

## Relating to God and man

Cause and effect is a law of science initiated by God. However He is the cause that effects our lives in every way. Before we can relate to people in appropriate ways we need to relate to God and understand His ways. When we put the cart before the horse we find ourselves not doing things right. We mess up and find ourselves needing to undo mistakes in our lives because of not doing things God's way in the first place.

We assume that we're going to get a promotion and then celebrate but then find out that we didn't get it.

We find a large sum of money in our bank account that appeared for no reason and start spending it then receive a phone call from the bank to say that it was a mistaken deposit and that the money needs to be returned.

We judge someone for being late for a meeting then find out that he was involved in an accident and is in hospital.

Before we relate to the world we need to relate to God to put the horse before the cart – to do things the right way.

Colossians 4: 2 – 18

### 1) Relating to God

- Devoting ourselves to prayer allows us to enter into His presence and connecting with God in a real and personal way.
- Devoting doesn't mean a quick ritualistic prayer to say that you've fulfilled your religious duty. Rather it means a commitment to prayer because ultimately you're committed to God and desire to meet with Him regularly and to hear his will and heart so that we can fulfil His desire for our lives.
- The word for "devoting" shows how serious the first church in Jerusalem was towards God as it's used 4 times
  - Acts 1: 14 They all joined together **constantly** in prayer
  - Acts 2: 42 They **devoted** themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
  - Acts 2: 46 Every day they **continued** to meet together in the temple courts.
  - Acts 6: 4 ...,and will give our **attention** to prayer and the ministry of the word."
- Prayer also makes us watchful.
  - Jesus told us to watch and pray that we don't fall into temptation. (Matthew 26: 41)
  - Watchful also means to be vigilant – be alert to dangers that surround us
- Prayer instils within us an attitude of gratitude.
  - We are constantly reminded that all we have comes from Him and we ought to be grateful for all things in all circumstances.
- Pray for the way we relate to others
  - Pray for God given opportunities in the world
  - Pray for wisdom how to share the Gospel with people we meet
  - Pray for boldness to be witnesses for Christ.
  - Pray that relate to people in the church and the world in the spirit of Christ – the heart of God

### 2) Relating to people

- Be wise the way you act towards outsiders – walk – live – lives of wisdom when relating to people who are outside the faith.

- It isn't a once off action, or even an action that we need to consciously do every time we meet someone who isn't a believer. It's a lifestyle that should be part of our character that doesn't change.
- In other words we should be living lives that will remain constant whether we are with others or not and still glorify God.
- This kind of consistency in wise living comes from spending much time with God and in His Word.
- Make the most of every opportunity – redeem the time
  - This literally means buying back the time
  - We can so often waste time and waste God given opportunities that come our way by not being God focused.
  - When we are with unbelievers we need to be listening to what they're saying so that we can take the opportunities that God opens up to share something of eternal significance with them.
  - How often we miss those opportunities because we're so focused on politics, crime, issues of one sort or another, etc.
  - We need to be wise in our use of time to use it effectively for God's glory whatever we're doing and wherever we may be.
- Let your conversation be full of grace and seasoned with salt
  - Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ
  - Let the same grace come through us in the way we speak to others.
  - It's easy to be judgmental, argumentative, and negative.
  - Even if someone is that to you don't respond in the same way as that just makes you the same as them. A gentle answer turns away wrath.
  - We might not always know how to answer someone as far as the correct answer is concerned but we should always know how to answer people as far as answering with grace and seasoned with salt is concerned. An answer that is tasteful although contrary to what the person wants to hear.

### **3) God remains the same but people are different**

- Paul ends off the letter to the church at Colosse by giving greetings to various believers as well as referring to some believers.
- We will notice that they are all different and referred to differently.
- Although God is unchangeable and is the same yesterday, today and forever people are all different and we relate to people differently
- God relates to people differently and people relate to God differently.
- Although God has made us all in His image and likeness and He is unchangeable He has made each of us unique and we should never expect someone else to relate to God in the same way we do.
  - Tychicus is a dear brother, a faithful minister and a fellow servant
  - Onesimus is also referred to as a faithful and dear brother. He was Philemon's ex-slave.
  - Aristarchus was a fellow prisoner
  - Mark, who Paul had a fallout with, is also mentioned so they had obviously reconciled their relationship
  - Luke is mentioned as being a doctor.
- When we relate to people in the church or in the world we need to be open minded and see them as God sees them with all their differences and treat them with grace, our words being seasoned with salt, to make a positive difference in their lives as they see Christ in the way we treat them.