



## The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)  
So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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### **Nurturing Constructive Relationships**

Recently I did a word study on Peter preaching that powerful message at Pentecost. It says, "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." (Acts 2:40) This is what the word "untoward" means. It simply means, "moving away or reactionary." As I studied that word, I was moved. In fact, I preached a message on "Save Yourselves

from This Untoward Generation." I found that untowardness in my own heart. I think that maybe some of the disappointments we have faced in our congregations have been a result of untowardness or being reactionary, and desiring that God would lead us. The apostle Peter did not say, "Save yourselves from the world." He says, "Save yourselves from reaction," or, "from this untoward genera-

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tion.” Reaction often follows, or we might say always follows, reaction. It never will find its way back to the right course.

With the children of Israel, we can read through their life and testimony how they reacted and wanted to do this, and then in order to correct reaction, did the opposite. That may not be God’s will either. This is something we have to, we do not just do the opposite we did yesterday or last year, ten years ago, or twenty

years ago to correct reaction. It is fearing God. It is getting our direction from God. This is what I would like for the message to be as we think of relationships.

Nurturing Constructive Relationships, has three subtopics, 1) In the Church, 2) In the home, 3) In the workplace. When relationships are going well, it seems like it cannot be any other way. Have you ever sensed that? When relationships are broken down it seems like it

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just cannot be any other way. Is this not how relationships are? We know when they are good, and we know when they are not good. We want to understand the cause and effect of how to take them. I do not think I am addressing those whose relationships are all broken down. Nor am I speaking to those who are in perfection. None of us are in perfection. We stand somewhere in the gap of “It can get better.” As we think of the hymn, *Nearer to Thee Oh God*, we know the relationship between God and us can always get better. Our relationship with our companion can always get better. Our relationships as congregations, and in our congregation’s experience can always get better.

Certainly there are levels that relationships are broken down to where they are severed and help is needed. However, the message is not in working with broken relationships. I thought it was worded very properly. It is nurturing constructive relationships. We know there are relationships that are not constructive, and so there are some that are constructive. We think of construction as building — some tear down and some build up. There are differences in relationships. Relationships are a very delicate thing. It is like cultivating a gar-

den. It is not like seeing a rose, and simply deciding to chop, figuring I will hit weeds and might hit something that is valuable or I might not. It is very delicate. I can get most of the weeds and yet in carelessness, destroy the good.

This is how relationships are. We can make fifteen ‘right moves’ and one wrong move can destroy all the good that the fifteen right ones did. This is how delicate relationships are. Thus, it is important part. Also I would like to say that one concern I have is, the results of poor relationships. There are many people seeking many answers from here and there. Everywhere there are counselors, philosophers, or whatever. I believe the Bible carries the answer. The right counsel which those counsellors give, is found within these pages. If we do not think they are there, it is because of our ignorance, and not because they are not there. Thus my desire is that our solutions would be grounded in the Scripture, because we do not discover or discover new truth. We do not manufacture it. Thus, all faith that we have today, relates to historical faith. Let us remember if we are losing it that we can regain it by looking into that which has been in the past — the tried and proven. These pages carry infinite truth.

As we think of relationships, I sat in a meeting once. It was an informal meeting, and I could tell that these relationships were not constructive. The whole temperature of the meeting was such that I did not know where to start. I did not know where it had gone wrong, nor why it was not being constructive. As I sat there, we might say, like Job's friends, wondering what to say, you almost felt like starting the meeting over. I could tell that the temperature of the relationships were not such that were proper.

What goes wrong? Where do these things come from? What happens when relationships get to this point? What do we do? These are some of the questions that we get into in church life, home life and the work place. How do we correct it? Can we correct it? Sometimes, and probably the most frustrating thing, we get this feeling that we cannot correct it. As I sat in this meeting, I sat there silently. I was trying to figure out whether to say something or just be quiet. How could this course be changed? I finally did venture to say a little something but, I about half regretted I said anything. This is how relationships can become. We say, "We need to communicate. We need to work things out." However, there must be a

foundation, or a basis. It is somewhat like starting to build a building. If we get half way through and the thing will not look like what we want when we are done, sometimes we can correct it. Sometimes, it is affected all the way back to the foundation.

As we begin to look at relationships, let us turn to James 4:1, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" James tells us that relationship struggles begin primarily in our own hearts as wars and struggles. The basis of these wars and struggles, comes from our individuality. As they work out, they lead to the major wars and fightings, if they are left to themselves. These things come of lusts that war in our hearts. When we stop and think of relationships, let us remember when there is conflict and struggle that quite often there is carnality, or we might say, things that are of lust of our lower nature somewhere.

