

Deeper Study Guide

Series: Family Matters

Study: *Relationships Matter to God*

Scripture: 1 John 4.20 (NKJV)

Teacher: Pastor Keith

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Objective: to understand the value God places on our relationships and commit to reflecting Christ in how we treat one another in our relationships.

Core idea of who God is: God is *relational* and that He created us for relationship, to know Him *personally*, to *experience* His presence, and *partner* with Him in what He is doing in the world.

What is God doing? Reconciling the world to Himself through Jesus Christ and He entrusted us with the ministry of reconciliation to share the message of a *life-changing* relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

God is love: The nature of God's relationship is selfless love that seeks our best interest according to His purposes and design.

Relationships matter to God because they connect us with Him and with one another, expressing His selfless love by seeking what is truly best for others according to God's purposes, and not simply what we want for ourselves.

Evidence that you know God to others: 1 John 4.20

1. **What is the Scripture saying?** _____ v20a. If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; 'You can say you love God, but your words alone do not prove it.'
2. **What is the Scripture revealing?** _____ v.20b. for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen. (NKJV)

About God: God desires our love for Him to be demonstrated through our love for others. Our relationship with Him should affect how we relate to others.

About me: Am I a liar? Do I claim to love God while holding resentment, bitterness, hatred, or unforgiveness toward someone?

3. **What thoughts need to change?** _____:
Old thought: I can love God without having love for others.
New Thought: Because I love God, I must allow His love to govern how I respond to people, even when they hurt or disappointment me.
4. **How do I transform to be like Christ?** _____: I seek to live out the ministry of reconciliation when possible, extending the same love, truth, and grace I received from Christ to others.

Summary: We cannot separate our love for God from how we love others. Even in conflict, we are called to reflect God's love, truth, and grace in our actions.

Points: NWCC Relational Formation in Christ

1. Our church relationships – How we *relate* to one another
 - a) _____ relationship – Our agreement: In Christ, we *belong to one another*, through His body and blood and *mutually* agree to promote (uphold), protect (cover), and prosper (bless) our church family. **WORD:** 1 Corinthians 10.1 (NLT)
 - b) _____ relationship – How we treat one another: In Christ, we see one another through His eyes and treat one another as He personally treats us, with love, truth, and grace. **WORD:** John 13.34-35

‘Our relationships in Christ, within His Body are gifts from God, given to us for a reason: to walk alongside one another, so we never have to walk *alone* through the seasons of life.’ **WORD:** Mark 10.9

Summary: NOW WORD family, we are in covenant with Christ, committed to belonging to one another, never walking alone, growing together in Christ, and reflecting Him through our Christ-centered relationships.

2. Our *life-changing* relationship with Christ – We are transformed.

In Christ, our relationship with Him becomes *life-changing* when we *internalize* His Word until His truth replaces our faulty thoughts and the thoughts of Christ governs how we think, understand, and respond to our circumstances. **WORD:** 1 Corinthians 2.16

Summary: NOW WORD family, we are committed to a *life-changing* relationship with Jesus Christ, internalizing His Word, until His truth replaces our incorrect thinking and *governs* how we think, understand, and respond to life's circumstances.

3. Our *ministry* of reconciliation – restoring broken relationships. 2 Corinth 5.18-19

In Christ, every believer is entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation, sharing its message of Christ's love, truth, and grace with the world and demonstrating it through our relationships with one another.

How we apply the Ministry of Reconciliation:

- _____ forgiveness – an [individual] decision to release an offense and choose not to bring it back up or hold it against the person again. **WORD:** 1 Corinthians 13.5
- _____ the relationship – a [mutual] decision that takes *both people* to decide to forgive one another.
- _____ the relationship – Reconciliation opens the door to restore the relationship, but it may take patience and may require repentance, restitution, and changed behavior to rebuild trust and restore the closeness of the relationship.

Summary: NOW WORD family, each of us have been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation. We extend to one another the same love, truth, and grace we have received from Christ. We seek to make things right and remain open to reconciliation, even when the other person is not yet ready.