

**DEVELOPING BIBLICAL
INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS
FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE AND MINISTRY**

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INTRODUCTION

- 1. The importance of Biblical interpersonal relationships both in our own personal spiritual adjustments and in ministry.**
 - a. In His final sharing with His apostles in John 13-17, the Lord emphasizes their personal spiritual walk and relationship with Himself and how this will affect the work that they do together in carrying out His purposes for their lives. He begins this long discussion by exposing their selfish motives which were causing quarrelling among them, continues His discussion with teaching on the work of the Holy Spirit and the nature of their own walk with Him in daily fellowship and then He closes this section of teaching with His prayer for their unity and harmony.**
 - b. Ephesians 4:1-16 speaks of the importance of Christians not only BEING everything God wants them to be in their own personal lives, but it also stresses the possibilities of the furthering and expansion of the work of God when everyone is in right relationship with each other and working in complete unity for the Lord to DO everything He wants us to do. SEE: Phil. 2:1-5**
 - c. Ephesians 4:32 to 6:9 emphasizes interpersonal relationships in the Church itself and then turns to the application of these truths in such relationships as the family and those on the social level**
 - d. The two key passages on the purposes and uses of THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, Romans 12:3-8 and I Corinthians 12, also emphasize how believers perfectly fit together in the Body of Believers when they are in spiritual harmony with each other and submissive to the Lord in the use of the gifts.**
- 2. Biblical examples of strained interpersonal relationships and their effect on the testimony and work accomplished for God.**
 - a. Abraham and Lot Genesis 13**
 - b. Isaac and Rebekah Genesis 27**

- c. David and Saul I Samuel 16-28
- d. David and Ahithophel. II Samuel, chs. 15, 16; Psa. 55:12-15
- e. David and Absalom II Samuel, 14-17
- f. Paul and Barnabas Acts 15:36-41
- g. Paul and the Corinthians I and II Corinthians

3. Practical illustrations of strained interpersonal relationship in modern missions and how they have affected the testimony and work of the missionary team.

- a. Hudson Taylor and the early missionaries of the China Inland Mission. The demands that Hudson Taylor made on them caused many of them to leave his mission. He was a great missionary but he had problems in his approach to fellow workers and in his expectations of what they would do.
- b. Personal illustrations from 50 years as a missionary in the Philippines and Hong Kong that taught the author the priority he had to give to maintaining vital spiritual interpersonal relationships in every area of his life, and the dangers faced in the work when these were not properly maintained.

4. Main areas to be considered in this study of interpersonal relationships.

- a. The development of a spiritually strong, consistent and enduring interpersonal relationship with the Lord Himself.
- b. The development of spiritual interpersonal relationships within our own families.
- c. The development of spiritual interpersonal relationships with our coworkers on the church or missionary team.
- d. The development of spiritual interpersonal relationships with the national believers and workers in the culture where we serve Him.
- e. The development of spiritual interpersonal relationships with our sending churches and organizations.

5. In this study, it needs to be understood that the term “MISSIONARY” does not refer only to missionaries from western countries, though these are included in the term. Rather, it refers to anyone, from any part of the world, who is sent to another place and culture, in any capacity, to evangelize and establish work. Though the term “missionary” originally mostly referred to westerners who were sent out to do this work, this is no longer true in many parts of the world.
 - a. The Philippine churches have sent out several dozen missionaries to places like Thailand and Cambodia. These missionaries are supported by Filipino churches, sent out by an organization named PABWE and are responsible to the ones who have sent them from the Philippines. They are missionaries in the same sense that would have applied to any missionaries sent out in the history of missions. In Thailand, a western missionary couple even works under the leadership of these Filipino missionaries.
 - b. The Hong Kong Churches, the Korean Churches and other churches in various spiritually developed countries in Asia have sent out numbers of missionaries to reach China and Asia.

KEY AREAS OF IMPORTANCE IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

1. **THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SPIRITUALLY STRONG AND ENDURING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD HIMSELF.**
 - a. **The place and importance of a strong and spiritual interpersonal relationship with the Lord in anything we seek to accomplish for Him.**
 - 1) **Some feel that this is potentially the greatest failure any missionary can experience in work on the field. Even with a zealous and dedicated lifetime of service for the Lord in his past, a person may still have been spiritually defeated in his own personal walk with the Lord because this relationship was never a priority and an area of strong concentration in his life. When God sets down the final judgment concerning his success or failure in serving the Lord, this could be the most prominent feature of God’s evaluation of him.**
 - 2) **There are many excuses people who are serving God use for this failure in their Christian lives, including lack of time, the**

press of other responsibilities, the success they are enjoying in the work of God without special efforts in this direction and the many ways other things, such as worship in the church services, seem to satisfactorily substitute for it.

- 3) Both in His final teachings to His followers in John 13-17 and in the final command He gave to them in Acts 1:8 concerning the necessity for waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit before beginning any work for Him, the Lord teaches that there is no substitute for this interpersonal relationship with Himself. He emphasizes that failure in this area by his followers would invalidate other things they might do for Him and leave them powerless to accomplish lasting spiritual results that are acceptable to God.**

b. Areas of importance in this interpersonal relationship with Him.

- 1) Our daily walk with Him and our growth in the Christian life. See: John 15:1-10; II Peter 3:18**
- 2) The development of an attitude of total dependence on Him both for power and spiritual results, and the putting away of confidence in the flesh to accomplish God's purposes in our lives.**
- 3) The application of His truth to our own lives through obedience. See: John 14, 15**
- 4) The molding and shaping of our lives through this strong interpersonal relationship with Him. See: Psalms 119; John 14; John 15:1-16; I John 1-4.**

c. Potential problems in maintaining a dynamic daily interpersonal relationship with Him.

- 1) Lack of heart interest and incentive in us for establishing and maintaining such a relationship. Many are simply indifferent to the necessity for this and feel no strong compulsion to establish such a daily interpersonal relationship with the Lord**
- 2) The limitations of time in the midst of busy work schedules. Significant time with Lord in His Word and prayer simply do not seem possible in the schedules of many workers for God, and they might be tempted to feel that such time spent away**

from the work would even seem to interfere with the work both they and others expect them to accomplish.

