

Overcoming the Obstacles to Healthy Relationships

1) Genesis 2:18 NKJV: ¹⁸ And the Lord God said, “*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.*”

2) Psalm 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity!

3) 1John4:11 – 12: ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.

a. Does God’s Word say that relationships are important?

b. What does it mean to dwell in unity, and what is necessary to allow that unity to be good and pleasant?

c. How do we find the ability to love others, and what fosters God’s abiding with us?

4) Recent social research is uncovering what the Bible says about the importance of relationships and even the common obstacles to these relationships being healthy.

a. Dr. Brené Brown is a research professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work. She has spent the past twelve years studying vulnerability, courage, worthiness, and shame.

b. Quotes from Dr. Brown’s research:

1. Connections (relationships) are why we are here.

2. Shame and fear unravel connection.

3. A sense of not being enough hurts the ability to connect.

4. The need to control and predict limit connection.

5. Vulnerability fosters our ability to have healthy relationships.

6. People who are very good at relationships have a sense of worthiness.

7. Connectors believe that they are worthy of love and belonging.

8. Connectors are whole-hearted and have the courage to tell the story of who they really are.

5) Genesis 1:26 - 27: ²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

a. Why did God make man male and female in one before he made woman?

6) Genesis 3:1 – 13

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. ⁸ And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the

Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, “Where *are* you?” ¹⁰ So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

¹¹ And He said, “Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?” ¹² Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ And the Lord God said to the woman, “What *is* this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

- a. How did the serpent get woman to wonder if God was holding something back from her?
- b. Did the serpent tempt woman with what she already had? How does that happen to us today?
- c. Why did woman eat of the tree of good and evil? Why did man eat?
- d. What do you think having their eyes open and seeing their nakedness mean?
- e. How do we know that they felt shame? What does covering with fig leaves and hiding among the trees mean to us?
- f. Why was Adam afraid? How did he and the woman respond?

7) 1Corinthians 6:19 – 20: ¹⁹ What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

- a. Human understanding tells us to grow our sense of worthiness. However, how are we to do this, especially since deep down we know that we are flawed?
- b. See Colossians 1:9 – 13
- c. Worthy: Greek (axios) drawing down the scale – weighing as much as is valued. What does this say about knowing our true worth?