**MINISTERIAL SPOUSES’ CURRICULUM GUIDE: LECTURES**

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**Lesson 15**

**Enriched Relationships**

**Slides 2 – 4**

God made a world full of people because He knew the importance of relationships. He knew that our physical and emotional health would be enhanced by healthy relationships**.**

**Slide 5**

1. **Friends.**

The Bible gives us several examples of friendships. **Slides 6, 7**

1. Biblical examples of friendship

Ruth and Naomi Ruth 1:14-18

David and Jonathan 1 Sam. 18: 1-3

Jesus and Mary, Martha and Lazarus John 11: 1-5

**Slide 8 THINK**

1. There are several factors that hinder lasting friendships.

**Slides 9, 10**

1. Hindrances to friendship
2. Lack of love for oneself. Luke 10:27. If we do not love ourselves, and regard ourselves as God’s unique creatures, what measure could we use to love others?
3. Smothering. Pro. 25:17. We need to leave spaces in our relationships. We must not be constantly spending time with our friends. They need some time by themselves.
4. Fear of relationships. Some have had bad experiences with friendships. This makes them afraid to make friends.
5. Competitiveness. 2 Cor. 10:12. The apostle, Paul, warns against this.
6. Lack of confidentiality James 3: 3-5; James 1:19; Pro. 25:11. This leads to lack of trust; and destroys friendships.
7. Insensitivity. Eph. 4:15; Gal. 6:2. Understanding and empathy are important ingredients in a friendship.
8. Fear of the past. Phil. 3: 13. We need to learn to forget.
9. Characteristics of a good friendship. **Slide 11**

True friendships have the following:

1. Commitment. Ruth 1 – 4. Ruth is a sterling example of this.
2. Love. 1 Cor. 13: 4-8. We should remind ourselves daily of these characteristics.
3. Support. James 5: 13-20. Good friends support each other.
4. Perseverance—“Hanging in there.” Pro. 17:17; 18: 24.
5. Affirmation. Num. 6: 22-27. This cements friendships.

f. Truthfulness. Pro. 27:6. This is the foundation of a good relationship.

g. Godly influence. Pro. 27: 17-19; Phil. 4:8. We should always consider the impact of a Godly influence.

h. Forgiving spirit. Rom. 7: 21; 8:5; Eph. 2: 1-10; Col. 3: 12,13. Jesus stresses this.

1. **Family. Slide 12**
2. The purpose of family
3. To provide a loving, caring environment
4. To train and nurture
5. To give support
6. To protect
7. Getting along with the family
8. Our children
9. Our parents
10. Our in-laws
11. God’s regard for family **Slides 13, 14**

The family was God’s idea. He made it.

1. God’s creation of the family
2. A refuge for the lonely Ps. 68:6
3. Elijah’s message
   1. Malachi 4:5,6
   2. A message of family restoration and heart turning
4. **Neighbors. Slides 15-17**

Jesus gave a graphic illustration of a neighbor. Luke 10: 25-27.

1. Show our neighbors what we believe.
2. Snatch opportunities to be a good neighbor.
3. Make an effort to remember their special dates. (birthdays, etc.)
4. Share recipes, household tips, and flowers or vegetables from our garden.
5. Have a generous heart.
6. Celebrate with them.
7. Sympathize with them in their losses.
8. Give them space.
9. Accept and respect their being different.
10. Smile with them.

Remember that Jesus is counting on us to be good neighbors.

1. **Professional Relationships. Slides 18-21**
2. Our performance Pro. 22: 29
3. Honesty Pro. 11:1; 12: 22; 12: 19
4. Integrity Pro. 28: 6; Job 27: 5, 6

“The greatest want in the world is the want of men who will not be bought or sold . . . who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.”

1. Excellence Pro. 20: 12; 22: 29
2. Respect Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6: 9
3. Team work 1 Cor. 12 14 – 22, 27
4. The Golden Rule Matt. 7:12
5. **Dangerous Relationships. Slides 22-24**

God warns us about the types of relationships we need to avoid. God’s love in our hearts will not permit us to hate them. They are included in His grace.

1. Women or men who chat too much. Persons who talk a lot, do not have time to think before they speak.
2. Designing men or women. There are those who are in the habit of scheming and plotting. Often they are manipulative and seek only their own goals.
3. Clinging vines. These are a drain on our emotions. It helps if we could spot them easily and set up some barriers.
4. **Handling unhealthy relationships.**
5. Focus on God’s plans for you. 1 Sam. 25; Jer. 29:11
6. Ask for appropriate help. James 1: 5.
7. Be alert and perceptive. Matt. 10: 16.
8. Remember that evil connections mar our relationship with God

Pro. 4: 14; 15.

1. **Mending Broken Relationships. Slide 25**

As Christians, we should make every effort to mend broken relationships. There are health and emotional benefits that can be derived.

1. Handling conflict (Pro. 15: 18; 16: 32; 19: 11; 27: 4; Eccl. 7: 9; Eph. 4: 26, 27; Col. 3:8). Conflict is inevitable. A willingness to handle conflict properly is crucial.
2. Admit there is a conflict.
3. Identify the source of the conflict.
4. Communicate in love and respect.
5. Control your anger.
6. **Dealing with Anger.**  **Slide 26**
7. Admit that you are angry.
8. Verbalize your anger
9. Determine if you have a right to be angry.
10. Find out which is the most appropriate way for you to handle your anger.
11. Deal with the root cause. **Slide 27**
12. Explore problem-solving solutions.
13. Seek professional counseling if necessary.
14. Work on solutions.
15. Pray earnestly about the conflict.
16. **Mending Broken Relationships. Slides 28-30**

It is important for us to try to mend a broken relationship. Sometimes our best efforts fail, however God knows our hearts.

1. Release the grudges. Lev. 19:17, 18.
2. Avoid making a public scene about the conflict.
3. Examine your contribution to the problem. Luke 6: 37 – 42.
4. Forgiveness
5. Carefully process the wrong done.
6. Evaluate the pain and anger.
7. Release the pain and anger to God. 1 Peter 5:7
8. Think of what Jesus would do. Phil.2:5
9. Be willing to forgive as Christ forgave. Eph. 4:32
10. Pray for the offender.
11. Forgive the offender. Luke 23; 34
12. Be willing to forgive yourself. Phil. 3: 12-14

Forgiveness is not always easy but it is always beneficial. Our health improves. We have the assurance of God’s forgiveness. We enjoy the peace from the joy of a restored relationship.

**CONCLUSION Slide 31, 32**

Jesus understands about our relationships. If we seek His wisdom, He will guide us and keep us. The nature of our relationships will determine our happiness. Our heavenly Father wants us to be happy. He is forgiving, loving and merciful. If we turn our relationships over to Him, He will enrich our lives.