Quite often the case is that we think it is in the other person. They think it is in us. Thus, this is where the fight and the war enter. James continues, "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye

fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.” (verse 2) Sometimes in relationships, one of the most painful things is simply the lack of relationship, or the lack of the relationship meeting our expectations. As it was in that meeting, I was hoping we could gain ground. I had pictured in my mind, where this thing could be and where it was, and the pain of dealing with that was part of the pain of the relationship. Yes, we got along fine and it was very nice, but I did not feel like it finished in the way we wanted it to finish. Sometimes this is the pain in the relationship. We want it so bad, so what do we do? We step out of, we might say, our realm of responsibility. This is where wars and fightings come in. This is what happens when we take these things into our own hand. We become so desperate and so (we would not say this, but in reality) we sort of pull a ‘shady thing,’ so that we can have this relationship — that which we would really desire to have.

Relationships are a result of simply laying a proper foundation and then building as God works and builds in our lives. James continues by saying, “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” (verse 3)

Here again, the flesh has preeminence. There is an ulterior motive, that is, there are motives underneath. It is not totally sanctified by God. James then says, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” (verse 4) James says that with divided attention we cannot build one building. If we have two buildings in mind, we cannot build one building.

All relationships have a basis. It may be for carnality, which is much of what relationship is in the world. It is a secret agenda to get what I want. Thus, people work with the person to get underneath, “I want what I want.” That is why relationships crumble. James says in verse 5, “Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?” Do we think the Scripture is saying this in vain? Do we still think that carnal nature, which constantly wants to come alive, will do us any good or that it will get us where we want to go? Will it build a home like we want to have? Will it build a church like we want to have? However good it may seem or appear, when carnality takes control, divides attention, or carnality expresses

itself, it will always not give what we desire to have in the end result.

All relationships have a foundation. If it is based on a selfish motive, it will crumble. If we expect to get married and we have a picture of having our wife to simply serve us, it will crumble. Do not expect, when it is all done, that we will have this beautiful marriage. We can wish all we want to, but if you do not want to sacrifice, do not waste your time, it will crumble. The same is true in church life. If we come to our churches and have a picture of how wonderful it would be to be a part of a certain church, if we do not want to sacrifice or put forth effort, or if we want to be the one that receives, do not waste your time. It will crumble. Our church experience will crumble. We will think it is all wrong. We will think it cannot be any other way. We will be frustrated. That is why there is this carnal spirit.

James continues, "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (verse 6) We may think that we can react to our past and we can cause the negative effect of our reaction and that is what you want, but it will crumble. It will not yield something we want.

We may think we can make the opposite happen. However, this is not what we will have in the end. "God resisteth the proud." Yes, we may almost get there and think it is within reach but God moves the circumstances and we finish with our crumbled relationship. Do we see the foundation we are laying, if we want a relationship?

We want to look at the life of Christ in Philippians 2, and see what was the foundation. I would like to somewhat bring this together in thinking of our homes and churches. I want to lay a foundation. What are some things that we can do which will increase our relationships as homes, churches, and in the workplace? Philippians 2:1, 2 says, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." As Paul says that if there is anything, if there is "any consolation . . . any comfort of love, if any fellowship," I wish to apply this to strong relationships.

"If any bowels of mercies." There is this joy of being like-minded. There is sacrifice in the church. In verses 3, 4 he says, "Let nothing be done through

strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” If we will make it in this church or home relationship, we will need to look on the things of others. That is what will make us enjoy this relationship. We look not on ourselves. This is the foundation of strong relationships. It is the only foundation.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (verses 5–8) What is the ‘bottom line’ of sound relationships, of a true relationship, of constructive relationships? What is it? It is staying up when I feel like going to bed, or going to bed, when I feel like staying up. It is going away when I feel like staying home, or staying home when I would feel like going away. It is learning to blend in with others. In a relationship, it is blending in. It is backing down when I feel like

standing for my own rights. It is standing firm for someone else instead of backing out of it. This is what Christ did. Christ laid awake when He could have slept. This is the real foundation of relationships. In our home life, we know what it is if we go to bed when we feel like going to bed and we get up when we feel like getting up. It is interacting with our partner and doing what they want or how they choose. As we make that sacrifice and share together, they also make the sacrifice to do what we want. This is how church life is.

