

PETE BUMGARNER MINISTRIES

**A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION
FOUNDED OCTOBER, 1984**

VERTICAL & HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIPS STUDY GUIDE



VERTICAL & HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIPS

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 3:7-21

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

THEME

Relationships are vital to man, yet they seem to be more unstable than ever before. We must realize that our relationship with God directly affects our relationship with people. Vertical and horizontal relationships are critical and unavoidable; consequently, we must develop in our relationship with God, which will enhance our relationships with people. We must guard and protect our relationships in the home, in the church, on the job, and in the marketplace by becoming more intimate with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Relationships are necessary and unavoidable; therefore, we need a better understanding of relationships.
- B. We can place all relationships into two major categories, vertical and horizontal.
- C. The vertical relationship is the relationship between God and man.
- D. The horizontal relationship is the relationship between man and man.
- E. The vertical relationship must precede the horizontal relationship; otherwise, the horizontal relationships will be jeopardized.
- F. Never in the history of mankind have we seen or heard of so much unrest and discontentment in relationships.
- G. Relationships are so unstable that trust is almost a thing of the past.
- H. Successful relationships require both time and effort.
- I. The most important relationship man will ever encounter is his relationship with God.

II. THE VERTICAL RELATIONSHIP

- A. Vertical is a position perpendicular to the plane of the horizon, which simply means straight up and down.
- B. God is in heaven and we are on earth; consequently, our communication with God is vertical or upward.
- C. The vertical relationship is probably the most neglected relationship on earth, yet it is the most vital relationship because it produces eternal results.
- D. The vertical relationship grants us access into a world not seen with the physical eyes, yet it is a world more powerful than the natural world in which we live.
 - 1. Man has been exposed to two worlds, the spiritual kingdom and the physical kingdom.

- a. The man who is captivated by the physical world will not be controlled by the spiritual world.
 - b. The man who is captivated by the spiritual world will not be controlled by the physical world.
 - c. God has given us accessibility to Him, but it is through the spiritual world; consequently, one who walks in the physical realm will never develop a relationship with God.
2. Mark 8:1-21 is an excellent example of exposure to the two worlds and failure to realize the spiritual because of the captivation of the physical.
- a. Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes, thereby revealing the spiritual world and its power over the physical world.
 - b. The disciples were so engrossed with the physical world that they soon forgot the spiritual world and concerned themselves with the fact that they had forgotten to buy bread, not realizing that Jesus had fed them when He fed the multitudes.
 - c. Jesus reprimanded the disciples and reminded them of the spiritual world and the need to remain spiritually alert.
 - d. Matthew 4:4 reveals the need for dependance upon the Word of God to provide the sustenance we need for daily living.
3. Intimacy with God causes the spiritual world to become more real than the physical world.
- E. God must always be the number one priority in our lives.
- 1. Our relationship with God is more important than our relationship with our mate or our children.
 - a. We are God's creation and, through the blood of Jesus, we have been purchased by God, thereby becoming God's property.

- b. When man's relationship with God is right, his relationship with his mate and children will be right.
2. The eternal must always take precedence over the temporary.

III. MAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- A. God is the Creator and man is the creature; we must never lose sight of this fact.
 1. It is not man's place nor does man have the right to question the actions and motives of God. (Romans 9:20-21)
 2. The creature must always remain submitted to the Creator, realizing that the maker of something is greater than the thing made.
 3. The ultimate goal of the creature should be to become more and more intimate with the Creator.
- B. **Where God resides** should be more important to us than **what God does**.
 1. God's person is more important than His acts.
 2. In John 1:38-39, Jesus asked two of John's disciples what they sought; their reply was, "Where do you dwell?" Jesus invited them to come and see. They followed Him.
 3. It seems that we have been seeking everything except God's dwelling.
 4. If we do not know where God is dwelling, how can we abide in His presence?
 5. Another important fact that we must be aware of is the fact that God does not always reside in the spectacular things. (I Kings 19:11-13)
 - a. In this passage of scripture the wind, earthquake, and fire were spectacular events, but God was not in them.
 - b. The still small voice, which was little more than a whisper, revealed the dwelling place of God.

- C. Intimacy precedes impact; therefore, relationship is more important than ministry.
 - 1. Our passion should be for Jesus, not ministry.
 - 2. Ministry is the outflow of relationship.
 - 3. Our person is also more important than our acts.
 - 4. God has called us to obedience, not performance. (I Samuel 15:22)

- D. We must know Jesus by the spirit, not by the form.
 - 1. Jesus was not recognized by His physical appearance after His resurrection. (Luke 24:13-35)
 - a. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus by His physical form.
 - b. Neither did these disciples recognize Jesus through the exposition of the Word.
 - c. When Jesus was brought into the dwelling place of these disciples (to reside with them), He broke bread with them, and they recognized Him.
 - 2. In II Corinthians 5:16, Paul emphasizes the importance of knowing Jesus by the spirit rather than by the flesh.

- E. Christ must be formed in us; we have been trying to form Christ outside of us by forming Christ aside from us. (Galatians 4:19)
 - 1. We are required to die to the self-life, that Christ might live in us. (Matthew 16:24-25; Galatians 2:20)
 - 2. Enoch walked with God and was not; we, too, must disappear so that Christ can appear in us.
 - 3. Many people are looking for religion without a cross.
 - 4. Many are trying to form Christ through good works, while refusing to change their lifestyle.
 - 5. If Christ is not being formed in us, we do not have a relationship with God.

