

CHAPTER 9RELATIONSHIPS FOR REAL AND FOR RIGHT

As we studied in the last chapter, the believer must be convicted and convinced that God's way is the best way and the only way! Also he must determine (Daniel 1:8) to be in a right relationship with God and to go down the road of rightness.

If I choose to go down the right road (see illustrations on pages 30 and 44), what is going to happen to my relationships? What about my friends (school friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, etc.) who are not on this road? By going God's way, am I going to help them or hurt them? As they see me going down the road of rightness, how will they react? Will they be mad? sad? glad? Will they understand? What about my parents and my other family members who may or may not be on God's road (see all the possible combinations illustrated and discussed on pages 5-9)? Am I helping them by going down God's road? What will happen to my relationships that I have with my family members? Should I continue on God's road or should I quickly get off?

Define the Relationships

Relationships involve connections that are made and our daily dealings and activities with those of our social world with whom we are connected. If I choose to go God's way (the only right and real way--John 14:6), what will happen to my relationships and my connections with my peer group, my pals and my parents? Will there be a change of relationships for the worse? Will I lose all the good social connections I seemed to have before? Should I depart from God's way and quit?

I must realize that if I am on the right course (see Chapter 8), my relationships will never be less solid or less strong, but they will always be for the best. The best thing I can do for anyone and for everyone is to go down the right road. The change of relationships will only be for the better. The more I walk God's way and develop, the more I'll be able to help and encourage others.

I must go God's way

--for myself (His way is ever best and it's "for our _____ always"-Deuteronomy 6:24).

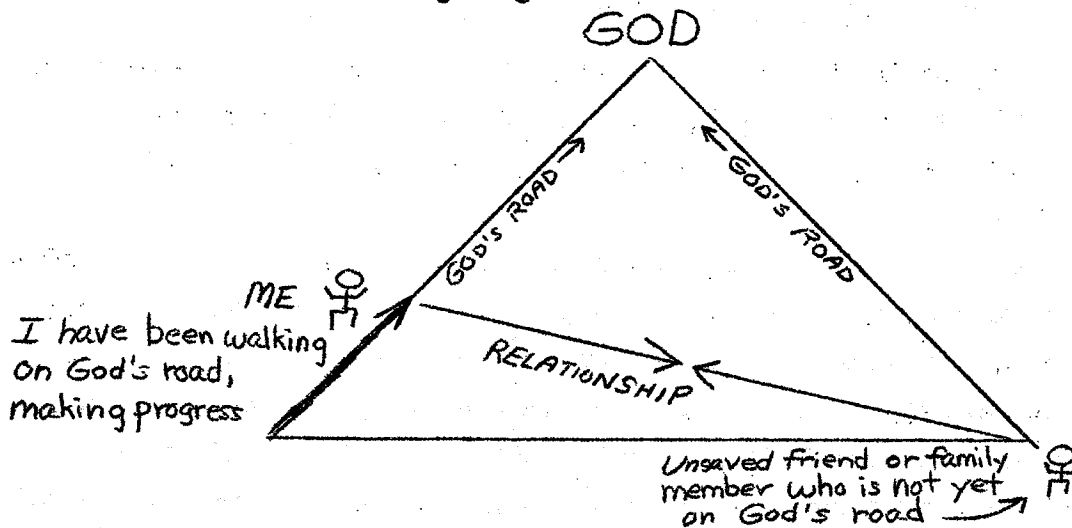
--for God (I'm obligated to God. As His child I must maintain a right relationship with Him, "as _____ children"-1 Peter 1:14).

--for others (see John 17:21,23; Psalm 40:2-3).