Someone said, “If every husband feels like they are the best in their wife’s eyes, every wife feels like they are the best in their husband’s eyes, if every churchgoer feels like their church is the best, every ministry feels like their laity is the best, every employer feels like he has the best employees, and every employee feels like he has the best employer, we would not have relationship problems.” This is very simple. We might almost say, “Too simple.” When we build relationships, do not think that we can pull a “slick deal” and a selfish deal and finish with good relationships. It does not happen that way. It will always result in a crumbled relationship. They do not simply

happen.

We need to be able to see the potential and value of relationships over time and how we can inspire each other. This brings us to sacrifice the time, talent, and money to make this reality. This is what Christ did, as He saw us. We would also like to look at the life of the apostle Paul. The apostle Paul felt this way about himself. He made the statement often, “I am the least of all saints.” “who am less than the least of all saints” (Ephesians 3:8) He even said, “because I persecuted the Church.” (1 Corinthians 15:9) Ephesians 4:1 explains Paul’s feelings so well. “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord . . .” (the apostle Paul was a physical prisoner, but also a spiritual prisoner) “beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation.” The apostle Paul was overwhelmed with being called to be an apostle. This overwhelmed feeling went on with him, and he felt unworthy of his vocation.

As we think of the work place, do we feel unworthy to work for our employer? Employers do you feel unworthy to have that employee? Do we see how relationships start coming back together? It is when we have feelings of unworthiness. This is where James left us when he said, “humble yourselves,”

(James 4:10) We must seek to see the value of strength in others. In our congregations, in our laity, and in the ministry, as we see the potential, our differences are not meant to irritate each other. They are meant to broaden our spectrum of influence. That is why we are different. That is why as husbands and wives we have opposites. We know that if we were the same in everything, our spectrum of influence would not have increased with our relationship. We would simply have all the same strengths and the same weaknesses. However, as those things are opposites, we carry a much broader spectrum of influence by carrying opposites. That is what most often has attracted us. That is how we can feel.

The apostle Paul says, “With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.” (Ephesians 4:2) This is how we build relationships. It is simple. It is not an impossible thing — till we come to “the unity of the Spirit” (Ephesians 4:3) — oneness — the oneness in the Spirit that we can have as God and us are blessed with these unions.

In James 4:10–12 we see a different side, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. Speak not evil

one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" James is saying that in our relationships, we can actually become a judge. It happens when we are not a 'doer' of giving love or sacrifice. It happens when we simply sit back, as a bystander in our own relationships and judge what is right and wrong. We find ourselves speaking evil and making judgments. James is saying that when we do that, in God's eyes, we do not have a relationship, nor are we building a relationship. If it is not constructive, we are simply a judge and that is God's job to do. Thus, if we find ourselves making judgmental statements and being judgmental, what are we worth to God? What value are we to God?

In church life there are two different types of people. There is the type who builds the church through doing things right. They are a perfection type of person. They like to talk about what went wrong and how we can improve. They can do it ever so perfect such that when they are done,

they still found quite a few flaws. Details are very important. That is how they make their money. They are able to spend their money, and we might say "split their dimes" with the result of having two quarters. They can simply cut to the margin. There is always a way they can improve and do it better. They are always looking for the flaws. Sometimes we can have the impression that this is almost all they are looking for.

There is another type of person who builds the church through relationships — through powerful relationships. That is how they have their business. Yes, they lose or waste money, but they see horizons, through new ideas, new ways, and what of it, if we lose a hundred dollars to make a thousand. Through their relationships they build the church. This is how they build the church. Their focus is on relationships. They do not see all that goes down the drain. They only see the relationships — the powerful relationships.

A person who is a detail person, will expend relationships for details, and one who is a relationship person will expend details for relationships. Thus, they work opposite. It takes both to build the church. However, at the same time, they can aggravate

and irritate each other. We can have an enjoyable relationship, but if all we have to talk about is the negative aspect — what could be done differently — that is not a relationship. Let us enjoy our relationship. We also can tend to become proud and arrogant. In a sense we can feel like we can do it better and no one else can. This is not a relationship.

When I go away for a week of meetings, there will be some brethren who will never have missed me. They have their focus on doing things right. There will be other brethren who will ask me how it went when I return. Again, our relationships take both. It also takes sound doctrine to build the Church.

The fact is, if I am a relationship type of person, maybe I do well to look at details. If I am naturally a detail type person, I do well to look at relationships. As we trade our arguments, God can build the Church. We can see the value in each other. In 1 Corinthians 1:12, the apostle Paul begins talking about those who said, “I am of Paul; and I of Apollos.” I think that is simply what he meant. There were these men who had their differences. Maybe the one was details and the other one was relationships. Thus, they contended. Paul wrote, “Are ye not carnal?” (1

Corinthians 3:4) Paul is saying that in this relationship problem, there is carnality and flesh involved. He told them that they each have their place. They each have their gifts and their talents. As they put these things together, God builds the Church, and God directs and sets things in order.

