

Loving Relationships In The Kingdom of God

Loving relationships in the Kingdom of God:

1. The Kingdom of God is the realm (dominion) in which Jesus Christ is fully obeyed as King. (Lk. 6:46; Matt. 6:33)
2. In the Kingdom, God's will is done God's way by God's Spirit for God's glory. (Lk 22:42)
3. Those who are born again, filled, empowered and led by the Holy Spirit as sons of God, are also citizens of a heavenly kingdom. (Phil 3:20; Eph. 2:19-22)
4. Sons-citizens in the kingdom of God absorb the values, motives, and practices of their King.
5. As sons and citizens, we treat others the way God wants us to treat them. The kingdom has an entirely different "operating system" than the world. (Ro. 12:9-21; Eph.4:20-6:9)
6. We are first and foremost "sons of God" in a kingdom "family" and citizens in a Kingdom "nation". Therefore, our carnal false selves, along with our earthly identities and dysfunctional ways of relating, must be systematically eliminated. (Eph. 1:5; Ro. 8:29-30)
7. We must help each other learn the ways of love, unity, and communication as sons and citizens in God's kingdom. What are kingdom manners? What is kingdom etiquette? How do sons and citizens in the kingdom treat themselves and other people? How is love practiced in the kingdom of God? The kingdom of God is both now and not yet fully manifested. How can we determine if we are relating to others according to the ways of the kingdom? (Ro. 14:17)

The Importance of Loving relationships In God's Kingdom:

1. God is a Father & Son and builds His kingdom through loving relationships.
2. Loving God and loving ourselves and loving our neighbors are the greatest commandments. (Mk. 12:30-31) How we love others reveals how we love God. (1 Jn.4:7-21)
3. We will be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ based on how well we have loved. (2 Cor. 5:9-10)

The Essentials For Loving Others:

1. It starts with receiving from and giving love to... Jesus. Love from and to Jesus is the Source and the Motivation for loving others. Jesus is the way to the Father – our Source of Love. Jesus continually reveals the Father. (1 Jn. 4:19)
2. Following Jesus involves denying ourselves and picking up our cross daily – a way of defining the cost of love. By losing our lives, we gain our lives. (Lk. 9:23)
 - a. Dying to self. (Gal. 5:24; 1 Cor. 15:31)
 - b. Forgiving Others (Matt. 6:12, 18:21-35)
3. Resign from playing God.
 - a. Do not judge. (Matt. 7:1-5)
 - b. Do not accuse, slander or gossip. (Eph. 4:29; Titus 3:2; Lev. 19:16)
 - c. Total forgiveness.
4. Communication
 - a. Listen to their mind and heart. Make eye contact. Care as much for them as for yourself.
 - b. Be empathetic. Put yourself in their shoes.
 - c. Be compassionate and merciful. You don't know what they have been through.
 - d. Ask questions from a caring heart.
 - e. Cultivate Father's heart. Think the best. Desire the best. (1 Cor. 13)
5. Conflict resolution
 - a. Pray and get right before God. Operate in humility, mercy, and gentleness.

- b. Go straight to the person. Do not triangulate.
 - c. Be kind and humble. Do not assume you are right.
 - d. Describe behavior and how the behavior affected you.
 - e. Make a godly appeal. Gently invite people to the highest life through Christ. Call them up. Be sure to humbly include yourself in the appeal.
 - f. Speak for yourself and not others. Use language like "I feel" versus accusations like "You are a _____, You did this _____"
 - g. Take responsibility for your contribution to the conflict or misunderstanding.
 - h. If the person is caught in sin, focus on positive and gentle restoration. (Gal.6:1)
 - i. Always build clear and positive pathways for trust to be restored.
 - j. Remember the law of sowing and reaping. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." (Luke 6:31; Gal. 6:7-9)
6. Learn how to maintain clear relational boundaries. True love does not foster co-dependency. It does not improperly assume responsibility for someone else.
- a. "In the physical world, boundaries are easy to see. Fences, signs, walls... In their differing appearances, they give the same message: This Is Where My Property Begins. The owner of the property is legally responsible for what happens on his or her property. Non-owners are not responsible for the property. Physical boundaries mark a visible property line that someone holds the deed to. In the spiritual world, boundaries are just as real, but often harder to see. Proper understanding of boundaries can help you define your intangible boundaries and to recognize them as an everpresent reality that can increase your love and save your life. In reality, these boundaries define your soul, and they help you to guard it and maintain it (Prov. 4:23). Boundaries define us. They define what is me and what is not me. A boundary shows me where I end and someone else begins, leading me to a sense of ownership. Knowing what I am to own and take responsibility for gives me freedom. Taking responsibility for my life opens up many different options. However, if I do not "own" my life, my choices and options become very limited. Boundaries are anything that helps to differentiate you from someone else, or shows where you begin and end." (Excerpts taken from "Boundaries" by Henry Cloud)
7. Practice inner-healing and deliverance. Wounded people wound people. Abused people can become abusers. Healthy, loved people usually are the ones who have an overflow of love for others.

Recommended Reading:

"Changes That Heal" by Dr. Henry Cloud
 "Boundaries" by Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend
 "Agape Road" by Bob Mumford
 "Prayers That Heal The Heart" by Mark & Patti Virkler
 "Total Forgiveness" by R T Kendall
 "How to Stop the Pain" by James Richards