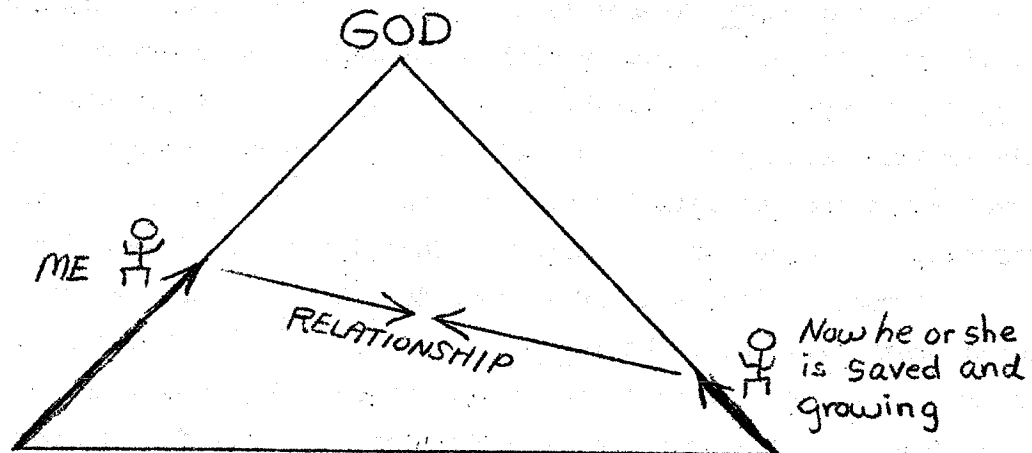
You might say, "I understand the need to be on the right course for my own benefit and I see my obligation to the God who saved me and purchased me (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), but how can my new life and my new course help my friends

and my family?"

Consider the following diagram:



According to this diagram (and according to my understanding of geometry), if I continue to make progress on God's road, will my relationship with the unsaved person grow farther apart? _____ (This is what we meant on the previous page when we said the relationship could never become less solid or less strong) Will my relationship with this person be for the better or for the worse? What would happen to our relationship if this person were to begin to go down the right road as well?



As I stay on God's path of rightness, I will have a relationship that can only help those in my social world whom I'm concerned about.

Will they understand me and my new course? Often they will not (see 1 John 3:1; 1 Peter 4:4; John 15:18-19). They may think it is all F _____ (1 Corinthians 1:18; 2:14). They may not appreciate the course that I am convicted of ("You're going to church again?" "Why do you carry your Bible to school?" "Why don't you enjoy some of the jokes we tell?" "Why don't you think like we do and talk like we do?" "Why don't you take drugs, drink and do other dumb things like we do?" "Being nice, clean, square, straight, etc. doesn't fit into our world or does it?"). They may think I have left them

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or that I'm against them or that I don't really care about them.

Is this really true? Do I really care? Am I for or against them? Am I seeking to hurt or help them? Do I want to win them or ruin them?

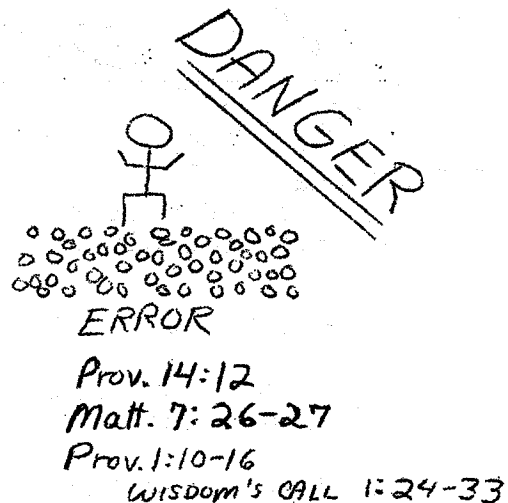
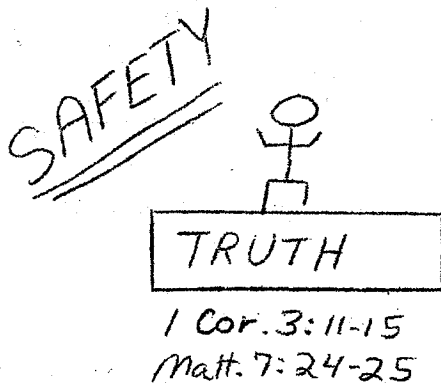
Key Question: If I'm not healthy, can I help anyone else? If I'm not on the road that's real and right, can I help anyone else to be right? If people all around me are sinking in quicksand, how can I be the most helpful? Should I jump in where they are or should I continue to stand on a solid rock? What happens if the blind lead the blind (Matthew 15:14)? _____

Suppose you lived in a city where everyone was blind including yourself. Suddenly one day you receive your sight but the others remain blind. What problems would that create? What difficulties would arise? Would they understand the things that you now see clearly? Would they hate you or be envious of you? Would they think you are crazy as you try to describe to them the things you see. Would they appreciate your efforts to help them? Is your sight worse for the blind or better for them? Should you go back to the state of blindness so you can be like your friends? Are you willing to live among those who are still blind? Should you wear a blindfold so you can be like them?