Have you ever noticed in church life, it seems like about all have some of both? Does not God set those together for a purpose? If churches could divide them, the one will tend to drift, and the other one will tend to fight. This is how we might say, often in splits both sides are proven wrong, and both sides are proven right. God help us. This is often what happens when it is done out of carnality. That is what would have happened here. They both would have been proven wrong, and they both would have been proven right.

Paul again talks about the foundation, the building and the relationship. Many of our differences God has created. Did you know that God created your wife or your co-minister for a purpose? Those distinct differences have a purpose. He created us and as we work together we will increase our effectiveness in the Kingdom. That is why God has created. However, as we become judgmental and conclusive in our

thinking — thinking that we know it all — and because this is how we believe, those things destroy relationships. Often in relationships, whether at home or wherever, we can soon sense what cools our relationship. We can soon sense what turns them on, and simply doing those things or not doing those things is how simple it is. It is not something that we can fight together and end up with something when we are done. It is the sacrificial love.

In Ephesians 5 we have Christ and the Church, and Paul brings it into the marriage relationship. This is something that I have been pondering recently, and I am not sure if I have got to the bottom of it. However, I believe it does deal with the marriage relationship as well as the relationship of Christ and the Church. That is what he says in verse 32, “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” What is the mystery he is talking about? In verses 21–31, what is he saying? I believe he is simply saying this: Young men (or we might say all men who are married) when you ask that sister, that young sister, that you began courting — you know when you received that answer — you felt unworthy. You felt so unworthy

of that answer that you felt in reality you were getting the best end of the deal. If the answer was yes, when she gave that answer she felt the same way. This is a mystery.

How can both feel that they got the best end of the relationship? This is the mystery of the marriage relationship. This feeling is what began your relationship. That feeling will continue your relationship. Those who have been married ten, fifteen or twenty years later, do you still have the same feeling? It is possible? This is the mystery of that relationship. However, he is saying that he is speaking of Christ and the Church. How does this apply to Christ and the Church? The fact is that Christ when he looked on us there was no value in us. He could picture in His mind a whole Church full of people whose inclination would have been to serve the world, but they gave all that up to serve Him.

We know the free will that they have. If our wife had been chosen, and had no choice in it, would it not have affected our relationship? This is the same. She chose to serve you and chose that relationship. You did not have to ask her. At the same time sisters, you did not have to say, “yes.” The freedom of choosing to say, “yes,” made the relation-

ship so valuable. This is what pleases Christ. We can go into the book of Revelation, where he asked, “What are these which are arrayed in white? (Revelation 7:13) He said, these are virgins. These are those who laid down all their fleshly desires to serve me, who actually chose to die or to suffer to serve me. That is how Christ is pleased with the Church. He is pleased to own us when we give ourselves up and serve Him. He is pleased to own us. That is the mystery of the relationship.

I am not sure if I have explained it to the full depth. I do not think we can. This is the mystery of relationship that we have. If we stop to think about it that is how our relationship began, how it develops, and still after marriage as we live with that relationship of feeling unworthy of our partner that will construct a relationship on and on through life. Let us notice two things: sacrifice and love, or we might say, love that actually brings sacrifice, and the other is reverence. These two things will feed a relationship. It will advance a relationship. In this Scripture it talks about husbands giving of their own bodies, “love your wife as your own flesh.” As we sacrifice — when they see us choosing our agenda and they are

first — see what happens? This brings reverence. “No you do not need to plow my garden first, work in the fields instead.” This makes us want to plow the garden first. Do we see how in the relationship, the unworthiness and the reverence it brings?

This is how it works with Christ and the Church. This is how it works with husband and wife, and in church relationships between the laity and ministry. In church life, the laity may be saying, “The ministry are taking too much upon themselves, They are always wanting to make the decisions. Can we not make some decisions for ourselves? Can we not bring some things to the church? The ministry may be saying, “we want to say.” It is totally backwards and it is hard to build a relationship with those types of feelings. When we reverse that and the laity say, “You do not need to feel like you need to bring all of this to the church every time. We trust you ministry and we commit to whatever you say.” This relationship inspires an unworthiness in the ministry to be careful of how they direct a relationship that we can have. Do we see how the one feeds the other, builds the other, and builds our relationships?

