

## LOVE AND MY RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

(See the Transferable Concept “How to Love by Faith” by Dr. Bill Bright)

**PURPOSE:** To create in the students the desire to apply principles for developing good relationships with others.

**OBJECTIVES:** By the end of the lesson the students will:

1. Be able to explain how to have good relationships with others.
2. Be willing to apply these principles to their lives.

**KEY VERSES:** John 13:34-35

### I. Introduction

*(Here’s an interesting option to introduce this devotional: bring in some musical cymbals, or any empty can and a drumstick. Play the instrument for some time being sure to make “noise.” Then read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. Mention that we can speak or do great things for God; but without love we’re just noise-makers.)*

Good relationships add spice to life. It makes getting up in the morning worthwhile. What can be more enjoyable than spending time with ones that you love? Proverbs 17:17 states: “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” But sometimes there are rifts in relationships. Problems arise of one kind or the other. Instead of love and kind words, there arrives on the scene two characters named discord and dissension. They destroy relationships.

*(Here is an example. You can find one from your own life. Change the name to protect the innocent. For creativity you could do a short drama instead of telling a story. The drama must be kept short.)* A number of years ago, a Christian (let’s call him John) had a co-worker (let’s call him George) who was also his roommate. John had a hard time loving George. Here are a couple of examples of things George did that really annoyed John. One time John needed to send some material to a friend of George. John sent it and felt everything was just fine. Well, George came up to John and asked if the package had been sent. John told him that he had sent it UPS (about a 5 day delivery). That did not satisfy George. He felt John should have sent it airmail (2 day delivery). John explained that it would get there in time. In the end George sent another package airmail to make sure it got there in time.

Another time at home George was lying on the couch with his boots on. John asked him to either put a newspaper under his feet or take off his boots. To say the least that did not go over well with George. How was John to love George in these situations? That is what we are going to talk about today. How can we love others that are just not easy to love? *(Ask, “What advice can you offer in John’s dealing with George?” Don’t answer just think about it.)*

How was the problem resolved? Let’s look at the process that we need to go through in thinking about how to enhance any relationship.

*(If possible, put II, III and IV on an overhead to help focus attention.)*

II. Assess the situation.

- A. Why am I feeling hurt? What has the other person done against me? What is my part in this problem? Have I offended the other person?
- B. Are there unresolved conflicts in either of us that are causing the problem?
- C. Are there points of lack of forgiveness in our lives?
- D. Are there some sinful habits that need to be addressed?

III. After assessing the situation, assess God's thoughts concerning the situation.

- A. Realize that God loves and cares for you with His infinite love. Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 8:38,39.
- B. Realize that God forgave us when we were going our own way from Him. Read Romans 5:8: "But God demonstrates His own love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
- C. God want us to live in peace with one another. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:2,3: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."
- D. God commands us to love one another. Read John 13:34,35.

IV. Accessing God's love and forgiveness for self and others.

- A. We live the Christian life by faith (Romans 1:17; Hebrews 11:6).
- B. Since we are commanded to love others, we can only fulfill that command by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). This verse says that God's perfect love has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. It's there, and available to us. Because we are commanded to love all people, we can ask God to empower us to love others, and we can know that He will answer that prayer (1 John 5:14,15). Step out in faith (Matthew 21:22) and see what God does as you work together day by day growing in your love for others (1 Thessalonians 3:12).
- C. Loving with God's love should cover everyone. We are not just to love the difficult people by faith, but instead we are to love everyone by faith. Remember, without faith it is impossible to please God. Matthew 5:43-47; Matthew 22:36-39.
- D. Loving God's way makes relationships beautiful.

V. Conclusion

Take some time now to think of a person in your life who is hard to love. Quietly go through II – IV above and ask God to show you what you need to do. How can you demonstrate 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 to that person? Then, do it.

*(Close in prayer)*