

HANDLING RELATIONSHIPS

SECONDARY SCHOOLS BIBLE
STUDY GUIDE



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HANDLING RELATIONSHIPS

God made us relational beings and He put us in relationships. These relationships are to be handled the way God intended them. Because of sin relationships go through tough times; sometimes they are hard to maintain. God has the way of maintaining relationships. This study gives us a picture of how we should handle relationships. Forgiveness is the catch word.

PREFACE

Right from the beginning, God created man a relational being. There was perfect relationship among God, man and nature when the world was just created, they all lived in harmony.

From the moment Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, the relationships that were once perfect got disturbed (Genesis 3: 8- 13). Man could no longer stand the presence of God; Adam blamed Eve for their sin while Eve shifted the blame on the snake. The effects of that sin continue to be seen in the way we handle relationships even today. Among the generations that followed after Adam, we read stories in the Bible of hatred, brother killing brother, people worshiping other gods, one nation rising up against another and so on. Today we hear the same stories and instead of taking good care of his environment, man has continued to exploit nature. But is this the way God intended our relationships to be? Definitely no.

In trying to restore the broken relationship between God, man and the rest of creation, God sent His only son Jesus Christ so as to reconcile the world (people and other creations) to Himself. Through Jesus Christ we have forgiveness of sins so that we can forgive others.

We are aware that many students have troubled relationships from home, school and even church. Many of you might have been disappointed by the people you trusted most and it is hard let go the feelings of pain caused by those disappointments. Is there any solution?

This Bible study is designed in a way that will help bring solution to troubled relationships and freedom to those living with guilt and pain from their past failures and disappointments. It is intended to help us make a deliberate effort to forgive those who offended us and to seek forgiveness from God and others for our failures.

Note: All Bible references are taken from Good News Bible

Enjoy your study,

SCOM, December 2007.

STUDY 1

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN, GOD AND OTHER CREATIONS

INTRODUCTION

God created human beings after creating everything necessary for their survival. They were created with certain qualities similar to God with the responsibility of looking after other creations. As human beings, we are therefore called to use the things around us for our benefit and to God's glory and not destroying them. It is a pity that our relationship with creation is not as God planned it. We usually abuse the creation and as a result we are the ones who suffer.

Study Text: Genesis 1:26 – 31

Memory verse:

"Then God said, and now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small." Verse 26

Study Questions

1. From the passage, when did God create human beings?
2. Why do you think God made human beings at the very end of all creation?
3. What makes human beings different from the rest of God's creation and what qualities did God put in man to make him in charge of all creation? Verse 26
4. *"And God looked at everything He had made and He was very pleased (V.31)."*

- a. In your own words, why was God pleased?
 - b. What can you do to make sure that God is still pleased with His creation to this day?
5. How does your view of other creation affect the way you look after it?
 6. From the passage, how should we relate to God, fellow human beings and other creations?

STUDY 2

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever imagined a world without men or women? What would it look like? God made man and woman so that they would co-exist (live together) and complement each other; to make life complete and more beautiful. As boys and girls, we all need each other; so we must treat each other as complementary and not competitors, no one is a second class creation.

Study Text: Genesis 2: 15 -25

Memory verse

"Then the man said, at last, here is one of my own kind- Bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my flesh, 'woman' is her name because she was taken out of man." Verse 23

Study Questions

1. What responsibility did God give Adam when He put him in the Garden of Eden?
2. a). Why do you think God made animals and birds and brought them to Adam (V.18 -19)?
b). "...but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him (V. 20b)." Why do you think animals and birds were not suitable companions for Adam?
3. Why was it necessary for God to make a woman from a man's rib? What does this tell you about the relationship between man and woman?
4. How did Adam react when God brought the woman to him (refer V. 23)? Why do think he reacted that way? How would you react if you were Adam?
5. a). When your friends look at you, are they happy that you are one of them?
b). What can you do to be a source of joy to others?
6. How should men view women and vice versa?

STUDY 3

RELATIONSHIPS DISTURBED

INTRODUCTION

There are times in life when our relationships are so sweet that we treat our loved ones as angels. But whenever something goes wrong the same people become enemies and we shift all sorts of blames on them; we quickly point fingers at them. This is what happened between Adam and Eve when they sinned. Sin disturbed their relationship and Adam shifted the blame on the once called "Bone of my bone". Above all the relationship between the two and God was also greatly disturbed. What we need to know is that as long as sin is among us conflicts will always be there and we are all to blame for the mistakes made.

