

Sermon Series: Wisdom for All—Lord of Life Lutheran Church—1/14/2001

Title: Wisdom for Relationships

Text: Prov. 23: 22-25 & 27: 5-6

Introduction: *Illus.: No Time for relationships*

Theme: Often our relationships are taken for granted, disparaged, or discounted; yet, if we are made wise through our relationship to Christ, we will invest a lot of effort into building strong relationships around the foundational, biblical principles which will make them a lasting blessing.

Our relationships within the home

- **Print and read Proverbs 23: 22-25**
- **Respect is earned with hard work but love must be freely given (vs. 22)**
 - A. **Respect is earned when humbleness rules your spirit**
 1. Being a son or daughter requires respect for God's accumulated wisdom standing before you in your parents (23)
 - **ILLUS.: MISPERCEPTION OF AGE**
 - Respect is earned from your parents when they see that Godly, humble heart
 2. Christian parenting requires respect of the divinely-given, awesome responsibility clothed in fallible human flesh
 - **ILL.: DISCIPLINE'S DISADVANTAGE**
 - Respect is given by your children when they see that Godly, humble heart
 - B. **Love must be freely given if we are to understand and receive the Heavenly Father's love to us**
 1. *For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. Matthew 6:14-15*
- **The goal of family relationships is to be each other's joy in the Lord (vs. 24-25)**
 - A. Find joy in and celebrate the fruit of the Spirit's wisdom is displayed in parent/child
 - B. **Be the cause of each other's joy**
 1. *Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. Col. 3:20-21*

Our relationships with friends

- **Choose your friends wisely**
 - A. **Scriptures wisdom for choosing your friends**
 1. *A man of many friends come to ruin and there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Proverbs 18: 24*
 2. *A friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity. Proverbs 17: 17*
 - B. **God's purpose for your friends is to be your spiritual gate keepers**
 1. **ILLUS.: PAUL, BARNABAS, AND TIMOTHY FRIENDS**
- **Covenant to be accountable and responsible for one-another**
 - A. **Setting up an honest and transparent relationship**
 1. Developing a **trust** around the forgiveness of Jesus
 - **ILLUS.: FORGIVENESS IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM**
 2. Developing an **understanding** of each other through praying together
 - **ILLUS.: I would rather be disagreed with by someone who understands me, than to be agreed with by someone who does not understand me.**
 3. Developing a **bold love** through humbleness and servanthood modeled after Christ
 - *"Speaking the truth in love." Ephesians 4: 15*
 - B. **Agreeing to come clean with each—without exception**
 1. *Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed." James 5:16*
 2. The authority of the Office of the Keys is given to each believer to practice with one another
 3. *Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins they are forgiven. If you refuse to forgive them they are unforgiven. John 20: 23*
- **Understanding the true friendship love often takes unexpected forms**
 - A. **Tough love is built upon the foundation of unconditional trust**
 1. *Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy. Proverbs 27: 5-6*
 - B. **Tough love is practiced by best of friends**
 1. **ILL.: "I KNEW YOU WOULD COME"—BEST FRIENDS**

No Time for Relationships

In his book *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putman says the following statistics are indicators of the decline in community life in America over the past 25 years: Attending club meetings: down 58% Family dinners: down 33% Having friends over: down 45%

Misperceptions about Age

At church one day, our young but outgoing daughter, Summer, seated herself on eighty-four-year-old Miss Zelda's lap. After tenderly eyeing the senior's soft, wrinkly neck, Summer asked, "Can you swallow?"

Discipline Disadvantage

My father would not have been particularly interested in a book about fathering, although he did like to read. One day when he was reading in the living room, my brother and I decided we could play basketball without breaking anything. When I took a shot that redesigned the glass table, my mother came in with a stick and said, "So help me, I'll bust you in half." Without lifting his head from his book, my father said, "Why would you want twice as many?" [Bill Cosby](#).

Paul, Barnabas, and Timothy

Every man should seek to have three individuals in his life: a Paul, a Barnabas, and a Timothy. A Paul is an older man who is willing to mentor you, to build into your life. Not someone who's smarter or more gifted than you, but somebody who's been down the road. Somebody willing to share his strengths and weaknesses--everything he's learned in the laboratory of life. Somebody whose faith you'll want to imitate. A Barnabas is a soul brother, somebody who loves you but is not impressed by you. Somebody to whom you can be accountable. Somebody who's willing to keep you honest, who's willing to say, "Hey, man, you're neglecting your wife, and don't give me any guff!" A Timothy is a younger man into whose life you are building. For a model, read 1 and 2 Timothy. Here was Paul, the quintessential mentor, building into the life of his protege--affirming, encouraging, teaching, correcting, directing, praying.

Forgiveness is the Beginning of Wisdom in a Relationship

Forgiveness isn't pretending nothing has happened, or pretending that what happened didn't hurt. It isn't even forgetting it completely, and it isn't going back and starting over as though it hadn't ever happened. Instead, forgiveness is refusing to let anything permanently destroy the relationship. There's a place for saying, "I'm sorry." There's a place for assuring the other person that "all is forgiven." But the goal of both is to rebuild the relationship. One of the amazing things about a healthy beginning again is that the relationship is often stronger than it was before

[Proverbs 23:22-25](#)

[22] Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

[23] Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding.

[24] The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him.

[25] May your father and mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice!