

Building Relationships

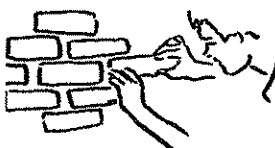
Proverbs 3 gives twelve rules of conduct we must follow in order to be happy. In Volume 5 we studied six rules that focused on our relationship with God. Now we will study six rules for building relationships with others.

It is important to study the principles found in God's Word because the natural tendency of mankind leads away from happiness. True happiness can be found only as a result of having wisdom and understanding.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. (Proverbs 3:13)

As we approach the subject of relationship building, think about this question: "Why did God create people?" The answer is found in *Revelation 4:11...Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* God created us for His pleasure and from the beginning He intended to have a relationship with us. He also intended for us to develop rewarding relationships with others.

To help instill these truths in our minds, let's think of these foundational principles as **building blocks**.



1. It is important to study the principles found in _____ because the natural tendency of mankind leads _____ from happiness.
2. True happiness can be found only as a result of having _____ and understanding.
3. *Thou hast _____ all things, and for thy _____ they are and were created.*
4. God created us for His _____ and from the beginning He intended to have a _____ with us.
5. He also intended for us to develop rewarding relationships with _____.

Proverbs 3:21-35

- 21) *My son, let not them depart from thine eyes; keep sound wisdom and discretion:*
- 22) *So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.*
- 23) *Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.*
- 24) *When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.*
- 25) *Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.*
- 26) *For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.*
- 27) *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.*
- 28) *Say not unto thy neighbor, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.*
- 29) *Devise not evil against thy neighbor, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.*
- 30) *Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.*
- 31) *Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.*
- 32) *For the froward is abomination to the Lord: but His secret is with the righteous.*
- 33) *The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.*
- 34) *Surely he scorneth the scorers: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.*
- 35) *The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.*

1. *My son, _____ them _____ from thine eyes; keep sound wisdom and discretion:*
2. *So shall they be _____ unto thy _____, and _____ to thy _____.*
3. *Then shalt thou _____ in thy way _____, and thy foot shall _____ stumble.*
4. *When thou liest down, thou shalt _____ be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy _____ shall be sweet.*
5. *Be not afraid of sudden _____, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.*
6. *For the _____ shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being _____.*
7. *Withhold not _____ from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.*
8. *Say not unto thy neighbor, Go, and come again, and _____ I will give; when thou hast it by thee.*
9. *Devise not evil against thy _____, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.*
10. _____ with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.
11. _____ thou _____ the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.
12. *For the froward is abomination to the Lord: but His secret is with the _____.*
13. *The curse of the Lord is in the _____ of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.*
14. *Surely he scorneth the scorers: but he giveth grace unto the _____.*
15. *The _____ shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of _____.*

Building Block #1 – Spiritual Stability

My son, let not them depart from thine eyes; keep sound wisdom and discretion: so shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. (Proverbs 3:21-24)

Building solid, lasting relationships with others begins with having spiritual stability. The author of *Proverbs* gives extra emphasis to this foundational building block. As a father/teacher writing these words, he seems to anticipate the fact that his student might be thinking about departing from *sound wisdom and discretion*.

In essence he is saying, "Don't even think about letting these sound teachings escape from you! Keeping them helps you build a solid foundation for life as well as having rewarding relationships with others."

It is human nature to want something "new and improved." Still, we should not cast off truth

simply to be free of the "straight and narrow." Spiritual stability is the foundation for building healthy relationships with others, because it is what people are searching for.

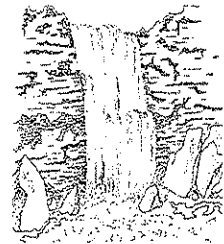
In constructing a building, workers use a plumb line to make sure their work is accurate. It would be foolish for them to guess or go by their feelings.

Likewise, we should always test what we believe, making sure it is true to the "plumb line" of God's Word. This will help us have spiritual stability.



“Be a Rock.”

My wife and I were devastated when our youngest daughter left Bible college and entered into a life of sin. We watched her depart from *sound wisdom and discretion*, and she headed toward misery and destruction. We didn't know what to do!



Sometime later, I was sitting in a wooded area at the base of a waterfall. Spring rains had been heavy, so the water gushed over the rock formation above and fell to the overflowing stream below.