In 1 Peter 3:1 Peter says, “Likewise, ye wives.” Thus, we

back up and see that he gives Christ's example of sacrifice. Thus, he tells the wives (even if their husband is unfaithful) "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." He is saying that your sacrifice can inspire their reverence. Do we see the sacrifice and reverence here? We have Christ's example of being perfect and how He won our reverence by His sacrifice. Do we see how that works in constructing relationships? It was the sacrifice which Christ made when we were unlovely and went our own way. It was when we realized all the sacrifice He has made for us and turned to Him — that feeling is where our relationship started and that is how it will develop. When we lose that unworthy feeling as the apostle Paul had, our relationship with Christ will go 'down the drain.' That is the same way it is with our wives as husband and wife, and in the workplace. When that relationship wanes, and when we lose those feelings of unworthiness, our relationship goes down the drain.

Continuing through verses 2–6

he continues, "Likewise, ye husbands," (verse 7) If we do not have these feelings one to another, the real fact is, the pride of our own heart. Pride will blind us to our own faults and highlight other's faults. That is why relationships go down the drain. We can take this principle and use it in any relationship we want to form, whether in the workplace, or church life. The pride of our own hearts blinds us to our own mistakes. Have you ever wondered as you look at maybe that preacher or person, "Does he not see how weird he is?" Have you ever thought that there are things just like that about yourself? Even though we cannot see them, it does not mean that they are not there. It only means we cannot see them. This is a fact. We think, "Could not that person simply correct it if he knew it? This is fact that we do not see ourselves. So often, when relationships are broken down, we are naïve to our own, and highlight others' mistakes. If we can reverse the two and realize that there are mistakes that look equally as big in me, what does it do? I do not know about them. It humbles us. We realize this is all we are. We think "Do they live with me like that?" What does that make us think? We reverence them. Yes, they forbear

with us like that. We appear no better. Then we think, "Why did they not tell me?" The fact is they have tried to, over and over again, but we never heard, never understood, never figured it out, and we may never. This is the unworthy feeling. Do you see how those go up and down? This is how our relationships can become in church life.

There have been times when we have taken private counsel in the prayer room. If some brethren knew how other brethren walked in, they would be totally appalled. There are some brethren who walk in with their Bible in their hands and they will make the mention that they appreciate all the church has done. They do not know, they simply appreciate the ministry, however he feels best. We wish they would say a little more. There are other brethren who walk in as though they were the bishop. No one ever knows how the others responded. The fact is that your ministry forbears that. Do we not feel for them sometimes? The same can be in reverse. Do we realize we still have many of those sharp edges that have to be taken off of us? Those are things that people live with us. We need to see this and see our own mistakes. Our wife forbears things that we are

unaware of. Do we recognize that? Wives, your husband forbears things that you are totally unaware of. Do we recognize that? "Well, that other couple . . ." We can see that in them, but certainly not in us." This is true, and it is a fact in learning to relate together. This brings reverence and respect for each other when we see that fact for what it is.

In seeing our relationships, it is important also to understand that there are some people, every time you get close to them, you know they seek to overhaul. We will never make our wife or husband to think like we do. We were different and we were put together, to broaden our spectrum of influence. In 1 Peter 3, we read of the example of Sarah and Abraham. The Scripture says she called him lord. The Scripture continues, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." (verse 7) Sisters have an inborn sense of seeing danger. In fact they can see danger probably in every angle, every decision that we make. I am sure that Sarah saw that in Abraham. She may have pointed out those dangers

and then committed the decision to him. As he heard those dangers, and then calmly moved on with, we might say, the safest angle, then God blessed that union. Thus, we might say, “Sisters there is no angle that there is no danger in.” Sisters, commit that decision to your husband; to make that choice as God has called him. Husbands, as you hear your wife’s fears of making the choices and decisions, we can realize there is a safety as that union comes together, since men can walk into blind pitfalls, simply unaware. At the same time, women can tend to see them in every direction and simply not make a decision. This can be equally as bad. As a husband hears his wife’s fears, and as they work together, God can provide His plan.

Remember also that God has made us different, and He has a way to interpret his will, not until only the husband understands, but until the wife understands. This is why Peter says, “that your prayers be not hindered.” Do not allow your differences to hinder your prayer life. Allow these differences to broaden your spectrum by saying as you pray together, “God, here is this choice. You know we feel that in this decision, in this angle, there is this fear.” Commit it to God.

God has His way to reveal His will until we both understand. God does not want us to separate and the husband try to convert his wife to think like he does. We must not think that our responses are simply like puppets, but that our responses broaden our spectrum of influence and our safety. It is actually the safety that we have.

