the diagram above.

**INDIVIDUAL TIME:** Do you have Godly order in your relationships? What do you need to change to bring order into your relationships? What can you do to bring that order? (Consider those positive and negative things you can do and say that we discussed earlier) Write notes opposite.



As we continue through this teaching, consider your close relationships and how you might apply what you are learning to bring change and Godly order to your relationships.

## **PART FOUR - FOUNDATIONAL KEYS**

### **Session Six – Keys to successful relationships**

Having successful and effective relationships in all areas of our lives takes hard work and commitment. The following provides some keys to developing good relationships.

#### **1. Love – it's a choice!**

- We are to love others not because they're always loveable but because they are always valuable
- If we love only in the easy times and ways, then we haven't learnt to love the way God loves us
- Love is a choice not a feeling – when we take action, the feelings follow
- There's not one person here who is 100% lovable 100% of the time yet God loves us 100% of the time!
- God commands us to love others even when they've done wrong or have hurt us
- It's difficult at times as we often say "I don't know if I can love that way". On our own we can't but with God's help we can!

#### **2. Care & Kindness**

- Often, far too often, we are just not very kind to the people that we love. Sometimes we show more kindness to the public than we do to close friends and family!
- Someone once said "the home is the place where we are loved the most, treated the best and act the worst"
- The Bible tells us to be kind – it seems too obvious a command, but it's spoken of a lot in the Bible

**ACTIVITY:** Read the following scriptures and note what they are saying; Romans 12:10, Colossians 3:12, 1 Corinthians 13:4, 2 Peter 1:7, Ephesians 4:31-32, Galatians 5:22-23

- Be kind to one another and serve one another – it does take sacrifice but it's also a privilege
- Don't take one another for granted and don't let serving one another and being kind to one another take a back seat

**Kindness can revolutionise relationships!**

### 3. Effectively Communicate

So often we can make communication in our relationships so complicated. We can choose to withhold communication, we don't communicate fully how we are feeling and sometimes we hint at what we are trying to say which can lead to frustrations on both sides.

Communicating clearly at the right time is key to good relationships.

There are five different levels that we communicate on:

1. Frivolous – everyday communication with acquaintances
2. Factual – sharing basic facts about our day
3. Fellowship – sharing ideas and philosophies
4. Feelings – share about core beliefs and we take a bit of risk about what we are sharing
5. Freedom – freely share with no risk of rejection, talk about our hopes, dreams and feelings

**ACTIVITY:** Split into pairs and think about your close relationships. Discuss which of the levels above you use to communicate with those you are in relationship with.

**Question:** how often do we communicate with people close to us on a feelings or freedom level? Are we secure enough in our relationships to be open, honest and ask the hard questions of each other or do we just stick to factual talk?

When we communicate, consider your body language, words and the tone you use, this can have a great impact on our relationships.

### 4. Honouring

Honour is fundamental to all of life. Honouring means to give value and worth and attaches importance to:

- respect,
  - esteem,
  - appreciate,
  - to praise,
  - to bless
- 
- It's the essence of Godly relationships
  - It's the heartbeat of God – love & honour (honour is love in action)
  - It's the atmosphere of Heaven – worship is to honour

**Revelation 5:12**

**Revelation 4:9**

To honour releases a blessing, curses release shame

**It's important that we honour God in how we live our lives but it is also important that we honour:**

### **1. Our Parents**

**Exodus 20:12**

**Ephesians 6:2**

Your father has a delegated authority from God. Honouring acknowledges that you can receive the blessing. Rebellion cuts off blessing

### **2. Our 'Spiritual Fathers'**

**1 Timothy 5:17**

They are worthy of double honour. NB, they aren't perfect!