I sat there watching the waterfall and praying to God for strength and guidance. Suddenly, God spoke to me within my thoughts. He said, “John, what do you see?”

I answered, “Lord, I see water – wild water gushing over the falls. It reminds me of my daughter; she is wild and out of control.”

God said, “Look again, what do you see?”

I looked once more and said, “All I see is water, uncontrollable water, shooting out around that rock.” Then I saw it! The rock! “Lord, I see the rock formation!”

God seemed to impress upon me, “John, the rock can't control the water, but by being there it helps direct the water. You be a rock for your daughter.” I sat there, but instead of looking at the wild, uncontrollable water, I looked at the rock. The water helped shape the rock but, at the same time, the rock helped direct the water.

I had been asking God what I should do and now I had my answer. “Do nothing. Just stand; don't move.” ...*Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58)*

After that experience, I determined to be a rock for my daughter. A rock doesn't do anything, it just stands solid. I have experienced God using my daughter to shape my life, and using me to direct her life. *And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Galatians 6:9)*

You need to be a person of stability if you are going to build strong, solid personal relationships. Your faith and emotions need to be anchored in the Rock – Christ Jesus. The more stable you are, the more you will be able to help others who are faltering or struggling.

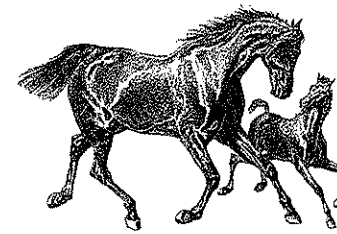
Four results of having stability: ♦ Abundant Life ♦ Attractiveness ♦ Security ♦ Sweet Sleep

1. Building solid, _____ relationships with others begins with having _____ stability.
2. Spiritual _____ is the foundation for building healthy relationships with others, because it is what people are _____ for.
3. In a waterfall, the water helps _____ the rock but, at the same time, the rock helps _____ the water.
4. *Be ye _____, unmovable, _____ abounding in the work of the Lord.*
5. *And let us not be weary in _____; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*
6. The more stable you are, the more you will be able to help others who are _____ or _____.

Abundant Life

So shall they be life unto thy soul (v.22a) This is talking about abundant spiritual life. It is the opposite of doubts and confusion. *Life unto thy soul* is spiritual vitality instead of spiritual weakness.

This type of life may be illustrated by a spirited horse running across a mountain valley. It is alive, powerful, and energetic.



Spiritual life produces enthusiasm and energy as it relates to decisions and direction in life. When Jesus came to earth, he offered people *living water*. In Bible times this term referred to water that was not stagnant; it was moving, flowing, fresh water. Wherever there was *living water*, there was life. Plants grew near the water and animals came to drink. In nature, *living water* produces abundant life. So it is, when you establish your life upon God's sound wisdom, He provides you living water that produces *abundant life*. It will be *life unto thy soul*.

1. *Life unto thy soul* is talking about _____ spiritual life.
2. Spiritual life produces _____ and _____ as it relates to decisions and direction in life.
3. When Jesus came to earth, he offered people _____.
4. When you establish your life upon _____ sound _____, He provides you living water that produces *abundant* _____.

Attractiveness

...and grace to thy neck. (v.22b) In Volume One we learned that *chains about thy neck* refers to having something that draws attention to the beauty of your inner person. This same thought is expressed here in the phrase *grace to thy neck*. When a person has life within his soul, it will soon start to shine out as a beacon to others. *Life unto thy soul* becomes *grace to thy neck*.

I watched a good friend of mine go through a time of attacks upon his personal and professional life. The more trials he went through, the more he drew upon the life that was within him. He prayed for those who were attacking him that they would find success and happiness in their lives. The *grace* showing forth from his life became an inspiration to me.

When I was in high school, I had a classmate who was confined to a wheelchair. She was also a radiant Christian. She didn't have the use of her legs, but she had life in her soul that was reflected on her face. The grace she wore gave her an attractiveness that everyone noticed.



Having God's wisdom controlling your life does something that literally makes you more attractive. If you will **keep** wisdom, understanding, and discretion, and never let them go, they will be *grace to thy neck*.