- 3) The press of other areas of responsibility in the work of the Lord that seem just as important and which permit us to justify neglecting our own interpersonal relationship with the Lord.
- 4) The attraction of fleshly efforts and flesh-pleasing results in our work for Him such as the size of the work we have established, the number of “souls won to Him” through our work, the reputations we have gained through our efforts and the approval of those both who send us out to do our work and of our coworkers.
- 5) The substitution of other means of communicating with God such as preparation of messages from the Bible, spiritual group activities, busy schedules of evangelistic and Bible teaching meetings with other Christians and other things.

d. The resolution of problems in our interpersonal relationship with Him.

- 1) The honest acknowledgement in our hearts that the things we count most important may not win the approval of God.
- 2) The full realization that power for labor for Him comes only through the right relationship with Him and the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit in our lives, and that true eternal spiritual results can only come through His blessing on any work we do for Him.
- 3) The full realization that numbers and size are no indication of the spiritual quality of the work we do and the approval and blessing of God upon our efforts.
- 4) The full realization that fleshly efforts will only produce fleshly results. Fleshly results will be both shallow in spiritual depth and without the full blessing and favor of God.
- 5) The acceptance of our responsibility before Him to see the spiritual foundations laid in our own lives before and while doing work for Him.
- 6) The willingness to make this spiritual interpersonal relationship with the Lord an absolutely top priority in our lives and to totally commit ourselves to it.

- 7) The sincere and heartfelt following of a DAILY pattern of a strong interpersonal relationship with Him. This not only includes dealing with anything at all that hinders this relationship with Him but also includes pursuing every step taught by the Lord Himself that we need to take to maintain this relationship. (SEE: John 15:1-10)

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUAL INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN OUR OWN FAMILIES.

- a. Many believe that this is the second greatest area of failure of those laboring on the mission field.
 - 1) The philosophies under which many missionary organizations and their missionaries labor for the Lord seem to place the family as a very low priority. “The work” that is accomplished for Christ is given the highest priority.
 - 2) Many missionary organizations, in fact, have required that the children in missionary families should be sent away to missionary schools at very young ages. These schools were often located hundreds of miles away from the homes of the missionaries so that the children only got to see their parents once or twice a year. The options of home schooling or small missionary schools in the area of the missionary’s work were never a possibility.
 - 3) Under this philosophy, the missionaries themselves were supposed to devote themselves to “the work”. The basic idea was that raising children in their homes on the mission field would divert the missionaries from their main tasks and that the missionary schools could adequately meet the needs of the children.
 - 4) One result of such a philosophy was that the missionaries themselves, in the name of “dedicated work for the Lord,” were tempted to put a very low priority on family life. Even the relationships between husbands and wives often received this low priority and suffered because of the press of work responsibilities that often even took the husband away for periods of time.
 - 5) Even missionaries who are not under such requirements often either lack teaching on the subject of interpersonal relationships in the family or simply do not take the disciplined action they

need to take to carry their full weight of responsibility in the home.

- 6) The greatest result of such policies has been the possible breakdown of family interpersonal relationships where children have grown up somewhat independent of their parents, and even the husbands and wives have had difficulty maintaining their close relationship.

b. The place and importance of true Christian families in the Scriptures.

- 1) Proverbs 31:10-28 speaks of the dedicated commitment of the wife to the home and family, and of the very close ties within that family as the family honored her efforts.
- 2) Ephesians 5:22-6:4 sets forth the depth of the family relationship as it deals first with the husband-wife relationship (5:22-33) and then with the parent-child relationship (6:1-4).
- 3) I Timothy 3:1-7, 8-13 sets forth the high priority God sets on the family relationships of those who would serve Him, including the implication that failure in the home might be a reason for disqualification from the work of God.
- 4) Deuteronomy 4:9, 10; 6:1-7; 11:18-20 and Ephesians 6:4b emphasize both the special responsibility and also the impact and influence of the father upon the children as they grow under his training in the home.
- 5) All of these passages seem to emphasize that outside institutions, such as the local church, and other means of influence upon the lives of family members are no substitute for the place of the home and family. What was true in the nation of Israel, though it offered all the advantages of a central place of worship, is also true for the New Testament Christian.

c. Areas of importance in family interpersonal relationships.

- 1) Interpersonal relationships between husbands and wives.

Scriptures that emphasize this relationship

- a) **Ephesians 5:22-33** give us a picture of the nature of the interpersonal relationship between a husband and wife. It speaks of the wife's loving submission to the leadership of the husband in their home and family. It also speaks of the tender love and leadership style of the husband.
- b) **I Peter 3:1-7** approaches this area of their interpersonal relationships in a slightly different way. It deals with a home where the husband may not be living in the right relationship with the Lord. It emphasizes both the manner of the walk of the wife and also her attitude toward the husband in such a situation. The passage closes in vs. 7 with the teaching concerning the deep respect and honor the husband is to give to his wife and to his attention to her needs.
- c) **I Corinthians 7:10-16** gives us a picture of either a husband or a wife who is married to an unsaved man. The passage emphasizes the tender relationship the Christian is to have to such a spouse and the potential impact such a relationship will have on that one.

Areas to guard and deal with in this relationship

- a) ***Areas of possible strain between husbands and wives.***
 - (1) ***Major differences in personalities and temperaments***
 - (2) **Major differences in life philosophies**
 - (3) **Major differences in background**
 - (4) **Major differences in spiritual maturity**
 - (5) **Major differences in ability to adapt to marriage**
 - (6) **Major differences in their willingness to accept their proper roles in their marriage relationship.**
 - (7) **Major differences in doctrinal beliefs and Biblical convictions.**
 - (8) **Major differences in ability to accept the changes and living conditions in the culture to which God leads them.**

b) Dealing with the strains of the marriage relationship.