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.” (1 Peter 3:8, 9) Sometimes we have used the term ‘tact.’ I have heard the definition of tact as the ability to rub problems out, not rub them in. When we talk about being frank and honest, it should not be about others’ mistakes but about our own. We humble ourselves and search God’s way and will until we see our own faults, and then, be frank and honest. It is easy to be frank and honest about others’ faults, but so hard on our own. When we see our own faults and then are frank and honest that is where our relationship goes beyond courtesy.

I have heard of relationships where statements were made. Statements were interchanged

about, “He is too set in his ways,” and things like that. Those are not courteous statements. Before we make those statements to correct a relationship, we need to get help. Those statements will cut and it will take years to heal. I believe that is why Peter is saying, “love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.”

I do not believe as employer/employees we should exchange statements. Even where we might say are good relationships, when we decide to break down the courtesy and start making statements like, “Where did you come from you lazy thing,” and such like. This thing actually got to them. When something did get between them, all these statements became alive and real and destroyed a relationship. Our relationship should be such that we use the courtesy of “thank you,” and “please.” Yes, even between a husband and wife. It should never be the place that we know each other so good that we let those, “Thank you. Please,” statements slip.

Yes, “love as brethren, be piti-

ful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing.” When I was sitting in that meeting that I mentioned at first, I felt like simply shooting back. That would not produce anything. I am sure they would have shot back. Shooting back will never restore a relationship. Does it work to inflict pain on that other individual so bad, in order for him to feel how much I hurt? Have you ever found that to work? So that he will stop. This is what wars are all about. In an earthly war, we can blow up so many more things. We can inflict so much pain that the enemy will give up. That is what wars and fightings are. Verse 10 “For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil.” If we must speak evil in our relationships, it is beyond Scriptural bounds. “Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.” (verses 11, 12)

### Scripture References

<b>Acts</b>		<b>Ephesians</b>	5:32	59
2:40	49	3:8	56	<b>Philippians</b>
<b>1 Corinthians</b>		4:1	56	2:1, 2
1:12	58	4:2	56	2:3, 4
3:4	58	4:3	56	2:5-8
15:9	56	5:21-31	59	55
				<b>James</b>

4:1	52	4:10	56	3:8, 9	63
4:2	52	4:10–12	56	3:10	64
4:3	53	<b>1 Peter</b>		3:11, 12	64
4:4	53	3:1	60	<b>Revelation</b>	
4:5	53	3:2–7	61	7:13	60
4:6	54	3:7	62		

## From the Previous Issue:

### Are We Maintaining Conviction Against the Use of the Radio?

From a sermon by Clair R. Weaver  
Sunday, August 10, 2003  
Culbertson Mennonite Church

### Book Reprint (Continued) One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study

#### LESSON 22.

### Simon Peter.

#### I. Peter and our Lord.

1. Call to the apostleship. — John 1:35–42; Matthew 4:18; 10:1, 2.
2. Tries to walk on the sea. — Matthew 14:29–31.
3. Confesses Jesus as the Christ. — Matthew 16:13–18.
4. Rebukes the Lord and is rebuked in turn. — Matthew 16:21–23.
5. At the Transfiguration. — Matthew 17:1–9; 2 Peter 1:16.
6. At the institution of feet-washing. — John 13:6–9.
7. Christ foretells him of his denial. — Luke 22:31–34.
8. Denies his Master. — Matthew 26:70; Mark 14:66–68.
9. His repentance. — Matthew 26:75; Mark 14:72.

NOTE. — Peter's over-confidence had been the occasion of his fall. Now, when a simple look of our Saviour reminded him of his folly, he instantly repented. Beware of his example in denial, but imitate his example in repentance.

10. Our Lord appeared to him individually after the Resurrection. — Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5.
11. Christ's charge to Peter. — John 21:15–22.
12. Tells of his martyrdom. — John 21:18, 19; 2 Peter 1:14.

## II. Peter and John.

1. In the death chamber. — Luke 8:51.
2. At the Transfiguration. — Luke 9:28–36.
3. Sent to prepare for the Passover. — Luke 22:8.
4. At the Passover. — John 13:21–26.
5. In the garden of Gethsemane. — Mark 14:32–41.
6. At our Saviour's tomb. — John 20:2–10.
7. An evidence of their friendship. — John 21:20–23.
8. In the Temple at the hour of prayer. — Acts 3:1–5.
9. Their imprisonment. — Acts 4:1–4.
10. Defense before the council. — Acts 4:5–21.
11. Sent into Samaria. — Acts 8:14–17, 25.

