

LOVED AND SECURE

6 Relationship
Essentials

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Introduction

Nothing else can fulfill your need for God's love in your life.

You were created to be loved by God. In fact, receiving His love is the foundation for building great relationships with other people.

If you have a pet, no matter how much you love them, that love will never replace the love you have toward other human beings. God has given us the ability to enjoy this world (including animals), and there's nothing wrong with that. But you'll always crave someone to talk to and share your hopes and dreams with. And just as the love of an animal can't replace the love of a person, **nothing else can fulfill your need for God's love in your life.**

When we aren't aware of or confident in God's love, we end up hurting the people we love. We think they're not giving us what we need, but in reality, what we're craving is a kind of love they can never supply.

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him.

1 John 4:16 (NKJV)

If you don't feel a connection to God's love, working to remedy that needs to be your top priority. It's not a matter of earning His love. It's been freely given to you—and **He's waiting for you to believe it and receive it!** God never forces things on you. He needs your response. When you make this choice, an awareness of His love comes into your life—an awareness that grows as you study His Word and spend time in His presence.

Take some quiet time with Him, asking Him to help you become more aware of this never-ending love that's being poured out on you every day. When you become secure in His love, then you'll be equipped to pour out this love on others.

Let's go over six essentials that form the basis of healthy relationships.

Practice Forgiveness

One of the most profound ways to demonstrate love is through forgiveness.

Love and forgiveness go hand-in-hand. If you're struggling with a relationship today, **it might be time to practice forgiveness.**

Oftentimes, we put our best efforts forward with strangers rather than the people we love the most. With our closest friends and family, we can develop the attitude, "Well, this is who I am and you're going to have to deal with it." But **relationships thrive when there's an atmosphere of growth and change.** We need to be lifelong learners—students committed to continually learning about relationships and studying the people we love.

This is the kind of love we are talking about—not that we once upon a time loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to clear away our sins and the damage they've done to our relationship with God.

1 John 4:10 (MSG)

The truth is, love doesn't mean much if it is not demonstrated, and **one of the most profound ways to demonstrate love is through forgiveness.** The Bible says that God demonstrated His love to us when we did nothing to earn it (Romans 5:8). How did He do that? He sent His Son to die on the cross so that we could trust in Him and our sins could be forgiven.

Days and weeks go by, and we let things build up—things we've done wrong and mistakes we've made. But God still demonstrates His love toward us because **His forgiveness knows no bounds.**

I'm not saying that we should hand out trust when it's unearned or allow people to take advantage of us, but we can always move toward forgiveness. And when we do, we **open the door to healing in our relationships.**

Love Unconditionally with Boundaries

We can say no to someone and show them love at the same time.

To love others well, we need to learn to **receive and experience God's love.**

Without knowing God's love, we're prone to loving people with a wrong kind of love. Adding conditions to the way you care for others, such as, "If you do this I'll love you more or treat you better," quickly turns love toxic. That doesn't mean the person is toxic, just the way they have chosen to share their love.

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 13:34-35 (NKJV)

When we parent this way, we raise kids who struggle in their relationships. If they're treated better when they get better marks or they behave a certain way, that's toxic. We can still encourage that kind of activity without adding love or value to it.

Love should never be conditional. **Love should always be unconditional.** And when we love unconditionally, it doesn't mean that we have to let people walk all over us or abuse us. We can develop good boundaries, **say no to someone and still show them love at the same time.**

God's love is so special, beautiful and amazing. And when it comes to our relationships, **we are empowered to love others unconditionally because God first loved us.**

Get into God's Word and let it convince you of His love for you. Learn how to receive it, experience it and express it to the people in your world.

Show You Care

Don't be afraid to reach out to others with love today simply by showing that you care!

As a believer, you can love people in ways that causes them to ask, "Why would you care?" The answer, of course, is that you care because Jesus cares, and His Spirit is in you.

Loving people this way is actually quite simple. **Just show them you care.** Believe in them. Loving someone with the fruit of the Spirit—joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness and self-control—is one of the most generous things you could ever do.

The Holy Spirit produces a different kind of fruit: unconditional love, joy, peace, patience, kindheartedness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. You won't find any law opposed to fruit like this.

Galatians 5:22-23 (VOICE)

Maybe you hesitate to love people this way because you're afraid they will take advantage of you or reject you. I have good and bad news. Some will! But let me tell you something. If a relationship has one person who is always giving and the other is always taking, who do you think is the happier person? The giver!

The taker often believes that they have to manipulate people to get their needs met. They're unaware of the fact that they are trying to get a kind of love and acceptance from others that only God can fulfill!. If only they would turn to Him and become aware of His love, presence and desire to see them strong, healthy, prosperous and blessed. There are some things that only God can do for us, like filling the emptiness of a seemingly empty love account.

