

4 RELATIONSHIPS

A GROUP BIBLE STUDY TO HELP YOU

THAT WILL

FIND THE FULFILLMENT

MAKE YOU

GOD DESIGNED FOR YOU

WHOLE

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4 Relationships That Will Make You Whole

A GROUP BIBLE STUDY TO HELP YOU FIND
THE FULFILLMENT GOD DESIGNED FOR YOU

Even chronically happy and optimistic people go through times when they feel unsettled, restless, out of place. But if you sense a void deep down – don't feel alone. Many of us miss the fact that God designed humans...you...to live in harmony with Him, other people and the world around you.

When even one of the relationships God created for you is in disarray, brokenness results. That brokenness manifests in different ways in all of us – addiction, divorce, inability to support yourself and your family, a fatalistic view of life, devaluing others, just to name a few.

This Bible study is designed for group discussion to help you reconcile the four important relationships that God created for you, found in Genesis 1 and 2:

- Your relationship with God
- Your relationship with others
- Your relationship with creation
- Your relationship with yourself

The Bible tells us that the first people, Adam and Eve, were in perfect harmony with these relationships until they rebelled against God. Sin corrupted the perfect relations that God had established for mankind, resulting in brokenness. That brokenness spread to all people.

But God has a redemption plan! The God who created the heavens and the earth is also the restorer of everything that was broken by sin. Just as sin and death entered the world through disobedience, life and righteousness became available to all through Jesus' obedience on the cross. Jesus came to offer wholeness to all of creation – to restore broken people to a place of harmony with God, others, creation and self.

Let's look at each of these relationships individually.

Your Relationship With God – Spiritual

“...As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’” (2 Corinthians 6:16b)

God desires a relationship with you, even if you think you don’t deserve it. In fact, the most important relationship you will ever have is with God. It’s the primary relationship you were created for. You exist so that God’s glory – His wisdom, justice and grace – might come alive in and through you. You have the capacity to commune with God and cultivate a deep personal relationship with Him because His Spirit lives in you.

Yet, we see the stark outcome of our broken relationship with God in Genesis 3:23-24 when Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden. Sin separated us from God, who is the giver of all life. A life disconnected from God is a self-centered life, devoid of real purpose, meaning and significance.

Conversely, God’s glory shines most brightly through you when you have a right relationship with Him. That happens when you:

- **Seek Scripture and understand God’s heart and live in obedience to His instructions for living a fulfilled life.**
- **Pray every day, not just as a way to start a meal, but as a way of life – asking God to give you the wisdom you need to make right choices and letting Him rule over all areas of your life.**
- **See God in the people, circumstances and places you encounter daily.**

When these things become a way of life for you, you discover your purpose and identity, you grow in compassion and love toward your neighbors, and you actively steward the resources God has provided.

As you have been reconciled to your Creator through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, now you are given the ministry of reconciliation – to tell others that they, too, can be reconciled to God and live the transformed, purposeful life that God intends.

Group Discussion

Have you ever felt as if you were disconnected from God? How?

How does your relationship with God impact your other relationships?

Starting today, what steps can you take to strengthen your relationship with God?

How will you hold yourself accountable to this commitment?

Your Relationship With Others – Social

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34-35)

God created us as social beings with the need to live in community. In the Garden of Eden, we see that a perfect social relationship existed between Adam and Eve as husband and wife. God gave them responsibilities that could only be accomplished through partnership and cooperation. When they sinned, however, their once harmonious relationship was replaced by fault-finding and betrayal. We read in Genesis 3:11-12 that they began pointing fingers at each other.

Do you ever find yourself playing the blame game, assuming the worst in others, or loving only those who are loveable or agree with your viewpoints? These are just a few of the many harmful ways we often treat others, resulting in damaged and broken relationships.

This kind of behavior leaves a hole in your life, making you feel unfulfilled.

The good news is God is working to restore all things. Whether it's between spouses, family members, classmates, coworkers, friends, neighbors, and even fellow believers, Christ's shed blood holds hope for the redemption of broken human relationships.

One way you can show your love for God is by loving others. When grounded in God's love, your relationship with other people can be characterized by service, humility, patience, forgiveness and compassion.

Group Discussion

List some of the things you can do to grow in your love toward others.

If there are broken social relationships in your own life, what steps can you take to mend them?

How is God healing and restoring brokenness in your human relationships?

Who are the “others” that God may be calling you to reach with His love?

Your Relationship With Creation – Physical

“God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’” (Genesis 1:27–28)

Psalm 24:1 says the earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it. In the book of Genesis, God gives Adam and Eve the unique responsibility to exercise dominion and stewardship of the earth, establishing a relationship between mankind and the physical environment.

