

Relational Health, Wellness, Wholeness

IDENTIFYING AND DEEPENING THE QUALITY OF CRITICAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD

SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY Monday, August 2, 2021

[Psalm 16:8](#); [Psalm 139:23-24](#); [Psalm 27:4](#)

STUDY & REFLECTION

It may seem redundant, that we identify God as a critical relationship, seeing in our previous devotions we have dealt with and emphasized the importance of Knowing HIM. But here, redundancy is necessary and essential. We must be careful that because we have been born-again, have walked with the Lord for a long time, and experienced HIS favor and Presence repeatedly, that we take it for granted. If we are honest, we often take for granted that we consistently value our relationship with the Lord and daily spend focused time with Him, renewing the relationship. The truth is we often take this most important relationship for granted and even from time to time neglect it.

Our scriptures have been taken from the Psalms, deliberately. This is because they speak of the personal, intimate, life-altering encounters, the writers have experienced with Jehovah, and put in clear perspective how important it is to experience HIM.

Genuine relationships have consistent, focused, scheduled TIME as a hallmark that builds and nurtures the relationship. Psalm 16:8 is a primary example:

I am always aware of the LORD's presence; he is near, and nothing can shake me. (TEV)

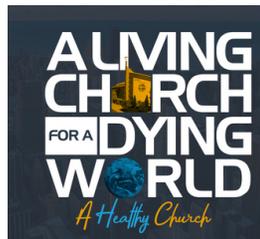
The passage in Psalm 139 shows the intimacy of the writer's relationship with God and the craving of the psalmist for God to have clear and open access to his heart. Psalm 27 reveals the longing of the psalmist to be in constant connection with God.

ACTION ITEMS

I challenge you to take each of the passages, and place them in parallel with your present relationship with God. Challenge yourself on the consistency, intimacy, and quality of the encounters. What are you willing to do to improve it?

INVOLVING OTHERS

Please interact with your small group and compare each of your action items with the others. Don't be guarded, but listen to your peers assessment and decide on one critical way you are ready to deepen the relationship.



Relational Health, Wellness, Wholeness

IDENTIFYING AND DEEPENING THE QUALITY OF CRITICAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY

SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY

Genesis 2:18; Genesis 2:21-24;
Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Matthew 19:4-6

Tuesday, August 3 and
Wednesday, August 4, 2021

STUDY & REFLECTION **Tuesday:** Your Spouse (if unmarried: Your Parents)
Wednesday: Your Siblings; Sons and Daughters

If we look at the status of the family today, unfortunately we will not get a good report. Much of the meanness and incivility, unrest, disconnection, and violence that we are experiencing in our country today can in many respects be traced to the disintegration and dissolution of God's primary social unit, established in Creation...**the Family.**

The family predates and is emblematic of the Church. God established that although Adam was the height of His creation, his being 'alone,' was not good. God then establishes the family. It was and is God's intention that the family, father, mother, children and related others be a harmonious unit that provides provision, protection, education, emotional nurturing, economic stability and spiritual nourishment for the health and well-being of all who are a connected part.

The family, as the basic unit of society has a powerful effect upon its members. It is often in the crucible of the family that life's values and traits are modeled, practiced and learned. Much of who we are and who we become, is a result of this primary relationship.

The hectic, chaotic, frenzied pace of living today is a primary reason for many of the ills we are facing. The nature and pace of family life today is a major driver of our disconnection, lack of nurturing love, mistrust of others, and enhancer of isolation and spiritual and emotional instability. We have rejected that which God designed for our good.

ACTION ITEMS

For the day and category designated, write down the person or persons you consider your family (spouse, parents, siblings, sons and daughters). Give some focused thought to each of them. Assess how much if any scheduled, focused, relaxing time you spend with each and under what circumstances. **In each case, do you deliberately seek to deepen the relationship?** After reflection, see if their importance to you in your mind, lines up with quality *time* spent with them.