### **3. We have honour in our church family/business/life**

**Romans 12:10**

- Outdo one another in showing honour – servant hood
- Protection and provision

### **4. We have honour in our marriage and family**

- Honour is a gift of special value we give one another.
- Love can only flow when we honour

### **Ways we 'dishonour' or 'shame' one another in marriage...**

- Hardening your hearts – withholding love and affection
- Constant criticism (rejection)
- Withdrawal
- Angry outbursts
- Verbal abuse
- Physical abuse
- Comparisons to other men/women (flirting)
- Withholding sexual affection
- No affectionate touching
- Adultery (in thought as well as deed)
- Sexual involvement before marriage

- Wrong priorities
- Selfishness
- Sarcasm
- Lack of sensitivity/caring

#### **Ways we 'dishonour' or 'shame' our children...**

- Father ridicules mother or vice versa
- Anger – verbal abuse
- Constant criticism – sarcasm
- Physical abuse
- Comparisons
- Not accepted – rejected
- “2<sup>nd</sup> hand”
- Ignoring

#### **Potential results of shaming in children's lives...**

- Frustration
- Rejection
- Drugs/alcohol
- Lying
- Bed wetting, poor school marks, poor career achiever, confused life

**ACTIVITY:** Discuss in two groups ways in which we can dishonour our parents

We can 'honour' or 'shame' people we are close to by our thoughts, attitudes, speech, listening and actions

**ACTIVITY:** Read Colossians 3:5-12. Discuss how we can honour one another?

**If you feel you have dishonoured people who are close to you, it's important you repent and ask God to help you to honour them rather than shame them.**

## **5. Love Languages**

Our final key to healthy relationships is love languages. We all give and receive love in different ways. It's important we recognise what helps us to feel loved and to look at those who we are close to and love them in the way they like to be loved. It's takes effort, but can make a real difference to our relationships.

## **What are the 5 love languages?**

### **1. Words of affirmation**

Actions don't always speak louder than words. If this is your love language, unsolicited compliments mean the world to you. Hearing the words, "I love you," are important—hearing the reasons behind that love sends your spirit skyward. Insults can leave you shattered and are not easily forgotten.

### **2. Quality Time**

In the vernacular of Quality Time, nothing says, "I love you," like full, undivided attention. Being there for this type of person is critical, but really being there—with the TV off, fork and knife down, and all chores and tasks on standby—makes your significant other feel truly special and loved. Distractions, postponed dates, or the failure to listen can be especially hurtful.

### **3. Receiving Gifts**

Don't mistake this love language for materialism; the receiver of gifts thrives on the love, thoughtfulness, and effort behind the gift. If you speak this language, the perfect gift or gesture shows that you are known, you are cared for, and you are prized above whatever was sacrificed to bring the gift to you. A missed birthday, anniversary, or a hasty, thoughtless gift would be disastrous—so would the absence of everyday gestures.

### **4. Acts of Service**

Can vacuuming the floors really be an expression of love? Absolutely! Anything you do to ease the burden of responsibilities weighing on an "Acts of Service" person will speak volumes. The words he or she most wants to hear: "Let me do that for you." Laziness, broken commitments, and making more work for them tell speakers of this language their feelings don't matter.

### **5. Physical touch**

This language isn't all about the bedroom. A person whose primary language is Physical Touch is, not surprisingly, very touchy. Hugs, pats on the back, holding hands, and thoughtful touches on the arm, shoulder, or face—they can all be ways to show excitement, concern, care, and love. Physical presence and accessibility are crucial, while neglect or abuse can be unforgivable and destructive.

**INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY:** Go onto the following website and complete the assessment that's relevant to you. Share with the group what your love language is and whether that was a surprise to you or not.

<http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile>

### **AND FINALLY...**

Remember to talk about your relationships to God and ask Him to help you better your relationships. The key to all this is to develop a strong top down relationship with the Lord and you will find your other relationships will start to show fruit.

## Session Seven – Key Relationship Principles

Once the covenant of marriage is made, husband and wife become ONE positionally. Learning to perfect and experience this unity takes a lifetime.

**Question:** So what is a covenant?

**Covenant says:**

Unconditional commitment  
All embracing  
Based on giving  
Expectations arise from  
promise  
Cemented by free choice  
(love)  
Overcomes (overlooks)  
failings  
Exchange names

**Contract says:**

Conditional commitment  
Limited to contractual issues  
Offer, acceptance, consideration  
Written conditions of contract  
  
Legally enforceable  
  
One breach 'voids' the  
agreement  
Parties retain separate  
identities

God relates to us through His covenant in self giving love, by promises, in righteousness, in committed faithfulness, sacrifice, patience, forgiveness  
Works out as....