As stewards, you and I are expected to enjoy, care for and preserve the physical environment. But, as you see in Genesis 3:17-19, sin corrupted the natural world. Land is so damaged it can no longer grow food; water so dirty it makes children sick; air so polluted it causes lung diseases. Believing you are excused from preserving and caring for the world around you – this also is a result of the fall.

Your relationship with creation was broken. If you sometimes feel that work is tiresome and aggravating, it’s because part of the curse God spoke over man is that work would be difficult. God also cursed the ground, with the result that weeds now grow and the earth’s capacity to be fertile and fruitful is diminished.

But, even as God subjected creation to decay and corruption, He simultaneously gave hope of its eventual redemption through the sacrificial death of Christ. As God’s redeemed people, and as we grow more like Christ, we emulate His concern and care for creation, which ultimately belongs to Him.

Group Discussion

What does it mean to you to have dominion over your environment?

Are there times when you know you have failed to exercise stewardship over God's creation? Please explain.

In what ways do you see death, decay and corruption in the natural environment?

What can you do now to show concern and care for creation?

Your Relationship With Self – Personal

*“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful...” (Psalm 139:13-14)*

It is clear in Genesis 1:27 that the human race is created in the image of God. As such, all individuals – every child, man and woman – have inherent worth and dignity. God proved you are valuable to Him by sending His only Son Jesus Christ to redeem you from sin so that you may experience fullness of life in Him – right now and for all eternity.

When Adam and Eve sinned, mankind’s harmonious relationship with God was broken. As a result, relationship with self was also corrupted. Perhaps there are times when you feel beat down, discouraged, insecure, without a clear purpose in life. Perhaps you may have even doubted the fact that God sees tremendous value in you.

You see, when our relationship with God is not right, our view of ourselves is broken. This keeps us from exercising the gifts and creativity that God has given us. It hinders us from learning new things and fully experiencing who we were created to be and why. Yet, Christ’s redeeming love has freed you from personal brokenness and inspired you to live with a healthy self-image and sense of purpose.

As you experience this reality, you will be able to see the value that God places on you and other people – no matter their social or economic status – and celebrate their contribution to the ongoing work of God to reconcile all things to Himself.

Group Discussion

In your opinion, how important is a healthy self-image to helping others overcome their own poverty?

List some manifestations of a broken relationship with self that you see around you.

What are the steps you can take to nurture your well-being, confidence and self-esteem?

Living in Harmony

Sin is what breaks our relationships. God's grace restores and heals them. As you continue to desire God's design for wholeness in these four relationships in your life, He will equip you to respond with truth and grace. You will see the value God sees in yourself and others, and your actions and attitudes will change. You will have a renewed appreciation for the world around you – seeing God in a sunset, protecting the land so it can provide sustenance, picking up litter tossed away by others. You will become more like Jesus every day.

We at Food for the Hungry (FH) have found that these four broken relationships are at the root of all forms of human poverty – physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual. And, by God's grace, as we help people in the world's hardest places see their own brokenness and need for redemption, they are empowered to break free from the bondage of poverty that have entrapped many of them for generations.

We pray that you will also receive and embrace the restoration that God offers – and be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:19)

Putting Your Faith Into Action

Only God can fully bring restoration to all broken relationships. His redemptive work will be complete with Jesus' glorious future return. But while we wait, there is much work to do.

At Food for the Hungry, we consider it a high calling to partner with God in His redemptive work in the world. Our vision states: "God called and we responded until physical and spiritual hungers ended worldwide."

This is a huge vision – one that only God can accomplish. Yet, God calls and empowers people like you to join Him. As an organization, FH seeks to follow God's heart by focusing on the world's most vulnerable: children.

Consider these statistics:

- **1.6 billion people live on less than \$1.25 per day.**
- **22,000 children – mostly under 5 years old – die every day from preventable causes related to poverty.**
- **250 million child laborers work to secure survival-level income for themselves and their families.**
- **774 million adults are illiterate, two-thirds of whom are women.**

When you partner with FH, you help push back the darkness of poverty in all its forms and shine God's light and His redeeming love to children and their families. You'll walk alongside community leaders, churches and families as they work together to find solutions to poverty, focusing on creating an environment where children can grow and thrive as God intends. They, too, are learning the root causes of poverty and God's plan of redemption.

Things like Child Sponsorship make it possible for FH to give vulnerable children hope and new opportunities to become the kind of people God has created them to be.

To know more about how Food for the Hungry fights poverty and changes lives, go to fh.org.



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