

***Developing Good relationships Among Brethren***  
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***Introduction:*** How do I think and act towards other people?

- A. Where does a life of serving others come from? (Mk 10:44-45; Mt 22:37-40)
  - 1. Jesus emphasized the connection between our work with others and the final judgment! (Mt 25:38-40)
  - 2. Some prefer a more isolated life or are naturally shy. God can take us and mold us over time to do things that are hard to us now.
  - 3. A spirit of selfishness can easily us and draw us into a spiritual dungeon. When we withdraw from others we already have withdrawn from God.
- B. In a local church we often will be faced with strained relationships among brethren.
  - 1. If I am not growing spiritually, then I can be easily draw into the “wisdom of Satan.” (Gal 5:14-15)
  - 2. Sometimes we have been drifting and may not know it. There will come a “wake-up” call. (Ex. Older couple that spent years isolated)
  - 3. How many “house churches” have started because of poisoned relationships?

***I. Develop a greater love for God***

- A. Do I remember my new birth? (Jn 3:3-5; 2 Pt 1:9-10)
  - 1. The new birth starts with Godly sorrow and ends with great rejoicing. Have I outwardly responded without a convicted heart? (Acts 8:37-39; 16:33-34)
  - 2. What God has done for me should powerfully affect my future.
  - 3. When I understand my personal forgiveness, then I will have a very different attitude towards others and their actions. (Lk 7:44-48)
- B. Do I long to be with my brethren and grow stronger in my relationship with God?
  - 1. Why would one isolate himself from meeting with Christians? (1 Jn 5:1-2)
  - 2. There is a progression when a brother begins a slow withdrawal from being with Christians. You begin to make a series of choices that reveal your heart.
  - 3. A time of mourning and praying is needed to renew my love for God! (James 4:8-10)
- C. What do my brothers really need?
  - 1. Some may need food and material help. When I get to the point that I close my heart to the needs of my brethren, I am in great danger. (1 Jn 3:16-18)
  - 2. What if I do not like social events where I can be with my brethren?
  - 3. What if I understood that at those events, I might make connections that will help my brother? Why do new Christians fall away? (3 relationships)
  - 4. The greatest needs in the assembly here is to connect with other Christians so that we can come to trust and help one another. (1 Cor 12:23-27)
  - 5. What if my neglect was a factor in another falling away? There are others that really need your help! (Acts 16:9)

***II. Fight and remove the “wisdom of Satan” from your thoughts***

- A. In the new birth I make a great change from a self-centered life to a God-centered one. We leave the old thinking behind. (Titus 3:3-5; Jn 13:34-35)
1. There is a real battle to overcome the thinking of the past. Changing my pattern of thoughts requires honesty and daily renewal.
  2. We can drift and not even see that the old ways are entering our hearts.
  3. In our assemblies and in our association with spiritual men, we will be challenged. Even Peter stumbled but made quick corrections. (Gal 2:11-13)
- B. How can I overcome a family life of anger, withdrawal and accusation?
1. One can begin the Christian life but have a powerful pull from the "gravity" of the past. We often learn from the examples of our associates. (Prov 22:24-25)
  2. The love of God helps me change to content of my thoughts. I must keep seeing the unseen! (1 Jn 4:19-21)
  3. What has God forgiven me? How patient has God been with me? What does God want me to do with I sin openly?
  4. What value to God is one brother in Christ? (Rom 14:15)
- C. Understand the "wisdom of Satan" and relace it with God's wisdom. (Jas 3:14-18)
1. Develop a positive attitude towards others. (1 Cor 13)
  2. Elisha gave up on Israel when God knew better! (1 Kgs 19:14,18)
  3. You can easily close your heart to others when we expect the worst.

### III. Develop a "togetherness" spirit.

- A. What kind of things should Christians be doing together?
1. Why was the early church effective in reaching the lost? (Acts 2:44-47)
  2. After persecution they prayed together. (Acts 4:23-24)
  3. In famine they shared and gave together. (Acts 4:31-35)
  4. At the burial of Stephen, they mourned together. (Acts 8:2)
  5. This is how closeness develops among God's people. (shared suffering)
- B. How can we weep together without being together at some time? (Rom 12:15)
1. We must have the attitude of "we" and not "they." (Col 2:1-2)
  2. Every person makes a contribution to this work. If you are not involved, please step out of the fringes and get into the middle of things.
- D. Three things we must do.
1. Push aside our timidity and take risks for God.
  2. Cast aside our selfishness and look to the needs of others.
  3. Put away the negative attitudes in our own heart.
- E. Put away all bitterness through honesty and forgiveness. (Heb 12:15)
1. The elder brother pulled away from his forgiven brother. (Lk 15:25-32)
  2. When it becomes all about me than about God, then I have fallen into darkness. (1 Jn 2:9-11)
  3. What a blessing to be free from past bitterness! (Eph 4:31-32)

**Conclusion:** God will bless us richly as we more clearly imitate His love for us!