**Covenant says:**

"For better for worse"  
  
"For richer for poorer"  
"In sickness & in health"  
  
"Till death separates us"  
  
"Keep self only for him/her"  
  
"I will even if you won't"

**Contract says:**

"Unless a better situation  
presents itself"  
"For richer"  
"For as long as you give me  
satisfaction"  
"We can separate anytime  
by mutual agreement"  
"Unless I get better value for  
money"  
"I will if you will"

It's not like the movies where they ride off into the sunset never to have disagreements or differences. There will be times when things will be tough, and you will have to work at things but it's such an exciting journey!



It's so important that we are on the journey with the right person!

Marriage is a much longer journey, a life time in fact, and you are in it together – there's no finish line (unless you die of course!), no hopping out – that's it, it's a covenant.

### **Being equally yoked**

- Oxen analogy – two oxen per yoke. Both need to be saved otherwise values are so different (2 Corinthians 6:14)
- Need to be pulling in the same direction (God's calling on your life)
- Pulling equally hard in that same yoke

When you are unequally yoked, making decisions becomes tough as you are pulling in different directions. Small and big life decisions will bring conflict and have a knock-on effect to others e.g.

- How to raise children
- How to manage your finances
- How you link in with your local church family
- Praying together
- Moral decisions
- How you invest time into each other
- What you spend your time doing

Your destiny is linked to theirs!!

- It is therefore importance for a couple to build kingdom together
- You need to be cheering each other on.
- It is no longer about building individual destinies.

**Question:** How would being unequally yoked affect your marriage? How can you become equally yoked in your relationship?

### **Love**

**Question:** What kind of love should there be between a husband and wife?

### **Different kinds of love - 3 kinds**

**Eros** – romantic, passionate, sensual, sentimental. Most often the starting point for marriage. Eros is vital throughout marriage, but it's changeable.

Eros love will not last a lifetime on its own. Therefore it will not sustain marriage. Eros wants to promise a relationship that will last forever but Eros alone cannot keep that promise. Eros makes lovers.

Examples: The lingering touch of the fingers, the deep kiss, candles and music at dinner, the 'I promise you' wink

### **Song of Songs 5: 10-16**

### **Song of Songs 7: 1-12**

**Phileo:** cherishes, companionship, friendship, sharing. Sharing thoughts, feelings, attitudes, plans and dreams – intimate things. A marriage without Phileo will fall short of what God has planned for marriage – two become one in every way. Phileo makes dear friends who enjoy closeness and companionship

Examples: enjoying each other's company, going shopping, sharing breakfast without a newspaper, turning off the TV to chat, going for a walk together, doing dnd's together.

### **John 21:15-17**

**Agape:** The way God loves. It's an unconditional commitment, act of the will, not relying on feelings. Agape love is unconditional as God's love is for us. It is a mental attitude based on a deliberate choice of will – so you can choose to love your mate with an Agape love even if you sometimes face indifference or rejection. Agape love means stability, permanency and can carry you through times of difficulty and stress.

### **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**

### **Infatuation vs. Love**

Infatuation is based on fantasy; infatuation fades with time; LOVE keeps on growing like a living thing. INFATUATION demands and takes, LOVE delights in giving.

MARRIAGE IS FOR LIFE – I and I = I, and it takes a lifetime to perfect that oneness.

**ACTIVITY:** Get into male and female groups. Discuss what you would like for your future husband/wife to have when it comes to values and those non-negotiables.

For married couples: What were you expecting from your marriage partner with regard to values? Did you communicate what you were expecting from each other before you got married?

## **PART FIVE – MARRIAGE VS. BEING SINGLE**

### **Session Eight – Marriage Relationship**

What is one of the biggest decisions you will ever make in life?

‘Relationship with the opposite sex’

Which points towards.....? Marriage

And if this isn’t what your focus is with this person then what are you doing?

Before we look at the practicalities of roles, it is important to understand our **Family of Origin**.

Our upbringing and family dynamic will have a bearing on our ideals for our own marriage and family. It is important to share what our upbringings were like and how our experiences currently influence our expectations for marriage ie if one has come from a large family and the other has been an only child, there can be very different views as to how many children each one imagines they will have.

Rather than conflict, sharing with each other will bring understanding and enable discussions to take place around finding solutions that suit both parties.

### **Roles within a marriage**

#### **Husband and wife**

**GROUP WORK:** In groups (mixed) read Ephesians 5:1, 1 Peter 3:7, Proverbs 31 and Colossians 3:18. Discuss in your groups the roles of a husband and a wife.