- (1) There are always possible strains which arise in a marriage relationship, but these strains are accentuated when they leave their own home environment and culture and settle in an altogether different environment and culture.**
- (2) There have been many cases where these strains have not only taken couples away from the fields where they were called to serve the Lord, but they have also sometimes caused the breakup of the marriage relationships themselves.**
- (3) Several things are necessary in dealing with these strains in the interpersonal relationship between the husband and wife.**
 - (a) Their willingness on the human level to honestly deal with these areas of strain and to take any steps and make any changes in their own lives to resolve them. These steps and changes may involve great sacrifice on the part of both of them of their own desires and the priorities they have set for their lives.**
 - (b) Their willingness to give preference to the spiritual ways they need to deal with their differences. Approaching these strains from a spiritual as well as the human standpoint opens the way for closer communication between them and a great dependence upon the Lord to intervene in their marriage relationship and help them. If their hearts are tender and open to His dealing with them and to His Word, God will show them the answers.**
 - (c) Their mutual commitment to having a humble and yielding spirit in settling their differences and making this a lifelong practice.**
 - (d) The necessity for a deep spirit of sensitivity and commitment to meeting the deep needs of the marriage partner. Women, in particular have emotional needs that are different from men as they bear children, adjust to new situations or feel the intrusion of the work responsibilities of their assigned duties into the time they can spend together as husband and wife. These emotional needs are also accentuated in a missionary situation where the wife has the greatest adjustments to**

make. A spiritual husband will both have a very sensitive spirit toward these needs in the wife and will respond fully to them. The wife will have the same spiritual sensitivity to the needs of her husband.

c) Giving priority to open spiritual communication and spiritual fellowship in their marriage relationship

(1) The foundations of this should have been established even when they were going together and then they continued to build upon these foundations in their marriage.

(2) The fact is, however, that many couples in the service of the Lord have no significant daily times of private worship and prayer together, and this lack of spiritual communication and fellowship hinders them in settling disagreements, staying on the same spiritual track together and finding the blessing and favor of the Lord upon their husband-wife relationship in marriage.

(3) Until they establish such open spiritual communication and spiritual fellowship in their marriage relationship, these problems will never be resolved enabling them to find the full blessing and favor of the Lord upon their husband-wife relationship in marriage.

2) Interpersonal relationships between parents and children

Scriptures that emphasize this parent-child relationship.

a) Deut. 4, 6, 11 The training of children by parents.

b) I Samuel 1, 2 The relationship of Hannah and Samuel.

c) Proverbs 1-4 The relationship of the father and son.

d) Proverbs 31 The relationship of the mother and her children

e) Eph. 6:1-4 The relationship of fathers and children

Areas to guard and deal with in this relationship

a) The parents must first of all commit themselves to establishing and maintaining a tender loving relationship

with their children, treating all of the children alike without favoritism. As the children are aware of the pressures of the work their parents carry out, they should never have reason to doubt the loving commitment of their parents to themselves and that they are a very high priority to the parents.

- b) The parents must also commit themselves to the time and effort of raising their children so that, in tender loving ways, the children are spiritually trained and disciplined for the purpose of giving God the freedom to shape and mold their lives according to His pleasure. (SEE: Deuteronomy 6:7; Proverbs 22:6 and Ephesians 6:4b)**
- c) The parents must also commit themselves to maintaining a spiritual atmosphere in the home with daily family worship, the demonstration of spiritual attitudes and conduct and the setting of spiritual standards in the home both for themselves and their children.**

d. Potential problems to be faced in family interpersonal relationships.

- 1) Many Christian workers have no deep convictions concerning the priority of their family responsibilities in their commitment to the work of the Lord. Other priorities crowd out the time and effort they should be devoting to their homes and families.**
- 2) There is very little emphasis put upon the place of the home in some of the candidate schools the missionaries have attended, and even their home churches, where they grew up, may put little emphasis upon this area of Christian responsibility in their preaching and teaching.**
- 3) The lack of a sense of the priority of family life causes them to take carelessly both the husband-wife relationship and the parent-child relationship. They feel that, with the priority they have set in their lives to serve the Lord with all their hearts and their success in their labors for Him, God will still approve of them in spite of their failures in the family.**
- 4) Many Christian workers also feel pressure both from Christian organizations and from supporters to devote themselves more completely to the work to which they have been commissioned. It is hard for these people to**

understand why the missionary is not devoting the time and resources to “the work” they expect of him. Based on their understanding of Luke 14:25-27, they expect him to be willing to make any sacrifice for the sake of following the Lord, including his home responsibilities.

- 5) Failure in vital interpersonal relationships within the family is not counted as serious as failure in “the work” by either the missionary himself or those who have sent him.**
- 6) The results of such an approach are that interpersonal relationships within the family are not strong, the husband and wife lack spiritual fellowship and communication, children are raised without the proper training and discipline that is expected by God from a father (Deuteronomy 4, 6, 11; Ephesians 6:4) and the impact and influence of the home on the people of the culture in which they are working is lacking.**

e. The resolution of problems in family interpersonal relationships

- 1) Before they are ever married and are committed to any organization or particular work for God, the man and woman need to carefully study all of the relevant passages of Scripture that deal with the subject of their own future relationship as husband and wife and the responsibilities of raising children in their home on the mission field.**
- 2) They determine before God that, no matter what God leads them to do or where He might choose to send them, they are totally committed to following His direction from the Scriptures for all that is concerned with their future home and family. These teachings therefore become deep heart convictions with them.**
- 3) They accept the truth that, if God wants to follow such a strict path of obedience to His Word in this area of their lives, He will also provide them the means of finding Scriptural balance between the needs of their home and family and the needs of the work to which God has called them**
- 4) Even before they enter into any ministry for God, they should put these convictions into practice so that they have actually experienced all that these convictions will require of them in their own lives and marriage and the price they will have to pay to follow them.**

- 5) **With these convictions and the experiencing of these principles in their own lives and homes, they then prayerfully make their decisions concerning what kind of a mission they would be willing to out under, what kind of work on the field would fit in with God's requirements for their marriage and how they would conduct themselves on that field within these guidelines.**
- 6) **Throughout their marriage, they consistently follow these teachings without compromise while putting in dedicated work for the Lord in whatever capacity the Lord chooses to use them. They recognize that following His teaching concerning their home and family is no substitute for laxity or laziness in His work.**
- 7) **Since the standards set forth in the Word of God seem to offer no alternatives to God's plan for the home and family, those who feel that they must give "undistracted attention to the work of God" must consider the possibility that God wants them to serve Him without ever being married at all. Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Titus and others may have reached such a decision in their own work for the Lord.**
- 8) **In making such a decision, they recognize and accept the fact that marriage is not for the purpose of just satisfying our own needs, but carries with it the full responsibilities of spiritual husband-wife relationships and also the nurturing and raising of children for the Lord. Anything less will not bring the favor and blessing of God.**

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUAL INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR COWORKERS ON THE CHURCH OR MISSIONARY TEAM.