You can set healthy boundaries while showing someone love at the same time. In fact, you're empowered to love this way. **So don't be afraid to reach out to others with love today simply by showing that you care!**

Focus On God's Love

Even when we don't believe anyone could love us, God loves us.

If we want to feel good about ourselves, **we have to stop trying to get everyone to love us.**

When we feel short on love, many of us manipulate others to get what we think we need. We fish for compliments and expressions of love, or we demand acts of service and quality time. Not only is this exhausting, but we end up feeling empty because others can't give us the love we need. The love that helps us develop great self-worth and a sense of who we are can only come from God!

We need to go to the Word to recognize how loved we are. Even in the midst of our failures and selfish acts, **even when we don't believe anyone could love us, God loves us.** When you understand how God's love works through Jesus and you begin to meditate and unpack it in your heart, your heart experiences real peace.

And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Ephesians 3:18-19 (NLT)

God has seen behind your mask and He loves you. He knows your history and He loves you. To experience this love to a greater degree, you need to begin to love others in this same way: unconditionally. Jesus says that if we love Him, we should obey His commandments (John 14:15). He wasn't talking about the Ten Commandments there; Jesus' commandments were to **love the Lord your God with all your heart**, all your soul, all your heart and all your mind; and to **love your neighbour as yourself.**

You can become so absorbed in God's love that you just can't get enough of Him! Turn your focus to growing in His love, and to loving others His way.

Love Without Measuring

Trying to measure love is one of the greatest traps in relationships.

Do you have someone you need to forgive?

If you feel offence, anger or disappointment toward someone, **forgiveness is the key** to cutting the umbilical cord that is feeding you those feelings. And if you're still focused on how much you've done in comparison to how little they've done, you still have some forgiving to do.

We tend to want to keep score, and we hold back love if we don't feel like things are equal. **Trying to measure love is one of the greatest traps in relationships**, because everyone uses a different measurement system. My list of how love is shown is different than yours.

"I'm telling you to love your enemies... This is what God does. He gives his best—the sun to warm and the rain to nourish—to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty."

Matthew 5:44-45 (MSG)

We need to **forgive those perceived shortages others and choose to love anyway**. Choose to show the other person the unearned love of God, because He gives you the ability to do that. Keep your boundaries intact, set limits and always require people to earn your trust before giving it. However, always remember that you can still show love and kindness to those you don't trust.

Why not start a journey today **to know and experience God's love**? Begin to draw from the love that God gives you for your sense of significance and self-worth. Then share that love with others, even if they don't deserve it.

Stop Trying to Fix People

We like to think that we can help people fix their flaws, but we're completely unequipped to do so.

If you had a board sticking out of your eye, how effective would you be at removing a speck of dust from a friend's eye? Crazy thought, but that's the image Jesus paints in Matthew 7.

"How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye?"

Matthew 7:4 (NLT)

Actually, we do this all the time when it comes to helping others with issues of the heart.

We like to think that we can help people fix their flaws, but we're completely unequipped to do so. In fact, some people seem to think that fixing others is their God-given calling and they're always pointing out people's shortcomings.

However, we can't reach into the heart of an individual and change them. We just don't have that ability. We can help them in other areas, such as learning God's principles, but we can't sort through their deepest beliefs. Only God's **Word can do that.**

Hebrews 4:12 (AMPC) says that God's Word is "sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart." **His Word can do what you can't.**

Nagging and faultfinding will only cause your loved ones to close their hearts to you. **You help them the most when you love them.**

You can also be a good model by spending time in God's Word with Holy Spirit. Read and meditate on the Word today and allow it to help you be all you can be.

Discover how unconditionally loved you are, shortcomings and all!

Conclusion

Love without strings attached.

If you're in a relationship with someone who doesn't show you love the way you want them to, **stop trying to make them love you.**

I know that sounds harsh, but hear me out. If you stop trying to get that person to love you and instead just enjoy your life the way it is, you free yourself. As long as you need that person to love you in order to be happy or at peace, you will feel like they control your life. Instead, you can **choose to get that love need** met by God, and then from there you'll be empowered to either **distance yourself** from that person (if the relationship is toxic) or **love them without strings attached**, which has an incredible effect on a relationship.

If someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more payback. Live generously. Here is a simple rule of thumb for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you; then grab the initiative and do it for them!

Luke 6:30-31 (MSG)

We can't look to others to give us the love that only God can give. No human being could ever rise high enough to meet that standard; they will always disappoint. We need to **become more aware of our Father God's love for us** by studying His Word, and then we are empowered to love others.

When you begin to get your thinking in line with God's Word, your entire world begins to change. You receive His love, become more secure in Him, and then can make it your goal to show that love wherever you go. **You can stir up His love in you**, and show others just how special, valuable and lovable they truly are!