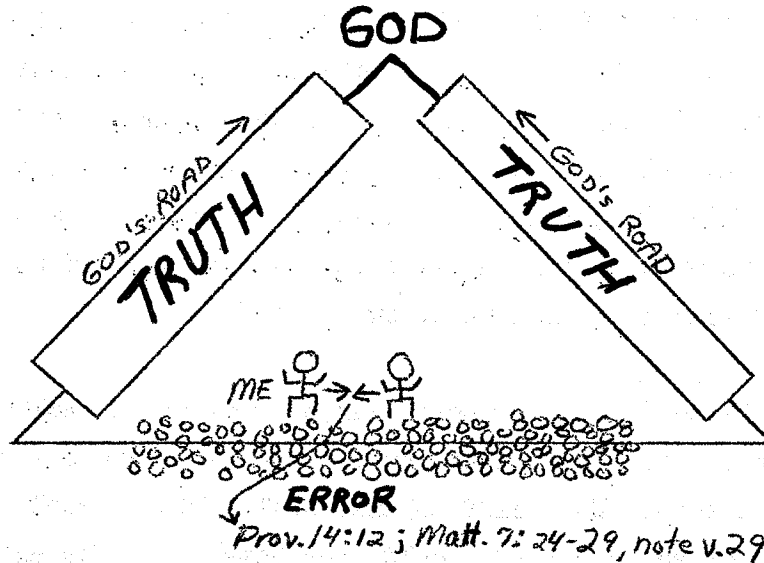
Likewise, should I get off God's road and seek to be like an unsaved person simply because they do not understand? Would that help them? Would it help me?

I can be an example to my friends and family. I can point out the way. I can encourage them to get on the road that is right and real. Does this mean that most will choose to follow me (see John 3:19; 5:40; 6:66)? _____

A solid relationship cannot be established upon a shaky foundation. Truth alone can hold us up:

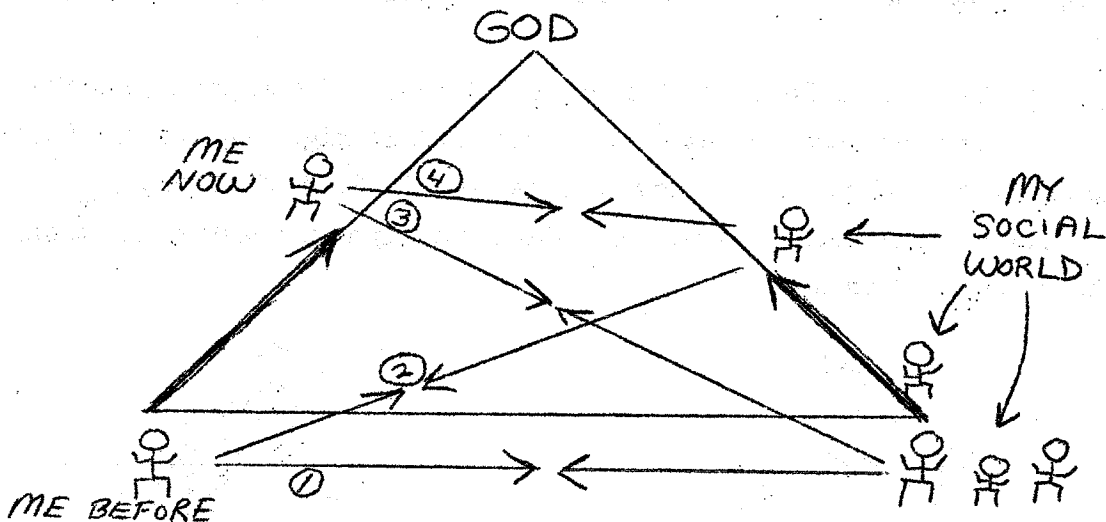


Consider the following diagram:



At first glance this may seem like a close relationship, but there is nothing solid or stable about it. Such a relationship is not lasting. Those you thought were your friends are not your friends one month later! ("with friends like that, who needs enemies?") How solid are your friendships?