- a. **The place and importance of effective and spiritual interpersonal relationships with our coworkers.**
 - 1) **This is the third area of greatest failure for those in the service of God. When we go out to serve God, we tend to look at the numbers of workers we have with us, the talents and abilities He has given us and the potential on our field of service for eternal results. We fail to see that these things can only be used by God IF there is the correct interpersonal relationship between those God has sent to do His work.**

- 2) **Missionaries in all cultures have found that Satan does not destroy our spiritual testimony and work for God by outside opposition to the preaching and teaching of the truth. If he tried to destroy the work of God in this way, such tactics would only unite the workers and cause them to move forward with renewed determination. Rather, he attacks the relationships workers have with each other so that there is disharmony and disunity and they are no longer working together as one spiritual unit for the Lord.**
- 3) **The example we find in Acts 2-5 shows us what God can do when His people are in perfect unity and working together in love to accomplish His purposes. The number of believers grew quickly, the testimony of the Church made an impact on the Jewish community and the blessing and favor of the Lord was upon the work. It was not until Acts, chapter 6 that disunity came and that first major problem had to be settled.**
- 4) **Some churches of the New Testament had these right interpersonal relationships with believers and coworkers and some did not. The Church at Philippi was commended for this, but the Church of Corinth was not.**

b. Scriptures that teach or illustrate this truth.

- 1) **Acts 11:19-26; Acts 13:1-15:35. These passages show the complete harmony between Paul and Barnabas that began when Barnabas went to Tarsus to seek out Paul and bring him to Antioch. Then, they went out on the first missionary journey together with successful evangelism in every city of Galatia. Their interpersonal relationship with each other seemed assured to go on indefinitely. HOWEVER, in Acts 15:36-40 a bitter dispute broke out between them over Mark and they divided from each other. This is one of the saddest passages in Acts.**
- 2) **Romans 12:3-8. In this passage, we are shown how believers perfectly fit together in the body of Christ, the Church. If everyone accepts his place in the body and is not competing with anyone else, the work of God will be blest.**
- 3) **Romans 14:1-15:8 speaks of the problem of quarreling and disunity in the Church at Rome between the Jews and Gentile members and the spiritual solutions that are suggested both in chapter 14 and then in chapter 15:1-8.**

- 4) **I Corinthians 1:11-4:21** tells of the apparent (and perhaps unintended) competition between three workers for the affections of the Corinthian believers and how this divided the Church. He goes on to describe how workers are to be regarded and to disclaim any honor they had chosen to give him in comparison with Peter and Apollos.
- 5) **I Corinthians 12**. In this chapter, the **GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT** are listed and then there is discussion concerning how every person in the body of believers, each with the gift God has given fully working in their lives, is both necessary and important.
- 6) **Ephesians 4:1-16**. In this passage, he begins with a plea for unity and harmony in the body of believers and then moves into the area of the gifts of leadership given to the Church by God. Each of the leaders were different in function, but, working together, each with the gift God had given, the body of believers would be built up and the members themselves trained and prepared to work for God.
- 7) In many of his epistles, including I and II Timothy and Titus, Paul speaks of the very close relationship he had with his coworkers including Timothy, Titus, Epaphras, Epaphroditus and many others. He not only commends them but he also speaks of his love for them and his longing to be with them.

c. The areas of importance in this relationship

- 1) The love and concern coworkers have for each other on a personal basis. It is not enough that they merely be coworkers. A genuine spiritual interpersonal relationship between them must involve the heart to heart involvement of their lives with each other. They are helping to meet the deepest needs of each other that discourage and often defeat workers for God by their heart love and concern.
- 2) The efforts they take to further their relationships and spiritual fellowship with each other. In a genuinely spiritual interpersonal relationship between coworkers, they would be willing to make any sacrifice, take any necessary steps and maintain a constant heart desire to see their relationships grow deeper and more productive with the passage of time.
- 3) The spiritual ways they handle differences between them. They recognize that differences will come from time to time. The key to the solving of these differences is in how they handle them

from a spiritual standpoint and the way they refuse to permit these differences to separate and divide them. If they are willing to approach these differences with tender hearts and earnest desire to find spiritual solutions to them, the Lord will show them the steps they will need to take and the changes that will be necessary to settle them.

- 4) The work they do together to further the purposes of God. Recognizing that they need each other in the work of God and that this work will not be completely fulfilled with God's approval unless each one is used to the very furthest extent of his potential, they move forward in the work unitedly and with faithful efforts.
 - 5) Giving the glory for everything accomplished back to God. This keeps them from feelings of pride or feelings of superiority over others in their interpersonal relationships. In this way, they recognize that it was God Himself who gave them the abilities they used in doing His work, by His spirit He enabled them to successfully do the work and His Spirit was also the motivating and convicting agent to bring results.
- d. Potential problems to be faced in interpersonal relationships with coworkers.
- 1) The very talents and abilities God has given missionaries to accomplish His work can often be a major stumbling block in interpersonal relationships between coworkers.
 - a) Many missionaries were leaders and somewhat independent before they were appointed as missionaries and became part of a missionary team. They are not used to working with others in such close ties and even being under the authority either of a chairman or of the team itself. They may find the team relationship an extremely difficult adjustment to make because of the changes it requires in their own thinking and pattern of life and ministry.
 - b) Carnal pride can cause some to feel that they themselves have accomplished what has been done in their lives and ministry so that they feel too much their own importance . This carnal pride can also cause them to feel that they are both superior to their coworkers and that their work is more valuable to God than that of their coworkers

- 2) Sometimes coworkers tend to be overcritical of each other as they fail to recognize that they do not have the same dispositions and will not do their work in exactly the same ways. They tend to expect everyone else to follow their guidelines and do their work in exactly the way they think it should be done.**
- 3) Sometimes coworkers have a spirit of competition among them. They feel that their work must receive the most attention, and therefore they resent the attention paid to others or to their work. This results in jealousy and animosity toward their fellow workers.**
- 4) Sometimes coworkers are closer in social and personal relationships to some than to others. This causes some to feel “left out” and brings resentment against those who seem to slight them. This may be especially true in situations where social opportunities are limited because they are living in a strange culture where they cannot meet people on a social level. The missionaries may therefore have more dependence on each other to provide such opportunities.**
- 5) Sometimes coworkers take part in a struggle for power and position on the field of their labor. They either want to be the chairman of the work, the head of institutions that are established or in some other ways exercise power and authority over their coworkers.**
- 6) Sometimes coworkers let petty matters divide them and destroy the close spiritual relationship they need to maintain to do true work for God. These may involve things that have been said, a report about some coworker that may or not be true, some action by a coworker with which someone else does not agree, problems between the families of coworkers, differences in some of their beliefs and practices, differences in background, or other matters.**
- 7) Sometimes coworkers simply cannot accept one another in that relationship. For some reason they do not meet each other’s expectations, their personalities clash, they do not feel that they are going in the same direction in their lives and work or they do not feel the need for each other in the work.**
- 8) When the principle of giving the glory back to God in all their efforts and accomplishments is not strictly followed, the desire for self glory can dominate the lives of coworkers creating division among them.**

e. The resolution of problems in interpersonal relationships with coworkers.