## III. Peter and the other disciples.

1. As fishermen. — Luke 5:1–11; John 21:1–14.  
QUESTION. — How much time had elapsed between these two events?
2. Our Lord's appearance to them after His resurrection. — John 20:19–23, 24–29; 21:1–14.
3. Address at the choosing of Matthias to the apostleship. — Acts 1:15–26.
4. Address on the day of Pentecost. — Acts 2:14–40.
5. A remarkable answer to prayer. — Acts 4:23–33.
6. Their imprisonment and miraculous deliverance. — Acts 5:17–20.
7. Defense before the council. — Acts 5:25–40.
8. Peter's defense for preaching to the Gentiles. — Acts 11:1–18.
9. Peter delivered from prison by prayer. — Acts 12:5–19.
10. Address at the Jerusalem conference. — Acts 15:7–11.

## IV. Miracles.

1. The lame man healed. — Acts 3:3–10.
2. Aeneas restored to health. — Acts 9:32–35.
3. Dorcas raised to life. — Acts 9:36–42.

## V. Rebukes.

1. Ananias and Sapphira. — Acts 5:1–11.

2.Simon, the sorcerer. — Acts 8:18–23.

VI. Beginning of the work among the Gentiles. — Acts 10.

VII. Peter and Paul.

1. Paul's visit to Peter. — Galatians 1:18.

2. Peter censured. — Galatians 2:11–13.

3. Espouse a common cause at the Jerusalem conference. — Acts 15:1–12.

4. Peter's reference to Paul's writings. — 2 Peter 3:15–17.

VIII. From the life, writings, and public utterances of Peter, we learn, —

1. That a humble station in life is no barrier to lofty attainments in spiritual grace.

2. That education helps, but is not essential to effective Christian work.

3. That the power of the Holy Spirit is needed in Christian warfare.

4. That over-confidence is a dangerous besetting sin.

5. That the strength of man may, in an unguarded moment, be the means of his own downfall.

6. That it is dangerous to follow "afar off."

7. That prayer is mightier than the sword.

8. That God is no respecter of persons.

9. That true penitence brings pardon for the most grievous sins.

10. That God favors those who press forward in the work.

1. What was Peter's standing among the apostles?

2. What can you say of Peter's qualifications for leadership?

3. How does he compare in this respect with James? With Paul?

4. What characteristic of Peter portrayed his strength? His weakness?

5. Give a synopsis of his epistolary writings.

## LESSON 23.

### **The Sons of Zebedee.**

I. Joint history.

1. Their first call. — Matthew 4:21, 22; Mark 1:19, 20.

2. Ordained to the apostleship. — Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:14–17; Luke 6:13, 14.

3. Surnamed “Boanerges, or “sons of thunder.” — Mark 3:17.

NOTE. — The reason for this title according to some commentators, is the impetuous disposition which they manifested on several occasions.

4. At the raising of Jairus’ daughter. — Mark 5:37.

5. At the Transfiguration. — Matthew 17:1–9.

6. Their desire for revenge rebuked. — Luke 9:51–56.

7. Their ambition checked. — Matthew 20:20–28; Mark 10:35–45.

NOTE. — Two thoughts present themselves in connection with this event: (1) Responsible positions in Christian work should be made the occasion of humiliation and prayer rather than exaltation and pride; (2) good mothers some times have an undue pride in smart preacher-boys.

8. Their inquiry concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. — Mark 13:1–4.

9. In the garden of Gethsemane. — Matthew 26:37.

10. On and after the day of Ascension. — Acts 1:13.

II. James put to death by Herod. — Acts 12:2.

III. John.

1. The disciple whom Jesus loved. — John 13:23; 19:26.

2. Receives the custody of Mary, the mother of Jesus. — John 19: 26, 27.

3. [The events of his life connected with Peter are recorded in the life of that apostle.]

4. The author of the Book of John.

5. Subjects presented in his three epistles. — Love, sin, obedience, eternal life, faith, warning against false teachers and teaching, hatred, redemption, heresy, holiness, reward.

6. Visions on the isle of Patmos.

The Son of man.

Book with the seven seals opened.

God’s throne.

Opening of the seven seals.

Angels and trumpets.

Sounding of trumpets and accompanying events.

Judgment.

Heaven.

Mt Sion.

Victory of the Lamb.

The Resurrection.

The bottomless pit.

The great dragon.

Beasts.

The fall of Babylon.

The seven plagues.