**Ephesians 5:22-33 (NAS)**

**Ephesians 5:22-33 (NIV)**

Other scriptures revealing God’s heart towards a husband and a wife within a marriage

- Colossians 3:18-19 (NAS)
- 1 Peter 3:1-7
- Proverbs 31

### **MEN – HUSBAND ROLE**

**ACTIVITY:** In pairs, discuss what you think some of the main roles are for a husband?

#### **A loving leader**

Christ being our example. Leadership is not a dictatorship. For a husband to walk in this role in a pleasing way to the Father he needs to be reliant on the Holy Spirit, and sensitive to God always. For a wife there is no greater security in a marriage than knowing her husband is completely submitted to God and his leadership flows out of his submission to Christ.

It's important to know that husband and wife are equal in God's sight, man is not superior to woman. However, husband and wife do not have the same function or role in the marriage i.e. there can only be one head, and where there are 'two' there are great issues in the marriage.

This doesn't mean that as a wife you don't have a say, but as the head the last decision is with the husband (if a wife is sure of her husband's submission to God, this is a lot easier, as you are trusting God through your husband).

Men you will be accountable for

- your household - now or one day
- what you allow into your family etc.

### **Protector**

Guys, if you cannot stand up for yourselves how can you do this for your wife!

### **Doorkeeper of your household**

What do you allow to come into your home?

1 Timothy 3:4-5 (Proistemi (rule) – to be a proistemi man = to be over, to be a protector)

### **Provider**

How are you doing in this area? Are you faithful in this area now? If you struggle supporting yourself, how can you realistically support another person Or manage finances for two people?

### **Responsible** for his wife's spiritual growth

Some of the ways in which a husband goes about loving his wife:

- He must express his love e.g. thoughtful gift, unexpected call, helping around the house, tenderness
- Sacrificing for her – something that requires effort; giving up something you enjoy to please her
- Hold her in high esteem; place high value on her

Proverbs 31:10 (NAS)

### Proverbs 31:10 (The Message)

- Make allowances for her mistakes and deficiencies – men aren't perfect either!
- Encourage her to share her views on things. Women generally see things in detail; men take a wider perspective.

If a husband isn't at a place of wholeness and maturity, his insecurities will make it very hard for him to live out the above points.

### **WOMAN – WIFE ROLE**

**ACTIVITY:** In pairs, discuss what you think some of the main roles are for a wife?

**Submission** – submitting to her husband's leadership and choosing to do it not just with an action but also with a heart attitude that desires to – joyfully. Submission is not something to be feared or dreaded but something that is to be enjoyed, it brings safety, security and freedom when embraced and seen positively as a gift and the order of God.

**1 Peter 3:1** – Hypotasso: to arrange oneself under, subject oneself (Sub – under, to come under / Mission – to come under someone with a mission; to support with a mission (your husband)

**Quote:** "Submission is really an attitude or frame of mind. It recognises that just as Christ was subject to His Father, and that the church is subject to Christ, so a woman ought to be subject to her husband. By this attitude, I believe God had arranged the structure of marriage in harmony with the highest principles of the universe. And one of those principles is submission to a higher authority. Saying "God has placed my husband above me, not to be a superior to me, but to be my spiritual covering and protection. God will protect me from harm through him and as I recognise this principle and live happily and contentedly under it, I shall be relieved of a great deal of the stresses and strains of life because God has arranged and equipped my husband to carry them."

*(Selwyn Hughes)*

**Question:** How does submitting to your husband look practically?

Some examples:

- Transfer to him the responsibility for final decisions - not nagging him about it if you feel it is wrong but rather praying about it
- Give him all the respect you can and stand by him in everything even if you DON'T agree, being loyal! Nothing can divide marriage like divided hearts and nothing divides a heart like misdirected loyalty.

- Be wise in the way you handle money. Inability to handle money is one of the commonest causes of irritation between husband and wife.

### **Helper**

The success of many a man is due to the helpfulness of his wife (**Genesis 2:18**) To be her husband's backstop. To be the one encouraging him to be the best that God has called him to be, putting aside her own agendas. Encouragement is one of the most powerful tools that God has given us, and as a wife you should be your husband's biggest fan!