- 1) We must first recognize that, though problems are bound to occur in longtime relationships, there are spiritual solutions to every problem if coworkers are willing to submit themselves to the authority of God and to His Word in dealing with them.**
 - a) If these are personal problems in the individual hearts of the coworkers, God can expect that each person will prove to be the spiritual person God wants him to be and will act spiritually in any matter that arises. This would apply to pride, feelings of superiority over others, feelings of competition with others or other personal spiritual problems.**
 - b) If these are problems between individuals, no matter how serious they might seem, God would give them the means to settle these problems if they are willing to accept His answers and solutions.**
- 2) The humble acceptance of the principle emphasized in I Corinthians 3:5-7, that no matter how great the talents and abilities might be in the individuals who work for God, we are only the sowers and the waterers, but it is God alone who gives the growth and the increase. This would emphasize that the entire team is necessary for the successful planting and watering, and that we need each other on the team, but the credit for accomplishments will not go to any us but to God Himself.**
- 3) We read in Philippians 2:1-4 the humble attitude Christians are to have in their dealings with each other and how the example of Christ (SEE: Philippians 2:5-8) is their motivation for such humble walk with each other. This has its perfect application to our coworkers. If this kind of a spirit is true in the lives of the coworkers, it will eliminate feelings of superiority, competition, criticism and other problems.**
- 4) Problems are best resolved if they are dealt with immediately rather than being permitted to build up over a period of time. We find that many problems start out by being rather minor matters, but that they assume greater significance when time has passed.**

- 5) When offense has been given or misunderstanding has occurred, there is no substitute for repentance and forgiveness on the part of those involved. (SEE: Ephesians 4:32) These are to be of such a deep nature on the part of all concerned that this results in a complete restoration of strained or broken relationships.
- 6) In Romans 15:1-8, there are two principles laid down for harmony between believers. These are: Pleasing Each Other and Accepting Each Other.
 - a) In the Roman church there had been a problem between the Jews and the Gentiles in the Church. They did not seem willing to resolve the problem that had caused it. From Paul's discussion of this problem, he sets forth these two principles as the ones they must follow.
 - b) The basis for the following of these two principles is the example of Christ in not pleasing Himself in dying for and saving us, and also His perfect acceptance of us though we were hopeless lost sinners when we came to Him.
 - c) In order for us to have spiritual interpersonal relationships that are free from tension and disunity, there must also be a humble spirit of desiring to please each other in the way we give up our own desires and demands for the sake of others and then a complete acceptance of each other with all our differences in temperaments, gifts, ways of doing things and accomplishments.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE NATIONALS IN THE CULTURE WHERE GOD SENDS US.

- a. The place and importance of effective and spiritual interpersonal relationships with the nationals in the culture where God sends us.
 - 1) In any work we do for God, it is important that there be a happy and amicable relationship between the missionaries and the nationals they are going to work with. Even more there must be an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Where this is lacking, there is a natural block in the way of any effective work for God being established and maintained.

- 2) **This is true whether we are dealing with the unsaved nationals in the country where God leads us or are dealing with Christians who have already trusted the Lord and have been disciplined. In either case they must be regarded and treated in the most spiritual ways.**
- 3) **If this spiritual approach is not followed from the very beginning, when the missionary first begins evangelism and work in a country, then it will not be followed when that work is fully established and national leadership is in charge.**

b. Scriptures that suggest such a relationship

- 1) **Acts 20:17-38 This passage records Paul's meeting with the elders of the Church at Ephesus and the very strong and spiritual relationship he had with these brethren with complete confidence in their ability under God to carry on the work there.**
- 2) **Philippians 1-4. This entire book testifies to the interpersonal relationships Paul had with the Philippian Christians and the very high respect he had for them. They are commended and appreciated for their spirituality and for their ongoing work for the Lord. We see this deep love and appreciation for them when he uses them as examples of sacrificial giving in II Corinthians, chapter 8. Even in his first evangelistic efforts among them in Acts, chapter 16, Paul had had the right attitude and approach to them and received a warm reception from the unsaved people he was sent to reach with the Gospel.**
- 3) **I Thessalonians 1, 2. In these chapters, Paul speaks of his deep appreciation for the Thessalonians, their progress in the work of the Lord and his confidence in the abilities God had given them to carry on their work without him.**

c. The areas of importance in this relationship

- 1) **Interpersonal relationships with those nationals the missionary seeks to reach with the Gospel through evangelism.**
 - a) **In coming to them with evangelism and soul winning efforts, the spiritual missionary makes a sharp distinction between who they are as humans and their spiritual needs. Because the unsaved man is sinful, lost and bound for eternal punishment if he does not trust Christ, it is possible to also**

look down on him as a human being and to treat him as being inferior to the missionary. Sometimes some of the terms missionaries use in describing the people with whom they work seem to suggest that the missionary is tempted to have such an attitude.