John is said to be the only one of the twelve apostles who died a natural death. His greatest work was accomplished at a time of his life when prospects seemed most gloomy. God can use us to best advantage at a time when we feel that we have nothing upon which to lean but the arm of God.

1. Bible students think that James was the elder of the two sons of Zebedee. Give reasons for this supposition.
2. How do you account for the fact that the Book of John has so little in common with the other Gospels?
3. Compare the Gospel of John with his epistles.
4. What qualifications had John to make him the revelator?
5. Name the books of John in the order in which they were written.

## **Children's Book Reprint (Continued)**

### **Greasy the Robber**

Toward the close of the day the wanderers drew nigh to a small town situated on the banks of a river not far from the railroad. Turning into one of the streets, they asked the people. "Are there any believers?" A neat little house among the tall pines was pointed out to them. Nearing the place, they noticed two children

playing at the door of the house and in the yard a young, well-dressed lady, who was quite busy. She greeted them kindly, however. The men told her that they were believers and asked for lodging. The young woman led them graciously into the house, saying, "For the brethren in the Lord there will always be a

place.”

At that time she called her husband, who was working in the garden. He came at once, greeted the guests cordially, and conversed with them while his wife hastened to prepare the tea. Before the water in the samovar [Russian teakettle] came to a boil, she had milked two cows and set the table. What a feast: large pieces of fresh butter, cream, a large pitcher of rich milk, two or three kinds of cake, boiled eggs, and wonderful white bread. It was a quite a sight for the eyes of the hungry wanderers. The large lamp threw a bright light on the snow-white tablecloth, and the shining samovar hummed cheerfully.

The friendly lady of the house entered in her white embroidered apron and said to her husband, “Ask the brethren to come to the table.” They sat down to the well-laden table, and the head of the home asked the blessing. He thanked the Lord for His love and care and for the guests and asked Him to keep them in faith and bless the food. It was the first time in his life that Tichomirov had sat down to such a richly laden table amid so hospitable and kind a family. His heart overflowed with joy and delight. The children, a boy and a girl, also occupied places at the table

and listened attentively to the conversation.

Tichomirov, at the call to supper, had to stop relating the story of his experience at the point where the robbers in the thick woods began to read the New Testament that they had taken off the persons of the murdered travellers. At the request of the head of the house, Tichomirov continued his story. In vivid words he pictured how the gospel entered into his own and his comrade’s heart; how they regretted their evil deeds and decided to change their way of living and deliver themselves to justice, how the district attorney was converted; and how they were sentenced. Further he told them of his stay in the transfer prisons and of the years he spent in compulsory work until he received amnesty. The hosts could not take their eyes from the narrator, and the lady of the house often wiped the flowing tears from her cheeks as if she wanted to hide them from the others.

During this narration the time passed unnoticed until the large clock loudly announced the midnight hour: then they all knelt and thanked God for His wonderful grace in the salvation of the lost sinners. When the lady of the house arose, greatly moved, she said, “But where do you want

to go now?"

"We have determined to return to our former homes," answered Tichomirov.

"Do you still have relatives there?" she continued.

"Solojev still has a mother, who is a believer and lives in the government of Kiev. I have nobody — neither father nor mother. I am simply going to look up my childhood place, my home village in the government of Mogilev. First of all, however, I have the great desire to tell my countrymen of Christ and His love for them."

"Are you an orphan a long time already?" resumed the hostess.

"I lost my parents when I was eight years old, I lost them in Siberia on our migration trip. My father died two days before the passing away of my mother."

The lady grabbed the table with both hands and stood leaning forward, looking Tichomirov deep in the eyes. Her husband looked at her surprised, and could not understand the reason she questioned the guest so thoroughly instead of preparing the beds for the night Tichomirov continued. "We — my sister and

I — remained as orphans she was somewhat older than I. The day after the death of our mother I lost her out of sight. Up to this moment I do not know what has become of her. Surely she must have perished like so many orphan children of the immigrants, on account of the impossible living conditions, She was a good girl and cared for me as my own mother." At this point Tichomirov began to cry.

Pale as death, with tears streaming down her face, the hostess exclaimed, "Is it possible that it is you, my beloved brother. Pasha? Tell me quickly; my heart tells me it is you."

"Shura! Do my eyes really see you? You, my angel, my beloved!" he cried, weeping like a child.

"Yes, it is I: I am your sister; you, my beloved! How my heart cried out for you!" The brother and sister threw themselves into each other's arms, kissing and weeping. Then Tichomirov reached out for the children, who, crying, looked at the mother. Presently he kissed the children and the husband of his sister.

*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.  
(Philippians 4:6)*



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