### **Covering each other, not exposing each other's weaknesses**

**Question:** Why do you think wholeness and maturity are important within roles of a marriage?

**When we aren't whole, we can easily walk in the role that is not ours, i.e. a husband can so easily be insecure in his role as leader if his wife is trying to fulfil that role.**

**Challenging thought:**

**Question:** (LADIES) What would it be like to submit to someone who is still very broken and isn't whole?

**Question:** (MEN) Who would like to take on the responsibility of protecting, leading and being accountable for someone else, when you yourself aren't whole?

## Session Nine – Embracing Singleness

### It's a gift not a burden!

So while you are single, enjoy it!

Here are some things to think about and put into place in order to suck everything out of this season that you are in, instead of wasting it or wishing it away.

When you are single it's really you and God, you may be involved with different things but you really only have yourself to consider when making choices; you can come and go as you please, do things when you want, based only on *your* diary/schedule when it comes to being available etc.

### 1 Corinthians 7:34 (The Message)

#### 1. Friendships – build friendships

If you struggle to build friendships, how will you be a friend to your partner one day? Start by being a friend, and if you don't know how, learn – ask others and watch others. Develop friendships between the same sex and opposite sex (Healthy friendships)

**Question:** how do you be a friend to someone?

#### 2. Vision for your life – know where you are going!

If you don't know, get involved in what is going on and allow Father to show you and to reveal those dreams that you have buried deep down.

#### 3. Growth

- Wholeness (remember any weak spots will only be highlighted in your marriage)
- Equipping and skills
- Serving – the next generation

#### 4. Boundaries

- Emotions are natural and from God, it's what you do with it and how you walk it out
- For protection/safety
- Why flirt with the very thing that could take you out? Flirting with the boundaries...?!

**1 Peter 5:8 (NAS)**

**1 Peter 5:8 (The Message)**

- What are you going to do when temptations come? They will come! Have exit strategies

**1 Corinthians 10:13 (NAS)**

**1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)**

- Where to start with boundaries, what do they look like? What does the Word say? The Word is our plumb line – to walk circumspectly – middle road. Align yourself with God's heart not with yours and the worlds.

**1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)**

The word TOUCH = Hapto (Greek) which means to 'kindle' to 'light' in other words to ignite, to stir up. Touch can arouse, it has the ability to stir up something in someone

**Question:** Do you think it is a good thing for touching to happen between the opposite sexes?

1 Timothy 5:1 (NIV) – respect one another

**Question:** Would you hug or play with your sister with the intent to arouse her?

- Get into the Word and search for the Father's ways of how to do things. Also ask those that you are walking with to help you if you don't understand or get confused
- Because you are valued and treasured in the Father's eyes. Like precious jewels put behind glass so that nobody can touch it, that's how the Father wants to keep you. AND walk so that you don't have any regrets while you're walking down the aisle. The same applies to the guys when your wife is walking towards you.

On that, if you haven't perhaps made the best choices or other things have happened in your life – know that the Father does work miracles.

## **5. Timing – God's timing or yours?**

Don't try and make things happen yourself – Ishmael, giving God a helping hand. Abraham made a rod for his back because of his haste. We live with the consequences of his choices today!

God's timing is perfect; let Him do what He is best at, deal with the timing of all things including your future partner.



Pray for your future partner- that God would work in them and bring them to a place of wholeness.

Seek first the Kingdom

Learn from other people's mistakes in this area and don't make them for yourself & then have to deal with the hurt.

Proverbs 26:11

If you would like to be in a relationship, get together with someone you are accountable to and start praying for the right partner and for God to show you what you need to work on ready for a relationship?

**THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES WERE USED TO DEVELOP THIS WORKBOOK:**

Position for Blessing – Drummond & Linda Robinson

Ready to Get Steady – Taryn Terlecki, Jubilee Church

The Five Love Languages – Dr Chapman

Knights & Villains – Len Kok, Victory Church

Various Teachings – Living Well Church

Various Teachings – SWEAT



**VISION STATEMENT**

Living Well Church is a family established on Kingdom principles. Our desire is to see lives transformed as we live out God's word, plans and purposes.

We are committed to equipping God's people for personal growth and maturity in faith in order to see each person released into their God given destiny.

We believe that God wants us to positively influence leaders and continue to develop resources for churches, communities and the market place.