

Our lives are filled with
relationships.

Rom 14:7 For not one of us lives
for himself, and not one dies for
himself;

As you consider your relationships with others, the first that might come to mind is the relationship of husband and wife.

Gen 2:18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."

I have known a few people in my life who disagreed with this.

Some were afraid of the responsibilities entailed in marriage. Others were simply too afraid of the opposite sex to ever take the risk of rejection involved in courtship.

Women ages 15-44

cohabited before marriage in 1995	34%
in 2006-10	48%
in 2013	75%

percent of cohabitations transitioning to marriage	
at age 20 after 3 years	30%
at age 30 after 3 years	49%

God wanted men and women in a committed relationship.

Heb 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

We need to ask why?

Marriage generally brings about the relationship between parents and children.

Prior to 1957, the knowledge and ability to prevent conception was extremely limited. In God's eyes, children are a gift of God as those who were barren prayed for children Hannah -1Sam 1:9

Psa 113:5-9 Who is like the LORD our God, Who is enthroned on high, ...(9) He makes the barren woman abide in the house As a joyful mother of children. Praise the LORD!

Psa 127:3 Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward.

The marriage relationship is often reluctantly entered, as a result of the fear of the responsibilities entailed or the difficulties to be encountered. Women, who have the greatest amount to lose in cohabitation, nevertheless accept it because of a desire for a man.

Gen 3:16 To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

A more difficult relationship, but more easily severed, is that between friends when we are unwilling to make the changes in our lives that are necessary to cement the relationship.

This is true among siblings -- Gen 27:41 So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him; and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob."

Courtship involves the exchanging of gifts. Those who are semi-committed to the relationship find that special occasions call for an increase in the size of those gifts. Not one but a dozen roses for Valentines day. A special dinner for a birthday.

We do these things to show the depth of our devotion. A dinner surpasses a soft drink and popcorn at the movies (although perhaps not in price).

And there are those of you who don't think these occasions are of any special importance and may learn to your distress that your wife, fiancé or girlfriend does.

The hurt may be small but it will be there.

How do we preserve the
relationships in which we find
ourselves?

At work, our employers make certain that we get along with those around us and do our jobs or sooner or later, we get fired.

The relationship is severed because of our unwillingness to make the contributions that encourage others to put up with us.

We frequently see the relationship tested to see if one person is really that important.

On a talk radio show, a callers will describe what it would take to retain allegiance to a political figure. One was 54, out of a job and didn't think his savings would get him to retirement. Social Security was all he was going to have.

He was upset and afraid. The relationships that he had spent his life working for were suddenly being terminated and he was having difficulty in re-establishing them. What was he to do?

Whether or not you can sympathize with the fellow or not, there are going to be times in your life when relationships are severed, fail to form or are threatened.

What are you going to do?

Everyone sets down and counts the cost.

If the cost is too high we try to repair the breach.

Luk 14:31-33 "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? (32) "Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace. (33) "So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

Behavior modification is what we teach our children. When our behavior doesn't get the expected results, what can we do? Change our behavior!

God uses this with us.

Heb 12:9-10 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? (10) For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.

When your behavior is offensive to someone else, they are going to withdraw from you. Perhaps slowly, sometimes rapidly. Sometimes to a great distance. Sometimes a little.

You may pay a little to a lot of attention to that person. It may not matter that they leave or it may matter a great deal.

Eph 6:4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

There is a point too far, but behavior modification with our children is encouraged by God

This instruction has to be tempered with the necessity of discipline which may or may not include punishment which may vary in its extent.

God tells us there are times when the punishment should be great.

1Co 5:11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

In all relationships, we need to carefully consider the consequences of our actions. As children of God, we answer to a higher calling.

Eph 4:31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

If we continually reject the counsel of God,
our behavior will be such that we no longer
have anything in common with the children of
God.

Rom 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep
your eye on those who cause dissensions and
hindrances contrary to the teaching which you
learned, and turn away from them.

If we continually change our ways to follow God, we will attract friends and acquaintances with a like mindset.

2Pet 1:8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And we will expend greater effort to retain the relationships we have with each other.

Rom 14:13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.

Rom 14:21 It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles.

I have heard young people say, “I don’t ever want to take another class again” when they finish high school.

Job speaks to God – Job 42:3-4 ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. (4)
‘Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.’

Those who do not continually modify their behavior to continue to grow are doomed to failure.

The everchanging nature of our relationships must be constantly considered and bonds broken must be restored before time takes the opportunity away.

Rom 14:7 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself;

All too suddenly, this life will be over.

Lk 12:18 "And he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 'And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" 20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' 21 "So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

What is your relationship with God and His children this day?

If you are a child of God's having been baptized for the remission of your sins but have drifted from your relationship with Him or His children, why not return?

1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

What is your relationship with God and His children this day? Do you share with Him and those who love Him?

If you are not a child of God's why not be baptized for the remission of your sins?

Gal 3:26-27 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (27) For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.