- b) No matter how remote the area might be where the people are located, how primitive their lifestyle might be, how completely pagan their society and forms of religion might be or how untaught and ignorant they might be concerning even the most basic truths about God and His truth, on the human level they are still equal with the missionary in every possible way in the eyes of God, and His love for them is just as great as it is for those in more civilized areas.**
- c) This means that the missionary, though approaching them with the Gospel of salvation and the deep burden for them to be saved out of their sinful and lost condition, is still to have an attitude of complete respect for them on the human level without any feeling of superiority or condescension toward them. He respects them for who and what they are, and their life situation, whatever it might be, would not change that attitude. This is the spiritual approach God wants him to take to them.**
- d) This spiritual attitude of deep respect for them and the lack of any attitude of superiority or condescension in the way he approaches them or deals with them will be a testimony to those to whom he preaches and will give them a more receptive attitude to the message of the Gospel.**
- e) This spiritual attitude will also be reflected in the way the missionary lives among them, the way he feels about them, the way he talks to them and in the way he treats them. He will submit himself to be guarded by the Holy Spirit in all of these areas so that he does not fail.**
- f) This spiritual attitude will not only characterize his interpersonal relationship with these nationals before they are saved, but will be carried through into the discipling process, the organization of their church, in the training of leadership for the church and finally the turning over of the work to them with full confidence in their ability to carry it on for the Lord.**

- 2) Interpersonal relationships with nationals who become the coworkers of the missionary.**
- a) In many of the mission fields of the world, the original position of the missionary has been completely changed. The nationals in the culture where God sent them have not only been saved and have grown in the Lord, but they have also have received leadership training and have taken over the leadership of the work the missionaries began so that they are now fully the coworkers of the missionary.**
 - b) In their position as coworkers, the missionary has had to recognize and accept that they are altogether his equals in every possible way and are just as valuable in the work as the missionary himself.**
 - c) Because they are part of the culture, speak the language fluently, are fully trained to do the work and have the knowledge of how best to reach their own people, they may even prove to be more valuable in the work than the missionary ever was. This may be difficult for the missionary to accept.**
 - d) After they take over the work the missionary has begun, the work they do and their accomplishments for the Lord may even far eclipse any the missionary ever saw in his own ministry.**
- (1) In fields like the Philippines and Hong Kong, once the nationals were fully in charge of their own work, the work blossomed and expanded far beyond anything the missionary could ever have envisioned or accomplished.**
- (2) In China, when the coming of Communism in 1949 forced every western missionary to leave, the Chinese church had to stand on its own feet under intense persecution, but the work throughout China multiplied until now it is many times as large and strong as it was under missionary leadership. In addition to the hundreds of government churches, there are tens of thousands of House or Family Churches throughout China. Many missionaries have had to acknowledge that such growth could never have taken place under missionary leadership.**

- (3) The same success has been repeated again and again in other parts of the world such as Africa and South America, where the missionaries first began the work but the multiplication of believers and the overall expansion of the work needed national leadership before these results could take place.**
- e) When national leadership has taken over the work and the work has begun to grow and expand, it would be wrong for the missionary to seek to retain or regain control over the work, be over these national leaders in authority or even to feel that he could somehow do it better if he were in their place.**
- f) In situations like Communist China, for instance, where the continued presence of missionaries might only endanger or hinder the work, it seems even better for the missionary to stay completely away from the work the nationals are doing. He is not only not needed but his presence might do more harm than good.**
- 3) Interpersonal relationships with those nationals under whose leadership the missionary potentially will labor for the Lord.**
- a) In many of the more spiritually developed areas of the world such as the Philippines, Hong Kong and many countries in South America and Africa, there is still a need for the missionary BUT ONLY IF he is willing to work UNDER national leadership.**
- (1) There are countless Bible Schools and Seminaries on many of these fields where the expertise of the missionary is needed in teaching some of the various areas of theology, Bible and other areas of study. However, these Bible Schools and Seminaries are under the very capable leadership of nationals in those countries and the missionary can only work there if he is willing to work under their authority and leadership.**
- (2) The same thing would be true if the missionary is needed for some reason on those fields in areas of work such as church work, literature or other areas where he might have special expertise and his assistance would prove valuable to the work. Again, these areas of work would be headed by fully capable nationals and the missionary**

would have to be willing to work entirely under their leadership if he is going to be used by God in those situations.

- b) For many missionaries, considerable adjustment and even complete change of attitude and approach would be necessary before they would be able to so change their original status that they could accept the complete reversal of the roles they and the national workers, many of them their original converts, previously had.

d Potential problems in interpersonal relationships with the nationals in the culture where God sends us.

- 1) From this discussion, it is obvious that one of the main problems in interpersonal relationships the missionary has with the nationals in the culture where the Lord sends him is that of his ATTITUDE towards the nationals.

- a) The “little brother” attitude that characterized the approach of many missionaries in the last two centuries was found to be insulting to the nationals of the countries where missionaries worked. It seemed to imply that the nationals would never reach the level of maturity and ability of the missionary himself and would always be dependent upon him. The missionary also often considered himself indispensable to the work as though the nationals could not be trusted/depended on to do the work without him.

- b) As pointed out before, it is possible to have a wrong attitude not only towards the unsaved people the missionary seeks to evangelize but also to have the same wrong attitude toward the Christians on all levels of their development in the Christian life. Once the missionary begins with this wrong attitude, this tends to characterize all of the work he will do on that field of labor.

- 2) Another major problem that possibly can arise is that of resistance to accepting the conditions and the environment in which the missionaries are called to labor.

- a) Although there are many fields of missionary labor that are just as civilized and highly developed as the one from which the missionaries come, the very fact that they are foreign fields will mean that the conditions and environment under which they labor will be different. This will be especially true

for the cultural and social environment of his field of labor that they may find radically different from their own.

- b) Many missionaries, especially missionary wives, find adjusting to such radical changes too difficult to accept. They may seek to solve the problem by isolating themselves by living apart from the culture and environment of their field of labor in their own homes while maintaining as much as possible the environment of their own country. This isolation will only keep them apart from the very lives they are seeking to reach and hinder any impact they might seek to make with the Gospel.
- 3) There is also the potential problem of resistance to change. The missionary has gone to that field with definite objectives in mind and with deep convictions concerning exactly how he is to reach those objectives. Once people have been won to the Lord, churches have been established and national leadership has assumed control of the work there will be drastic changes in his role as a missionary taking place. Some of these will be radical changes that he might never have anticipated when he first began as a missionary. How he reacts to these changes will test and prove his true value in the work of the Lord.
- a) Evangelism may no longer be the primary goal or ministry of the missionary. That work may altogether be taken over by the nationals who come in to take over the work the missionary has initiated. This means that, if the missionary is to continue in the work, he may have to seek from the Lord an altogether different ministry.
 - b) Even church planting may no longer be a possibility for the missionary in this changing situation. Although it is true in countries like the Philippines that, even with all of the hundreds of churches that have been established, there are still countless unreached areas still waiting for the Gospel, even this work may better be accomplished through the emerging national churches and leadership. For the missionary to still insist on leadership in this area, with the plans and direction for it coming from him, his insistence would hinder the development of the national church and leadership and their own vision for the outreach of the Gospel.
 - c) Radical changes for the missionary may also be necessary even in areas such as literature, medical evangelism, Bible

School training and other ministries that are often thought of as supporting ministries. It should be logically assumed that the nationals can not only someday take over these ministries but that they can, with proper training, perform them even potentially better than the missionary.