Study Text: Genesis 3: 1 – 13

Memory verse

"But the Lord God called out to the man, "where are you? ...Then the man answered, the woman you put here with me gave me the fruit, and I ate it." **Verses 9, 12**

Study Questions

1. What commandment did God give Adam and Eve?
2. a). Why did they fail to keep the commandment?
b). Who was to blame between Adam and Eve? Explain.
3. What effects does sin have on relationships between human beings and between human beings and God? (refer to Gen. 2: 23 and 3: 8-12)
4. Read verses 14 – 21. Why did God bring judgment on the snake, Eve and Adam?
5. What lesson (s) do you learn from God's action in v. 21? Share it with your group members.

STUDY 4

HATRED WITHIN THE FAMILY

INTRODUCTION

There are a lot of reasons why people hate each other. For Esau and Jacob, it was because of cheating and poor decision making. Esau made a mistake by giving up his birth right because of a temporary thing, hunger. Jacob took advantage of that and later on cheated him. Their parents also played a role in their hatred by being divided in favoring each one of them. Regardless of the reasons for hating each other, the good news is that they reconciled later in life. Hatred must end with reconciliation, a bad story with a good ending.

Study Texts: Genesis 25: 27 – 34; 27:1 – 10, 30 – 45

Memory verse

“Esau said, this is the second time that he has cheated me. No wonder his name is Jacob. He took my rights as the first born son, and now he has taken away my blessing. Haven’t you saved a blessing for me?”
verse 36

Study Questions

1. Have you ever been hurt in your life? If yes, what happened?
2. In your own words, summarize the passages we have read.
3. Looking at the passages we have read, what are some of the causes of hatred in a family, at school or society as a whole? Be free to give more examples.
4. What was the result of Rebecca’s and Isaac’s favoritism towards

Jacob and Esau, respectively?

5. What advice can you give to parents who show favoritism towards some children in the home?
6. How did Esau feel when both his birthright and blessings were taken by Jacob? Who was to blame? Verses 32-36
7. After Jacob had stolen his brother’s blessings, there was great enmity between them. What happened for them to come together again? Refer Gen. 32: 3 – 12; 33: 3 – 4.
8. Think about any person in your life whom you had grudges against. What did you do to clear those grudges? Share your experience. If you are still having grudges with anyone today, what can you do to clear them?

STUDY 5

WHEN YOUR OWN BROTHERS HATE YOU

INTRODUCTION

The situation of Joseph was different from that of Jacob. Esau could say that Jacob deserved to be hated because he cheated him (anazishosha dala). But what justification could Joseph’s brothers give for hating their innocent brother? It is always difficult to forgive someone who hates us for no apparent reason yet Joseph forgave his brothers and assured them of his forgiveness.

Study Texts: Genesis 37: 1- 36 and 45: 1-8

Memory verse

“Do you think you are going to be a king and rule over us? His brothers asked. So they hated him even more because of his dreams and because of what he said about them.” Verse 8

Study Questions

1. Why was Joseph hated by his brothers? Were the reasons justifiable?
2. How did Joseph suffer as a result of his brothers’ hatred towards him?
3. If you were in Joseph’s situation, how would you feel and what would you do to them?
4. In Gen 45: 3, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and they were so terrified. Why do you think they were so terrified?
5. a). What lesson do you learn from the response of Joseph in verses 4 – 8? What should you do when faced with problems like the ones Joseph passed through?
b). Do you think Joseph forgave his brothers or not? Explain

STUDY 6

WHEN TROUBLED BY GUILT

INTRODUCTION

Even though Joseph had forgiven his brothers for the wrongs they did to him, his brothers were not very sure of his forgiveness. They did not trust the forgiveness their brother offered. Is it not often true that we

sometimes fail to accept or be sure when someone has forgiven us? Usually we carry on with a guilty conscious even after we are forgiven. The worst thing is that sometimes we do not even trust God’s forgiveness. As Christians we must be ready to ask for forgiveness, to accept forgiveness and to forgive.

Study Text: Genesis 50: 15 – 21

Memory verse

*“After the death of their father, Joseph’s brothers said, what if Joseph still hates us and plans to pay us back for all the harm we did to him?”
verse 15*

Study Questions

1. Why do you think Joseph’s brothers still felt that Joseph would pay them back for the wrong they did to him?
2. What did they do (V.16-17)? Was their action genuine? Explain
3. When Joseph received the message from his brothers, how did he react and why?
4. a). In your own understanding, what is forgiveness?
b). Why is forgiveness necessary in relationships, both to the offender and the offended?
5. Looking at the whole story of Joseph, how should you treat those who offend you and those you have offended?
6. Do you have any person (s) you need to forgive or ask for forgiveness? What are you going to do after this study?

