"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

**Overview**

- Two sections.
  1. Top ten relationship needs in families.
  2. Practical tips for making relationships work.
- Seek to find ways to apply the material to your relationships.
- My goal is to show how living biblically creates the context for healthy relationships.
- This content isn't exhaustive. You will easily be able to identify additional topics that could be added.

**What Relationship Roles Do You Have?**

- Everyone here has many types of relationships which could include being or having:
  - Father-Mother
  - Son-Daughter
  - Brother-Sister; Brother-Brother; Sister-Sister
  - Aunt-Uncle
  - Grandpa-Grandma
  - Cousins
  - Friend
- Biological family, adopted family, church family, work family.
- In this presentation, you should think about the roles you play in all of the various relationships you have.

**Top Ten Relationship Needs In Families**

- The simple (but not easy) recipe...
  - If we follow God's commands and respect God's design for relationships, things work better.
  - If we do things outside of God's design and biblical principles, we will experience the consequences!
  - Remember the children of Israel?
- The following 10 relationship principles work because they:
  - Bring glory to God by acknowledging and respecting His design.
  - Help bring out the best in people and minimize weaknesses.
Approach to This Section

1. Review a Bible verse and/or biblical principle that goes with the topic.
2. Define and explain each of the 10 topics.
3. Think of ways this principle could be applied in relationships.

#1 Acceptance

**Romans 15:7** “Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.”

- We need to accept people for who they are as God designed them.
- Receiving another person willingly and unconditionally; even when the other’s behavior has been imperfect.
- We need to help other people live up to what they are capable of AND allow people to be human.
- Grace-Based vs. Performance-Based Acceptance

#2 Affection

**Mark 10:16** “And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

- Many times it is easier to assume that other people in our lives “just know” we love them.
- Appropriately expressing care and closeness through physical touch, gifts, quality time, words of affirmation, and acts of service is essential to family relationships.
- It is important for family members to say the words, “I love you,” to each other.
- Obviously, the type of affection shown will vary widely based on the type of relationship and the setting.

#3 Appreciation

**Colossians 3:15** “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

**1 Corinthians 11:2** “Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.”

- Expressing thanks, praise, or commendation.
- Keeping appreciation private is like a having a “good intention” you never act on.
- Especially with children, it is important to be mindful to recognize effort over outcome.

#4 Approval & Blessing

**Ephesians 4:29** “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

**Mark 1:11** “And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

- Involves building up or affirming one another. Affirming both the fact of, and the importance of, a relationship.
- In Old Testament times the practice of formally bestowing a blessing was a major milestone in communication between the generations of a family.

#5 Time & Attention

**Biblical Principle:** Think of the words to the hymn *In The Garden:* “And He walks with me and He talks with me. And He tells me I am His own. And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.”

- Conveying appropriate interest, concern, and care.
- Taking thought of another, entering another’s “world.”
- It provides the other person with the security of knowing they are worthy of love and respect (instead of a bother or a low-level priority).
**#6 Empathy & Comfort**

*Romans 12:15* “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.”

*2 Corinthians 1:3-4* “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort: Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

- Seeing life through the other person’s eyes and responding in their best interest.
- Responding to a hurting person with words, feelings, and touch; to hurt with and for another’s grief or pain.

**#7 Encouragement**

*1 Thessalonians 5:11* “Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify [build up] one another, even as also ye do.”

*Hebrews 10:24* “And let us consider [attentive, continuous care] one another to provoke [stimulate and incite] unto love and to good works:”

- Urging another to persist and persevere toward a goal; stimulating toward love and good deeds.
- The difference between receiving encouragement and belittling criticism can alter the course of someone’s life.

**#8 Respect**

*Romans 12:10* “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;”

- Valuing and regarding another highly.
- Treating another as important; honoring another.
- Viewing the other person as the eternal soul that God sees.

**#9 Security (peace)**

*Psalms 4:8* "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

*Job 11:18-19a* “And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety. Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid…”

- Freedom from fear or threat of harm.
- Harmony in relationships.
- Emotional safety.