Is there a difference in your relationships before you were on God's road and after you were convicted to take God's course?

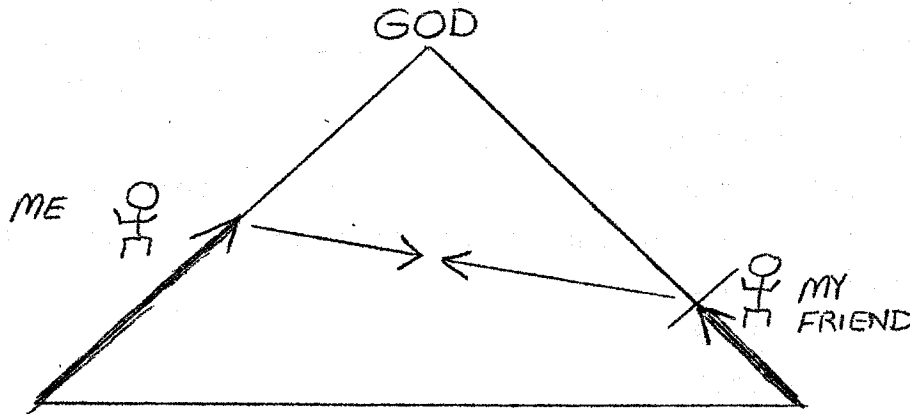


- ① I am no closer to the right road and the right relationships
- ② Others are on the right road and I am not.
- ③ I am on the right road and in the right relationship to God and to those around me.
- ④ We will be closer to each other and more able to walk (live) and work together.

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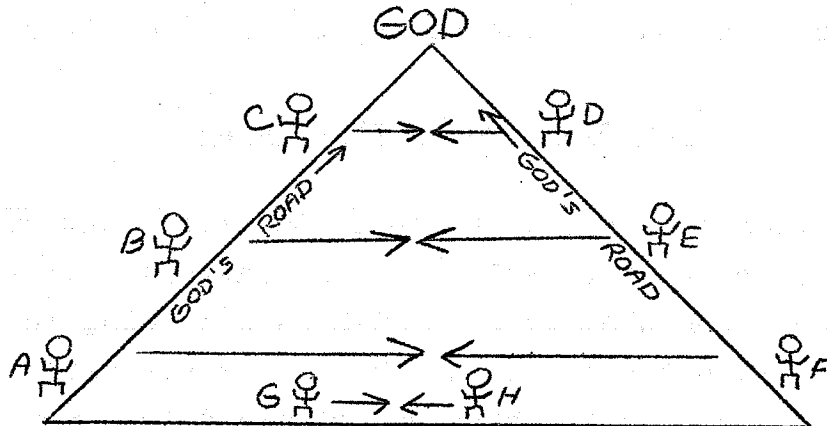
As I compare my "before" and my "now" (see the last diagram on page 50), are the relationships the same or are they different? How are they different? Why are they different?

Suppose you have a friend who also gets on the road of rightness but then stops and makes no further progress:



Since your friend stopped, should you also stop? Should you say, "If that is far enough for him (or her), then it is far enough for me!"? _____
 Who is really the only person who can hinder or stop your progress? _____

There is a difference between FRIENDSHIP and FELLOWSHIP. A friendship (fondness of and thus closeness to) is an attachment to another person based on many different things (having similar interests, activities, likes, dislikes, etc.). Fellowship (partnership, commonness, a sharing of the same things together, a sharing in common) is a relationship which develops and deepens with time and which develops character and brings about a closeness:



Which two people enjoy the closest fellowship? _____ Which two people have the least fellowship? _____ Would A and F have better fellowship than A and D? _____

It is also important to remember that there is a great difference between CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP and a FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIANS. CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP is that kind of fellowship which is characterized by CHRIST--He's the center, He's honored and His Lordship is recognized and submitted to. A FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIANS is a group of people who claim to be Christians and yet who may not be right at all. Often in such gatherings Christ is left out of the thinking and planning and activity and conversation. It may bear His name, but He is not pleased and He is not honored.