STUDY 7

“FORGIVE US AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO OFFEND US”

Introduction

In the Lord’s Prayer our Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples to ask for forgiveness basing of their forgiving others. It becomes easy to ask for forgiveness when we are wrong but to forgive others it seems to be hard. Christianity differs with other religions because its main foundation starts with forgiveness and the forgiven sinners are to forgive others.

Study Text: Matthew 6: 5 – 15

Memory verse

“Forgive us the wrongs we have done, as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us.” Verse 12

Study Questions

1. From the passage you have read, why did Jesus tell His disciples NOT to pray like the hypocrites?
2. Recite the Lord’s prayer in your own words.
3. Why is Jesus telling us to forgive others their wrongs first in order to be forgiven by our Father in heaven?
4. Have you ever prayed for forgiveness from God when you knew you had not forgiven someone in your life?
5. When you forgive, what happens to you and the person you have forgiven? Refer also John 20: 23
6. Take some minutes to search your heart to see if there is still someone in your life you have not yet forgiven. Pray for God’s grace to help you forgive them and go on to do it.

STUDY 8

WHEN TO FORGIVE OR ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

Introduction

Sometimes we live with people who offend often us but they seem not to realize it. As human beings we find it easier to forgive others after they apologize to us but Jesus is showing us a different way. Take some time to learn from Jesus’ example because we will still have people around us who offend us but they will not admit it.

Study Text: Luke 23: 26 – 43

Memory verse

“Jesus said, forgive them father! They don’t know what they are doing.”

Verse 34

Study Questions

1. How many offences are committed against Jesus in this passage? Was Jesus wrong in any way?
2. How did Jesus respond to the people’s insults? Why do you think He reacted that way?
3. a). *“Jesus said, forgive them, Father! They don’t know what they are doing. (v.34)”* Did these people deserve to be forgiven? Why or why not?
b). In V.43 Jesus forgave one of the criminals crucified together with Him. What did he do and how was his action different from those who crucified Jesus?
4. When Jesus forgave the people on the cross, did it mean that their offences were not serious? If it was you being crucified,

what would you do?

5. In your understanding, when is the right time to forgive someone or ask for forgiveness from God and others?
6. After learning from Jesus' example, are you prepared to forgive others even if they don't apologize first? What steps are you going to take?

STUDY 9

WHEN YOU FAIL TO FORGIVE OTHERS

Introduction

We all have experienced serious pain at some point in our life and we might have vowed never to forgive those who inflicted it on us. Sometimes the pain causes deep wounds in us that refuse to heal even after a long time. But no matter how serious the pain might be, we just have to forgive because if we don't, we will reap the consequences.

In this study we will discuss some of the consequences of not forgiving.

Study Text: Matthew 18:21 – 35

Memory verse

"You should have had mercy on your fellow-servant, just as I had mercy on you. The king was very angry, and he sent the servant to jail to be punished until he should pay back the whole amount" **verses 33-34**

Study questions

1. How many times are we supposed to forgive those who sin against us?
2. "...How many times do I have to forgive him, seven times? (V. 21b)." Why do you think Peter asked this question?
3. Have you found it easy to forgive others especially those who repeatedly sin against you? Explain
4. a). Why do you think the servant who was forgiven millions of pounds failed to forgive his fellow servant who owed him a few pounds?
b). Mention some of the consequences of not forgiving others especially after pleading with us to forgive them? Give as many as possible.
5. Was the king justified by sending his servant to jail after he had already forgiven him millions of pounds? Why or why not?
6. Do you think God will forgive us our sins if we fail to forgive others? Explain.
7. What lessons are you learning from this passage?

STUDY 10

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Introduction

Having gone through all the studies in this guide, it is possible that you have discovered some areas in your life you need to correct. Are your relationship with God / others not right; are you still troubled by guilt or you are failing to forgive somebody? As you come to the end of the term, reflect on the previous studies and see how you have benefited from them and make a deliberate effort to correct the areas you need to.

Study Text: John 3:16-21

Memory verse

“Anyone who does evil things hates the light and will not come to the light, because he does not want his evil deeds to be shown up.” Verse 20

Study questions

1. Why did God send His only Son to this world?
2.
 - a). What does it mean to believe in Jesus?
 - b). How does believing in Jesus help to restore broken relationship with God and other people?
3. Do you personally believe in Jesus Christ? If no, are you ready to believe in Him now? (ask one of the group members to help you). If yes, prove it.
4. What are the benefits of believing in Jesus in line with the lessons you have learnt from the past studies?
5. What can you do to make sure that you love the light and not the

darkness?

6. As we come to the end of these studies, are there some areas you are still struggling with in your life? Be in pairs and pray for each other about the struggles you are going through.

BLESSED ARE YOU WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

YOU GO AND PRACTICE IT!