- 4) Another problem for the missionary, even more extreme than the others, might be the need for a radical change in the field of service and the type of work to which he first was called to devote his life. He might simply find that he is no longer needed on the field of his original ministry and that a change to an altogether new field or country is necessary.**
 - a) This perhaps might be the most difficult of all the adjustments he has to make, for it could involve a new language to learn, a new culture and national temperaments to adjust to, new living conditions and countless other adjustments.**
 - b) Such changes might have the potential for completely defeating the missionary and sending him back to his home culture and people. This need not happen, but some have given in to this solution for their lives and their missionary careers have been ended.**
 - c) There are countless examples, however, of missionaries who have not only accepted the need for such changes but have excelled spiritually in the way they have accepted them and have made the new adjustments which they involved.**
- e. The resolution of problems in interpersonal relationships with the nationals in the culture where God sends the missionary.**
 - 1) The development of genuine spiritual attitudes in the missionary's own life before he ever goes to the field of the Lord's calling for him and his family.**
 - a) The growth of a genuine spirit of humility in him concerning his personality, his talents and abilities and the role he will have on the field. This, according to Philippians 2:1-4, means that he will not think of himself more highly than he ought to think but will recognize that all of his gifts have come from God and that all of them were given to him for the sake of the Lord.**

- b) The development of a “servant’s attitude” (See: John 13) that would make him willing to serve God in any role that he might find or that might someday develop on the field. This would make possible an easy transition when there are radical changes that may take place once he has evangelized and churches have been established under national leadership. With the help of the Holy Spirit, even the strongest and most arrogant spirit can be transformed into a broken and humble spirit that can fit into any missionary situation.
 - c) The casting down of thoughts and intents that are often based upon racial or cultural attitudes of superiority to others. (See: II Corinthians 10:5). Again, the help of the Holy Spirit is needed to cleanse his mind and heart from all such attitudes and to give him lasting victory over them.
 - d) The growth of an attitude of genuine love and concern for all others of any race or culture. If this is truly in his heart, it will translate to actions on behalf of others.
 - e) The growth of a genuine heart respect for the talents and abilities God has given to others and the ways God chooses to use them in His work. This will help him think less highly of himself and to see and accept the potential in others to be used in ways in which they might go far beyond what he himself is able to see come to pass in his own work.
- 2) The motivations (WHY he does work for God) (See: II Corinthians 4, 5) he manifests in his own life in the work of God will also be a deciding factor in any successful work he does for God. This means that he will put aside competitiveness with others, desire for self glory and other fleshly motivations and will devote his life to both serving and manifesting the Lord in any situation where the Lord leads him. (See: II Corinthians 5:15; Philippians 1:20, 21)

5. THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRONG SPIRITUAL INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE SENDING CHURCHES AND INDIVIDUALS WHO SUPPORT THE MISSIONARY.

- a. The place and importance of effective and spiritual interpersonal relationships with our sending churches and individuals.

- 1) The term which often is used for those back home is “missionary supporters.” This means that missionaries often think of the churches back home in terms of what they can DO for the missionary rather than the spiritual relationship the missionary has with these churches. The emphasis, therefore, is upon financial support, prayer and encouragement that is needed from the churches back home.
- 2) While these benefits from the churches back home are necessary in the work of the missionary, a more correct term and emphasis should be upon these churches as “sending churches.” This means that the missionary has been called by God but is sent out from local churches back home. They have a vital interest and part in his ministry on the field. This is seen in the Scripture passages that have to do with the relationship between New Testament missionaries and the churches that sent them out.
 - a) This relationship with the “sending churches” of the missionaries means that the missionaries have great RESPONSIBILITY toward those churches. The money that is given by these churches is God’s money that the churches have the right to expect will be used in right and most effective ways.
 - b) As missionaries sent out by these churches, missionaries can also be expected to meet the very highest standards in their own personal lives and in their work for the Lord.
 - c) This relationship with the “sending churches” also means that the missionaries are ACCOUNTABLE to these churches in every possible way. It is true that his final accountability is to God Himself, but on the human level, God works through these “sending churches. As God’s agents for the sending out of missionaries, the churches have the right to know exactly what the missionary is doing, the true results coming from his work, the problems he is facing, his possible failures on the field and they even have the right to send a representative to visit the missionary’s field to observe his work.
- 3) This relationship with the “sending churches” means that the missionaries have the ethical obligations to maintain close contact with them through correspondence and other means, to be very open and honest with them, to use their funds in the

wisest and most spiritual ways and to conduct their own lives and their work in ways that would meet the full expectations of the churches for work of the very highest standard. They also accept that the churches have the right to question them closely both while they are on the field and when they come home on furloughs.

b. Scripture passages that illustrate this relationship.

- 1) Acts 8 Philip, in his evangelistic work among the Samaritans felt the obligation to call Peter and John from Jerusalem to carefully examine the work he had done and to assist him in leading them further in the faith.
- 2) Acts 11:27-30 The Church at Antioch still felt an obligation to the Church of Jerusalem and sent Paul and Barnabas there with the offering for the needs of the church. The churches of Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia did this again when another emergency arose (See: I Corinthians 16:1, 2; II Corinthians 8, 9; Romans 15:25-28)
- 3) Acts 13 Paul and Barnabas were sent out in their first missionary journey by the Church at Antioch and they were subject to the spiritual process the Church used in sending them out. In this relationship with them, he was not only sent out by them but he also had their full support and encouragement.
- 4) Acts 14, 15 Paul had been sent out on his first missionary journey by the Church at Antioch. He and Barnabas not only honored their obligation to report back to them but they also lived among them for a time as they ministered among them.
- 5) Acts 15, 21 Though Paul had been called to minister to the Gentiles and there were obvious differences between the convictions the Lord had laid on his heart and those of the brethren in Jerusalem, Paul still felt the spiritual obligation to report back to them and to seek to settle any differences between them by dealing with the questions they raised.

c. Areas of importance in this relationship

- 1) A genuine spirit of gratitude toward the sending churches for their support, encouragement and deep concern for the missionary. Some sending churches not only contribute much money for the support of missionaries, but they also invest a

great deal of their time, prayer and concern in the lives and work of the missionary. This can all be taken for granted by the missionary without a heart response by him to all this care he is receiving from the sending churches.