- F. Relationship with God begins at new birth, but we must constantly give attention to developing this relationship.
 - 1. The new birth is only the beginning or the embryo stage of our relationship with God.
 - 2. Remember! Christ must be **formed** in us. (Galatians 4:19)
- G. The only way to develop our vertical relationship is to spend time alone with God.
 - 1. We must daily set aside a period of time to read the Word of God, which is the will of God.
 - 2. We must also set aside time for uninterrupted prayer, which is communication with God. Then, in the “interrupted” routine of daily life, we can remain in an attitude of prayer by constantly communicating with our Father.

IV. THE HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIP

- A. Horizontal is parallel to the plane of the horizon, which simply means from left to right or from side to side.
- B. Since horizontal means from side to side, we understand that horizontal relationships are those involving people with whom we meet and associate.
- C. Horizontal relationships are very important, but we must remember that horizontal relationships are directly affected by the vertical relationship.
- D. Although horizontal relationships are temporary, they, too, can produce eternal results.
- E. We tend to relate horizontal relationships, which is man to man, to physical relationships, but God desires our horizontal relationships to be spiritual relationships. (II Corinthians 5:16)
- F. The horizontal relationships will be the best when we die to self, put God first, and others second.

V. MAN’S RELATIONSHIP WITH MAN

- A. In Romans 12:10, we are taught to prefer one another.

1. The Adamic (human) nature tends to prefer self; God's nature prefers others.
 2. Our relationships must be free from every type of prejudice.
 3. Without the vertical relationship with God, we cannot have successful and fruitful relationships with one another.
 - a. Naturally speaking, even sinners have successful and fruitful relationships, but we are not speaking naturally.
 - b. We, as born-again believers, must put our emphasis on the eternal values of relationships.
 - c. A correct relationship with God will grant us the ability to have horizontal relationships with eternal values.
- B. Each of us has visions or goals that differ dramatically.
1. The objective of each one of us should be to reach his goals and fulfill his dreams, but not at the expense of someone else—we need other people, and other people need us.
 2. Too often, others are ignored and hurt as we strive to reach our particular goals.
 3. Reaching goals without offending others is contingent upon our vertical relationship.
 4. As we strive to reach our goals and fulfill our dreams, we must keep the door closed to the spirit of competition; competition has no place in the Body of Christ.
- C. The Body of Christ is made up of many members, and every member is important.
1. We should all desire the success of every member in the Body of Christ.
 2. God sets the members in the "Body" as it pleases Him; therefore, we should be content with the position in which God places us, realizing that it is from this position that we will be the most beneficial to God and others.

3. The competitive spirit must be cast out of the Body of Christ and not allowed to operate any longer. Everybody is important in the sight of God; therefore, competition is unnecessary in the Body of Christ.
 - a. We have become so sports-minded that the spirit of competition has infiltrated the Church.
 - b. God is not interested in the macho image; God is pleased with the meek and humble spirit.
 - c. Facades and superstar images have no part in the Body of Christ. The true heroes of God's kingdom are not self-made people, but God-made people.
 4. We must prepare ourselves through the vertical relationship and yield to the wisdom of God as He places each of us in the Body of Christ.
- D. Horizontal relationships should revolve around Jesus.
1. Often, relationships pursue the interests of men instead of the interests of Jesus.
 2. When man looks after his interests instead of the Lord's interests, he opens the door to temptation.
 3. Our horizontal relationships should be spirit to spirit, not flesh to flesh. (II Corinthians 5:16)
- E. In building relationships, we must accurately recognize Christian brethren.
1. We often abandon caution, calling nearly everyone we meet "brother."
 2. A brother is one who is blood-related.
 - a. Physically speaking, men who have the same parents are natural brothers.
 - b. This same truth applies to spiritual brothers; spiritual brothers have the same Father.
 - c. Not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord," is a spiritual brother.

- d. Warning!!! It is vital that we know people by the spirit; otherwise, we might walk in ungodly counsel, or stand in the sinners' path, or sit with those who mock the things of God. (Psalm 1:1)
- F. Our relationship with one another must be pure at all times.
 - 1. We must be wise in our conversation and avoid suggestive and misleading remarks.
 - 2. We must be cautious in our physical approach to the opposite sex. Our motives must be pure.
 - 3. Always remember that love is not selfish or self-seeking; consequently, love will not violate another.
 - 4. I Timothy 5:1-2 offers good counsel concerning relationships with others.
- G. Man's relationship with God will affect his relationship with people.

VI. SUMMARY

- A. Relationships are vital; therefore, it is imperative that we understand relationships in order to develop and maintain them properly.
- B. There are two major categories of relationships: vertical and horizontal.
- C. The vertical relationship is the relationship between God and man.
- D. The horizontal relationship is the relationship between man and man.
- E. Intimacy precedes impact; therefore, we must "be" before we can effectively "do."
- F. Everyone is someone important; therefore, we must be cautious not to demean, but rather to prefer others.

VII. CONCLUSION

- A. Relationships are probably in more danger than ever before in the history of mankind.
 - 1. The majority of marriages end in divorce.
 - 2. The rebellion of children against their parents is reaching crisis levels.
 - 3. Employer-employee relationships are more volatile than ever before.
 - 4. There are more splits and divisions in churches than ever before because of poorly-developed relationships.
 - 5. The nations are reeling and rocking as a result of deceitful and unstable political relationships.
- B. When God's Word is violated, society pays the price.
- C. Relationships that are not established on the Word of God will crumble and fall.
- D. We must discipline ourselves to get alone with God in order to develop a more intimate relationship with Him.
- E. Without an intimate relationship with God, our relationships with others are in grave danger.
- F. These are evil and pernicious days—days of destruction, hurt, mischief, and even deadly days; consequently, people need the Lord more than ever before.
- G. Making Jesus the Lord of our relationships is the key to successful relationships.