What will happen to me if I do not go down the road which is real and right? Consider the adult world and learn from them. What has life offered them?

a job?
 a car?
 a home?
 a family?
 money?
 etc.

Suppose you were given all these things RIGHT NOW! Would this make you any different? Would you know any more? Would this help your relationships? Would you suddenly be more able to handle life?

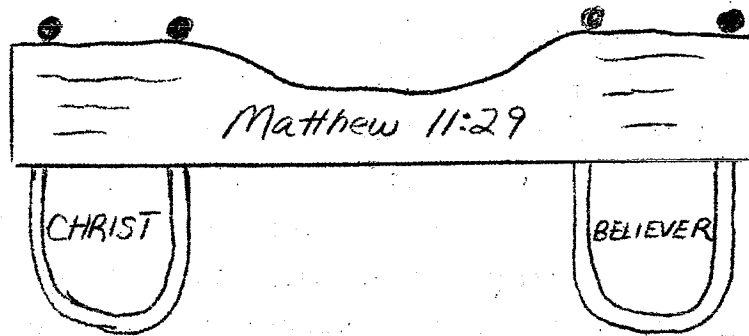
Adults are just like you, except they have had a few more years to grow up and acquire some things that you may not now have. How better off are many of them when it comes to the art of living (consider the mental hospitals, the need for psychiatrists, the terrible divorce rate, the broken homes, the ruined lives)?

Discover the Relationships

We need to discover and awaken to the fact that our present relationships may not be very solid or very lasting. If we are not on the right road, then what we establish is not going to last. Learn the difference between those relationships that are real and those that are wrong. Many relationships do not stand the troubles and tests of time.

Think of those who were your friends but who may not be your friends now. What happened? Has anyone ever said something like this to you: "What happened to your friend?" or "I thought you were friends." What is wrong with this kind of friendship?

We need to discover the yoke of Christ (Matthew 11:29; compare Isaiah 58:9):



A yoke is a linking up of two so that they go in the same direction. Some yokes are terrible and burdensome because they take the person in the wrong direction:

The Roman Yoke=political oppression and bondage

The Pharisees' Yoke=religious oppression and bondage
(Matthew 23:4)

Sin's Yoke=the bondage of a corrupt heart and nature

There is one yoke which is light and easy and wonderful!

The yoke of CHRIST is:

the LOWLIEST--your Partner under the yoke is the One who was rejected by men (Hebrews 13:13; John 15:18-19).

the LOFTIEST--your Partner under the yoke is God's exalted and victorious Son.

the LONELIEST--few there be that join up with Him and go on His road and in His direction. But His way is right and real.

Develop the Relationships

Time develops relationships and changes take place. Do people change? Are you changing? How and in what ways? What does change do? When you change, how does it affect others? When others change, how does it affect you? How does change affect your relationship with God. Does God change (Malachi 3:6)? _____ Will the change in your life be good or bad? for the better or for the worse? Why will it be for the better? What are you counting on that will make it for the better?

If you do not see the need to get on God's road and change for the better NOW, will you feel the need to do this at age 21? at 30? at 40? at 70? How do you know you will change for the better then? The real test is this: CAN YOU DO IT NOW (TODAY-- see Hebrews 4:7)? If you are saying NO to God now, why will you say YES then. If you are not changing for the better NOW, could you then be in the process of getting more set like cement in the wrong way? If this is so, then you will be in a far worse condition 10 years from now and it will be far less likely that you will change then. When is the best and only time to respond to God and God's Word (Hebrews 3:7,13,15; 4:7)? _____

Delight in the Relationships

Growing up is a delight. The correct attitude is expressed in Psalm 40:8: "I _____ to do Thy will, O my God" (see also Psalm 1:2; 119:16,24,35,47,etc.). If we truly delight ourselves in the Lord, what will He do (Psalm 37:4)?

_____ If we seek first the kingdom, what will be added unto us (Matthew 6:33)?

_____ Does this include right relationships with those we care for the most?

God is right and therefore I take delight! If you were to look around to see whom you really have to build a relationship with, what would you discover (Psalm 73:25)? _____

_____ If this one, all-important relationship is right, do you think all the other relationships will begin to straighten out and you will begin to have a care and concern about people even as He does?

HOW IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP
TO THE
LIVING GOD?

Where are your feet and which way are they headed???