- 2) **Dedicated response by the missionary to all that the sending churches are doing in the way the missionary uses the funds provided by the Lord through the sending churches, careful guarding of his time and efforts on the field so that he meets their full and justified expectations and the full commitment of his life and efforts to so work and conduct himself on the field as though they were actually there observing him.**
- 3) **The establishment of work by the missionary that meets the highest Biblical standards of quality and spirituality so that both the Lord and the sending churches are satisfied that he has been truly sent and used by God on the mission field.**
- 4) **The carrying out by the sending churches of their full responsibilities to the missionaries in their support, their prayer, their love and concern and their communication with the missionary.**
- 5) **A spiritual attitude of understanding, trust and compassion for the missionary and his work, with the realization that those on the home side may not fully understand the culture in which he works, the difficulties he is facing and the differences that are necessary between their American churches and the churches the missionaries establish on the field. This means that the missionary understands that the attitude of the sending churches is not that of criticism or lack of trust but rather is that of responsibility toward God for their part in his labors.**

d. Potential problems in this relationship.

- 1) **The missionary may feel disconnected from this relationship once he is on the field. When the missionary is thousands of miles away from his sending churches and working in a situation that is altogether different from that of his home country, he will be tempted to feel that the home churches are in no position to either understand or to monitor his life and work. It is possible, therefore, to simply feel that he no longer has the responsibility to them that he felt when they first sent him out.**
- 2) **It is also possible that the missionary will be tempted to feel resentment if the sending churches ask too many questions or**

make too many requests of him in the area of accountability. He may feel that they do not trust him to be faithful in his life and work and that he deserves more than this from them.

- 3) The missionary may be so occupied with his new life and work that he takes carelessly the task of regular reports and other communications to keep the sending churches abreast of what is going on.
- 4) The missionary may also be less than candid with the sending churches in informing them of the difficulties and problems he is facing, failures he might go through, changes he is going to have to make in his original plans and his own personal and family needs.
- 5) The sending churches may be insensitive in the way they deal with their missionaries by taking an overbearing approach with them and not really showing a sympathetic spirit concerning the problems and difficulties the missionary is going through.
- 6) The sending churches may also lack patience with the missionary concerning the steps he has to go through to get a work started. They may not understand the months of language study, the slow process of winning and discipling the first converts and the opposition the missionary may face in the culture in which he is working.
- 7) The sending churches may also be looking at his situation from a western point of view, without understanding the adjustments the missionary might have to make in an entirely different culture in the evangelistic approach he might have to use in winning people to the Lord, the type of work he establishes, the way the new church might conduct its affairs, the type of building they need and other adjustments. These churches might desire a western type of approach and church rather than simply a Biblical one.

e. The resolution of problems in this relationship.

- 1) Before the missionary ever leaves for the field there must be a clear understanding and agreement between the missionary and the sending churches concerning what they can expect from each other.
 - a) Though the missionary may not fully know all of the situations and problems he will be facing on the field of God's choice for him, his convictions in all areas of life and practice, his exact

- b) Both the missionary and the sending churches discuss all the implications of their relationship so that they understand all that that relationship involves.**
- 2) The churches and the missionaries also dedicate themselves to being all that the Lord wants them to be as the missionary goes out to the field. The missionary must be able to completely count on the churches, though they may be separated by thousands of miles, once the missionary leaves for the field. The church also must be able to count on the missionary for all that they together have dedicated themselves to do.**
 - 3) Areas of failure, as this relationship develops, on both sides in this relationship must both be honestly acknowledged and dealt with so that there will continue to be a strong spirit of trust between them. They realize and accept that failure can come from the sending churches as well as the missionaries and spiritually face these failures before God.**
 - 4) This relationship must be approached from a joyous and positive spirit on both sides. Rather than it being a burden on either side, it is to be approached as a privilege and a spiritual partnership in the work of God which will bring great blessing both to the sending churches and to the missionaries they send out to the field.**
 - 5) Also, it is to be approached as something for the good of both the sending churches and of the missionaries they send out to the field. The churches need to be fulfilling their New Testament responsibilities in reaching to all the world and therefore their efforts are part of their service for God to complete the work they do for God and gain His approval. The missionaries as the sent ones are also recognizing that their responsibilities and areas of spiritual accountability to the sending churches will make them more aware of their dependence upon these sending churches and give them the encouragement they need to attempt difficult things for God.**

CONCLUSIONS

- 1. No matter how God chooses to use us or where we labor for Him, we will always be involved in interpersonal relationships. These are to be taken seriously and are to be approached in spiritual ways under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in conformity with the Word of God.**
- 2. Our experiences in them and our ways of dealing with these interpersonal relationships can either have the blessing and approval of God or they can be sources for great defeat in us.**
- 3. As noted in this study, clear directions are given in the Scriptures for all areas of interpersonal relationships. We never need to doubt what God feels or desires concerning them because His instructions are clear in every area we deal with in interpersonal relationships.**
- 4. None of the directions given in the Scriptures for dealing with interpersonal relationships are without submission and sacrifice on our part. They are demanding and strict, and demand major adjustments and changes on our part as God shapes and molds us to conform to the person He wants us to be in our work for Him, but the benefits of following them far outweigh the submission and sacrifice God requires from us.**
- 5. The spiritual answers we find and the spiritual commitment we make to these answers to the problems that arise in each area of interpersonal relationships will determine whether we have victory or defeat in our work for Him and win His approval. We should not be satisfied with less than total victory in each area so that we have the full blessing and favor of God upon our labors for Him.**
- 6. We may find that, as we recognize our own needs in these areas and apply some of the Scriptural truth to these needs, others may not agree with the convictions we are given by God and may even oppose us in putting them into practice, but this should not stop us from following His will and fully implementing all that He has laid upon our hearts.**