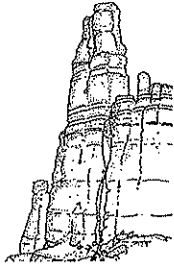
1. *Chains about thy neck* refers to having something that draws attention to the _____ of your _____ person.
2. When a person has life within his soul, it will soon start to shine out as a beacon to _____.

3. Having God's _____ controlling your life does something that literally makes you more _____.
4. If you will keep wisdom, understanding, and discretion, and _____ let them go, they will be _____ to thy _____.

Security

Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely and thy foot shall not stumble. (v.23)

When I was a young person, my parents took me to the Grand Canyon. I climbed carelessly around the cliffs near the edge. Today, I still get close enough to make my wife nervous, but I have a whole new respect for safety.



The same principle holds true in making decisions. When I was younger, I made many casual decisions; but, as I matured, I wanted to consider each decision more carefully. This requires *understanding*, which means responding to life in God's way.

A person feels secure when his life is under control. When a crisis comes, and he suddenly realizes that he is not in control of a particular situation, he may panic and make irrational decisions. This only makes the situation worse.

Calamities may come, but those who have kept *sound wisdom and discretion* will be better able to stand securely. They won't panic; they know that, with God's help, they are equipped to handle trials. *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. (Psalm 37:24)*

Over and over, the Scriptures assure us that God guards the path of those who walk uprightly:

- ▶ *He that walketh uprightly walketh surely. (Proverbs 10:9)*
- ▶ *Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. (Psalm 119:105)*
- ▶ *If God be for us, who can be against us? (Romans. 8:31)*

God wants us to be able to live our lives with the assurance of security. Notice this tremendous statement: *God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (II Timothy 1:7)*

1. Understanding means _____ to life in _____ way.
2. A person feels _____ when his life is under _____.
3. Calamities may come, but those who have kept *sound _____ and discretion* will be better able to stand _____.
4. They know that, with _____, they are equipped to handle trials.
5. *Though he _____, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the _____ upholdeth him with his hand.*
6. The _____ assure us that God _____ the path of those who walk _____.
7. *He that walketh _____ walketh _____.*
8. *Thy Word is a _____ unto my feet, and a _____ unto my path.*

9. *If God be _____ us, who can be _____ us?*
10. God wants us to be able to live our lives with an assurance of _____.
11. *God hath not given us the spirit of _____, but of _____, and of _____, and of a _____ mind.*

Sweet Sleep

When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid. Yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. (v.24) This *Old Testament* Scripture is the practical application of *Romans 8:28* – *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

It is one thing to know in your mind that all things are working together for good; but it is another thing to experience it in a fearful situation. Being afraid makes it difficult to sleep.

I remember a time when we had spent many months negotiating a certain deal with another business. My staff and I thought this would be something good for both companies. We had laid the groundwork and made preparations for the transaction to take place.

At the very last moment, we found out that the deal would be disastrous for our company. We knew we couldn't go through with it, but we had already made some changes in the structure of our business on the assumption that the deal would go forward. This was a most difficult situation! Not only did I fear for the welfare of our company and our employees, but I was also personally hurt. I felt that the intent of the other people was dishonorable. I also felt that if we didn't sign the agreement, they could bring harm to our business.

1. *When thou liest down, thou shalt not be _____; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy _____ shall be sweet.*
2. *And we know that all things _____ for good to them that love _____, to them who are the _____ according to his purpose.*
3. Being _____ makes it difficult to sleep.
4. It is inevitable that you will experience _____ from time to time.

I remember lying in bed, unable to sleep. As I was feeling distressed about the situation, my mind was alert and filled with worry. Then God brought to my attention the words from Scripture – *The Lord shall be thy confidence and shall keep thy foot from being taken. (Proverbs 3:26)* He reminded me that He was in control.



As I lay in my bed, I repeated that Scripture over and over again. Soon I fell asleep. God's promises gave me a restful sleep and the next morning I awoke refreshed.

In the next few days I saw God work in a marvelous way, proving to me once again that He really did have everything under control.

It is inevitable that you will experience fears from time to time. The best way to deal with a difficult situation is to keep God's wisdom flowing through your mind by meditating on Scripture. Then you will feel the assurance that God is in control and all things are in His hands.

Having a peaceful spirit, you can lie down and not be afraid. *I will both lay me down in peace and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety. (Psalm 4:8)*