

The Power of Godly Friendships

Do you remember when Jesus talked about a demon leaving a man? He said that when the devil leaves, he roams the earth to find some friends and then brings seven demons worse (stronger) than him to occupy that man again.

Isn't that amazing? The devil will roam the earth to find seven strong friends to overcome a situation, but Christians will hardly roam a street block to find strong relationships to help them overcome their situations!

It's time we rise up, saints. The devil wants to divide us so he can conquer us. He stops at no length to destroy our relationships with God, with our spouses, with our kids, and with our pastors or churches.

The most meaningful relationships in our lives are often the hardest ones to maintain, but if we learn to do so, we will tap into a power rarely seen in this earth. Jesus put it this way: "If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven" (Matt. 18:19).

Notice, the Father loves our agreement so much that He'll give us anything for it—that's powerful!

The purpose of marriage or any godly relationship is to produce power. When two people are in agreement about what they believe for, nothing will be impossible for them.

The Christian life is often a lonely life. We see betrayals and competitions, people feeling used or disposed of for someone else's gain—and it doesn't happen only in the world! It's in the church, and it hasn't crept in—it has stormed in, designed by the devil to keep us powerless.

Look at what God said in Genesis 11:6 when the people were of one mind and heart: "Nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them." That's the power of relationships, or, better said, that's the power that God wants in our relationships.

Not only do I want to show you how to walk in this kind of power, but I want to offer myself to you—to join myself with you in producing that sort of power. It's called a covenant relationship. It's not just me sending you tapes and you sending a monthly gift. It's us joining together to release God's unlimited power and blessing in every area of our lives.

But first, let me show you what it takes to have power-filled relationships in your life:

1. First of all, we must understand the purpose of the relationship.

As with anything, when the purpose of a thing is not understood, that's when you will abuse that thing. (An example of this is money. People abuse money when they don't understand its purpose.) I have found that the purpose of a relationship is to create a power or a strength that was not there before.

As I mentioned earlier, Jesus said if two shall agree, they can ask anything, and it shall be done for them. So the purpose of a relationship is to create an agreement that releases power in our lives—the power to receive anything!

Can you see why the devil works so hard at destroying or damaging your relationships?

Why does he divide people through offense, divorce, jealousy, strife, bitterness and so many other forces? Because he wants to keep them from walking in the agreement that produces the supernatural power we're talking about.

2. We must get rid of all strife and unforgiveness in our lives.

When we are offended at somebody, we prevent the flow of power that comes from our agreement. We also open the door to a root of bitterness in our heart, which hinders our ability to hear from God and, again, prevents God's power from flowing in our lives. In Mark 11:25, Jesus said, "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."

Forgiveness is one of the most important ingredients in relationships. People fall short; people hurt us; people mistreat us. We must forgive them.

3. Lower your expectations of people, and raise your expectation of God.

One of the main reasons we have problems in our relationships is that we put too much dependence on people coming through for us or providing something for us. If you allow that to happen, then it puts too much power in other people's hands. They can then control your emotions, your happiness and your decisions with that power. If someone disappoints you or lets you down, it can hurt really badly. But if you put your trust in God coming through for you, rather than people, you can eliminate the disappointment and hurt.

We have it backwards. We believe too much of what people say and not enough of what God says. Change that, and you will find yourself freer and happier than you have been in years.

4. Understand the secrets to effective communication.

Follow this process:

A. In order to have a powerful relationship, you must have clear and effective communication.

B. In order to have great communication, you must have understanding. One of the biggest problems in our relationships is feeling misunderstood. You want someone to understand you, understand where you are coming from and not judge your motives or intentions, right?

C. Well, in order to be understood, the other party needs to listen. If they aren't listening, they'll never understand you. If they're already thinking about what they're going to say while you are talking, they will not understand you.

I want to encourage you: If you need a harvest of someone listening to you, sow the seed by becoming a listener. The most successful parents, teachers and salesmen are those who learned to listen. This is our seed-listening. Our harvest will be that others listen to us; they will understand us; we will build a great relationship.

D. Now, you will not listen to someone you don't respect, so the next key here is respect. How do you gain or give respect? Very simple. You must trust. This is very hard when you have been lied to or lied about. But if you are to have the building block of respect, it must be built on trust. Broken trust produces broken relationships, and broken trust is the result of broken promises.

E. Therefore, the final ingredient, which, in essence, is the first ingredient, is integrity. To have a great relationship, there must be truth in that relationship. Broken relationships, broken marriages and broken people are the result of broken promises.

So let's put it together:

- When a person has integrity (keeps their word), you can trust them.
- When you trust them, you can respect them.
- When you respect them, you will listen to them.
- When you listen, you will understand them.

- When you understand them, you will have great communication.
- And when you have great communication, you can come into agreement with them.

When you come into agreement with them, you can ask for anything, and it will be done for you (Matt. 18:19).

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