**#10 Support**

*Galatians 6:2* “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

- Coming alongside and gently helping with a problem or struggle, providing appropriate assistance.
- Knowing that someone will “be there” for us.

**Practical Tips For Making Relationships Work**
Key #1 You Need a Speaker and a Listener

- Communication cycle:
  Speaker ➔ Message ➔ Listener ➔ Acknowledgment ➔ Speaker
- Proverbs 18:13 “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”
- Many arguments occur when there are two speakers and no listeners!
- James 1:19-20 “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

Key #2 Respect Differences

- We have been given different gifts.
  - Romans 12:4-8 “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: [discussion of gifts of prophecy, ministry, exhortation, giving, ruling, mercy]”
  - 1 Corinthians 12:18 “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”
- The body needs different members.
  - 1 Corinthians 12:15, 21 “If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body: . . . And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.”

Two Types of Processing Styles

Individuals tend to work through their problems in one of two main ways:
1. Thinkers: Cope primarily by thinking things through logically
2. Feelers: Cope primarily by working through emotions
   - Neither style is wrong.
   - Both have strengths and weaknesses.

“Thinkers”: Logically-Oriented Individuals

- Work through problems and stressors by:
  1. Keeping emotional distance.
  2. Understanding information and facts.
  3. Having assistance in problem-solving.

“Feelers”: Emotionally-Oriented Individuals

- Work through problems and stressors by:
  1. Sharing their feelings and experiences.
  2. “Venting” and pouring out their emotions.
  3. Having others to empathetically listen.
  4. Being understood by others.

Key #3 Avoid Favoritism

- It is OK, even good, to recognize people have different strengths and weaknesses.
- Be careful not to show favoritism:
  - Jacob was favored by Rebekah: had to flee to escape Esau’s wrath. Genesis 27
  - Joseph was favored by Jacob: sold into slavery by his brothers. Genesis 37
  - Absalom was not disciplined by David: destroyed the kingdom and eventually died. 2 Sam. 13-18
- James 2:9 “But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted [convicted] of the law as transgressors.”
**Key #4 Look at the World Through the Other Person’s Eyes**
- Take the other person’s perspective.
- *Hebrews 4:15-16* “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”
- We tend to forget and think everyone sees the world the same way we do.
- God’s design for the family is a safe place where we can be known and fully accepted.

**Key #5 Sometimes It’s Not What You Say, But How You Say It**
Specifically:
- Nonverbals speak louder than words.
- Body language, posture, etc.
- Your tone of voice can strongly influence how a message will be heard.
- Giving others your attention through eye contact.

**Key #6 Show Empathy**
- Step #1: Set Aside Your Own Agenda (temporarily)
  - “I notice you.”
- Step #2: Turn on Your Emotional Radar
  - “I feel with you.”
- Step #3: Demonstrate Your Care and Concern
  - “I act to help you.”

**Key #7 Maintain Good Hedges**
- Satan is actively seeking to harm you and those you love.
- *2 Corinthians 2:11* “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”
- *1 Peter 5:8* “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”
- Hedges are boundaries you set to keep yourself (and others) from sin and harm.
- True love will never put another person in a compromising situation.
- Prevention! Prevention!! Prevention!!!

**Key #8 Forgiveness is Essential**
- Past problems with communication can cause us to give up on future communication.
- When communicating, stay focused on the present conversation. Don’t bring in other issues and past arguments.
- Don’t hold forgiveness hostage.
- *Ephesians 4:32* “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

**Colossians 3:12-14**
12. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, meekness, longsuffering;
13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.
14. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.
Forbearance

• Definition: “To put up with someone.”
• Under times of stress people can become irritable, rigid, and even irrational.
• Avoid taking things too personally.
• Take comments people say and let them “roll off” as much as possible.
• Suggested prayer, “Father forgive them, for the know not what they just said.”

Key #9 Start Today!

• Identify a few areas from this presentation you can start working on and do them today.
• God is still working in your life!
• *Philippians 1:6* “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”
• Don’t let your past choices prevent you from making Godly, healthy relationship choices for the future.
• Ask God for wisdom and opportunity to implement new skills or to maintain ones you are already using.