

An experiential relationship

A story is told that some years ago it was noticed that the delivery boys in an area of London were all whistling out of tune. It was discovered that the bells of Westminster were off pitch and the boys had unconsciously copied them. Being out of fellowship with the father will affect all of our other *relationships*. (Source Unknown).

1 John 1: 1 – 4

1) A real encounter with the real Christ

- We live in a time of shallow, and even fake, relationships.
- People often make friends with others for what they can get out of it and not for the relationship itself. It's a self centered approach to people.
 - The attitude isn't what I can give to the other person for their benefit, but what do I get out of this?
 - This type of relationship always remains on the surface level and never gets to the heart level of what really matters in each other's lives.
- Steven Kessler states that there are 6 levels of relationship:
 - Acquaintance – don't really know each other. Just bump into each other in daily life.
 - Jesus had many acquaintances that followed him out of interest or wanting to get something from him.
 - Companionship – focussed on a common activity
 - There were some companions who followed Jesus, such as Mark and some ladies.
 - Friendship – the person is more important than the activity.
 - Jesus chose his twelve disciples who he called friends.
 - Committed friendship – a commitment to each other because you want to spend time together.
 - Peter, James and John were the three who Jesus did more with than the others.
 - Primary friendship – your best friend.
 - John was the disciple who Jesus loved.
 - Life partner – this is reserved for the person you're going to marry or married to.
 - Jesus intends that we have a life commitment to him and we'll all feast at the marriage feast of the Lamb and we, His church, are his bride.
- Jesus' disciples saw him with their eyes and touched him with their hands.
 - They had a real encounter with the real Jesus
- We can have various opinions about who Jesus was and is, we can have our ideologies concerning him and philosophise about him. None of this pleases him because He wants us to come and have a real relationship with him.
 - We may not be able to physically see him or touch him, but he is still as real today as he was when physically walked with his disciples.
- We can only testify about something or someone that is real.
 - If anyone testifies in court the lawyers scrutinise their testimony to make sure that it's real. If it isn't real the testimony isn't accepted as valid and is thrown out.
 - Jesus is the real Word of life to which we testify that He was with the Father and appeared to us.
 - John 1: 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - John 1: 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

2) Fellowship based on truth

- Many relationships are based on emotion – how we feel about the other person. Emotions aren't bad as an emotionless relationship is a dead relationship.
- However, the problem with relationships being based on emotions is that emotions are fickle. Our emotions change according to the situations and circumstances.
 - Jeremiah 17: 9 The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?
 - This is the reason that we shouldn't follow our hearts as we are so often advised to do nowadays.
- The modern philosophy of the world is "if it feels good do it". This often gets us into trouble as our feelings often run beyond what is right.
 - Young people so often confuse infatuation with love.
 - Infatuation is the warm fuzzy feeling about someone without any sense of commitment to the person at all.
- Our relationship with the Lord and with each other needs to be based on truth and supplemented with emotions, not vice versa.
- How is a relationship based on truth?
 - Be truthful of who we are. Jesus was the Word who became flesh. He was, and always has been, God, but he took on human form and lived amongst us.
 - Many people have the wrong idea of who Jesus is and so have a wrong relationship with him.
- Matthew 16: 13 – 17 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven."
 - Jesus none of who people thought he was, but Peter knew the truth and based his relationship on that truth.
 - The truth of Jesus is revealed by God.
- If we have the wrong idea about who Jesus, or anyone else is, our relationship will be based on a lie and will not be a strong lasting relationship.

3) A joyful relationship

- True relationships bring us together because they are open and nothing is hidden.
- Such relationships enrich one another's lives and so fill us with joy.
 - John 15: 9 – 11 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.
- True relationships are always joyful relationships as they are based on the truth of each person and the appropriate love for each person.
- False relationships don't, and can't, have that same joy as there isn't the same trust and depth of love.
- Let us know and understand who Jesus is and learn to love him in truth.
- Let us know and understand one another and learn to love one another in truth.