INVOLVING OTHERS

Compare and share with your small group. Come up with a short list of what you all agree is being lost in the hustle and bustle of living, almost squeezing out life.

What can be done to disconnect from such a toxic lifestyle and allow you to deepen and connect these critical relationships?



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IDENTIFYING AND DEEPENING THE QUALITY OF CRITICAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHURCH FAMILY

SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY Thursday, August 5, 2021

Acts 2:42-47; Romans 16

STUDY & REFLECTION

What we see displayed in the early chapters of the book of Acts is always challenging. Here we see in powerful manifestation **the power of fellowship and genuine community**. In many respects, these were extreme examples, but as we follow the early disciples through the epistles, we see the powerful effect of love and fellowship among God's people, continuing and maturing. Romans 16 and other of the letters of Paul reflect the strength and keeping power of *personal connection and camaraderie*, among the people of God.

Camaraderie is a spirit of trust and goodwill among people who are closely associated in an activity or endeavor. It speaks of the power of togetherness, companionship, and team spirit, held by people strongly connected. This is displayed in Acts, and matured in Romans. In the 16th chapter, notice how Paul refers to many of the saints by name and *relationship*. He uses powerful endearing words and phrases to describe the nurturing connection that he has with each of them. These personal relationships were no doubt developed as they shared the joys and dangers of walking with God **Together**. This bond gave them the combined strength to stay grounded in Christ, no matter the threat of Satan and evil.

Do we see examples of this among Christians today?

ACTION ITEMS

After study and reflection, answer these questions:

- Should we see and experience such relationships today among the people of God?
- Can we develop such relationships, or do they occur by chance?
- Who are you close to in the church
- What will it take to develop close godly, mutually rewarding, relationships?

INVOLVING OTHERS

In your small group, discuss if you can as a group, identify personally or by observation **saints who seem to manifest and demonstrate close, personal, relationships, that are appropriate and genuine**. How can we promote such relationships and make such a part of our local church culture?

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IDENTIFYING AND DEEPENING THE QUALITY OF CRITICAL
RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS

SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY Friday, August 6, 2021

Proverbs 18:24; Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; 1 Samuel 18:1-4;
John 15:14-15

STUDY & REFLECTION

One of the most important and healthy relationship that a person can have is a **genuine friend!**

A friend may or may not be a family member. A friend may or may not be a member of the same church. But having genuine friends will enhance and enrich a person's life.

The wisdom books give us insights into friends and friendships. We learn that *"two are better than one...for if you fall and are alone, you are in serious trouble, but a friend will assist you and pick you up. A friend "has your back!"* They teach us that to have friends one must be friendly. The books of Samuel speak in a very positive way of the 'friendship,' of David and Jonathan. This friendship was legendary and helped reveal the Will and Plan of God for His people Israel.

The Lord Jesus speaks to this relationship in John 15 where HE declares, *"I no longer call you servants, I call you friend!"*

The servant doesn't know what the master is doing but a friend knows his **heart!**

ACTION ITEMS

Reflect and consider, if you have genuine friends. Make a list of your friends.

- What has happened to develop this friendship?
- What traits have you embraced to demonstrate that you would be a genuine friend?

INVOLVING OTHERS

Share the details of your action items with your group. Critique each other and share the positives and negatives that either enhance or distract from you being seen as a *genuine friend*.

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SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY Saturday, August 7, 2021

Review Scriptures From This week

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Make a list of all those you identified over the past week to be **important to you as Critical Relationships**. You may be surprised at how many, and the list doesn't include all the people you deem important in your busy life!

There are 168 hours in a week!!! The same amount for all of us!

Calculate how many hours in a week do you spend at work, sleep, grooming, commuting etc. Subtract that number from 168.

How many hours do you have left?

Now **assign time to each of the relationships** with the hours you have left.

Consider what you discover. *Surprised!?*

Now share it with others. ***What are you willing to change?***