

Christianity Is Based on Right Relationships



Relationship with God (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week sharing out of the truths that life has taught me, truths that can make the difference between success and failure in your life as they have done in mine.

Today and for the rest of the week, I'll be sharing with you on one of life's most important issues: How to build successful relationships. Our world today is full of people who have developed skills in handling things, all sorts of things: cars, radios, engines, computers, printing presses, scientific instruments, and, of course, money. An endless list, but they do not know how to handle people. Their lives are a train of broken relationships. Nevertheless, in the last resort, if you succeed in handling everything you touch but you cannot handle people, your life will be more of a failure than a success. And yet the key to successful relationships is not far from you. It is to be found, like the answer to so many other problems of life, in that unique and inexhaustible book, the Bible.

The first thing I want to communicate to you today is that Christianity is primarily a religion of right relationships rather than right doctrine. For many Christians, the primary test of whether a man is right or wrong is whether he holds the right doctrine. Now I do not want to underestimate the importance of doctrine, but doctrine is not terminal. It is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end.

In Romans 6, Paul calls doctrine a "form" or a "mold." A mold is something that we pour something hot into to bring it out in a certain specific shape. The test of the mold is the product it produces. And so it is with doctrine. It is to be tested by its products.

The product is relationships. Doctrines are means, relationships are ends. It's a sad fact, but many people who pride themselves on their right doctrines are wrong in almost all their relationships—at home, with other people, in business, with the members of their own church—and yet they base all their claims to success on the rightness of their doctrine.

The great symbol of the Christian faith has always been the cross. This is very appropriate because a cross has two

beams without which it is incomplete. The one is vertical, the other is horizontal. These two beams symbolize two relationships. The vertical beam symbolizes our relationship toward God, but the horizontal beam symbolizes our relationship to our fellow human beings. Now it's a fact of nature, a fact of physics, that if one beam is out of line in a cross, the other must be. If the horizontal beam is crooked, we do not need to look to see if the vertical beam is crooked. It must be. That's true in our relationships.

If our relationships with our fellow human beings are wrong, our relationship with God cannot possibly be right. This is a painful fact for some because, especially in certain sections of the church, those which we might call evangelical or fundamentalist, the whole emphasis has been on doctrine and on relationship with God. All that is very good, but is not sufficient. We have to get both beams in place.

Now let me speak to you for a moment about the essence of a relationship with God. I'd like to turn to a very familiar verse, Psalm 23:1, where David says:

> "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." (NAS)

Notice there that he is not talking about a doctrine. He is talking about a relationship, a personal relationship between himself and the Lord, and he declares that out of that relationship he has total security: "I shall not want." Everything that I will ever need, for time and for eternity, is included in that one relationship with God.

Notice two things about that relationship. First of all, it's present, it's not future. Religious people sometimes tend to believe that everything good is going to happen in the future. Meanwhile, everything's going wrong, the world is falling to pieces but somewhere in the future things are going to be all right. David speaks about a present relationship. One that he has now.

Then, it is a personal relationship. He says, "The Lord is MY shepherd." There's something direct and personal between the Lord and me and that is the basis of my security. My security is not in a doctrine, it's in a relationship. A relationship with God Himself. A relationship that guarantees the supply of every need in my life.

Now I'm going on to the other beam of the cross—the horizontal beam. I'm going to talk about our relationship with those around us. I want to turn to Ephesians 2:14–16 where Paul speaks about what Christ accomplished by His death on the cross in relationship to our fellow human beings. He says this:

> "For He [Christ] Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one ['both groups' there is primarily Jew and Gentile], and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity." (NAS)

The key phrases there are "out of two... one." Last week in speaking about the marriage relationship based on the marriage covenant, I pointed out that the ultimate purpose of the relationship is to make out of two, one. The basis, a covenant. That truth applies, likewise, to relationships within the body of Christ. God's purpose is to make out of the two, one. One new man. And the basis, again, is covenant. The cross, in God's purpose, took away enmity, divisions and barriers. It replaced them by reconciliation, love and unity. If that has not happened in our experience, then we have not received the full out-working of the purpose of the death of Jesus and the covenant that was made through His death.

Now, in Ephesians 4, Paul goes on to speak about what that one new man will look like. But he changes his metaphor and speaks about it as a body, the body of Christ. Not an individual physical body, but the total people of God considered as one. And he says this in Ephesians 4:15–16:

> "but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." (NAS)

Now certain objectives are stated there. I would suggest we choose three words: unity, maturity, and then one body. That's the objective of God for His people. To bring us to unity and into maturity and so to make one body. And in this picture of the body, Paul lays particular emphasis upon one type of thing within the body, the joints. He says the body is fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies. How are we to understand the joints? What do they mean for us? To me it's clear that the joints are the relationships between the members in the body. They are the things that hold those members together.

And so we could say that the joints are interpersonal relationships, are relationships with the other members of the

body of Christ. And in this context I want you to see something of tremendous importance. Paul says, the supply comes through the joints. It's the joints that supply what the body needs.

I personally believe that Christ has already made full provision for all the needs of His body, for every member of His body, but I know from experience that many of God's people are not living in the fullness of that provision. I believe perhaps the major reason is because the channels of supply, the joints, are not in working order. In other words, they're not in right relationship with fellow believers and so the supply of God for them is cut off because the joints are not working. In other words, if you want the fullness of God's supply, not only do you have to cultivate right relationship with God Himself, but you have to cultivate right relationship with God's people.

Let's look at two statements made about the early church in Acts 4. It says in verse 32:

> "And the multitude of them that believed were one heart and one soul..." (KJV)

> "Neither was there any among them that lacked..." (KJV)

Those two things go together. First of all, complete unity and harmony between them all; secondly, all their needs supplied. "Neither was there any among them that lacked..." How many groups of Christians do you know today of whom it could be said there was not one among them that lacked?

Well, my time is up for today. I'll be back again with you tomorrow at the same time. I'll be speaking about the one essential foundation for all successful and enduring relationships.

Radio Program

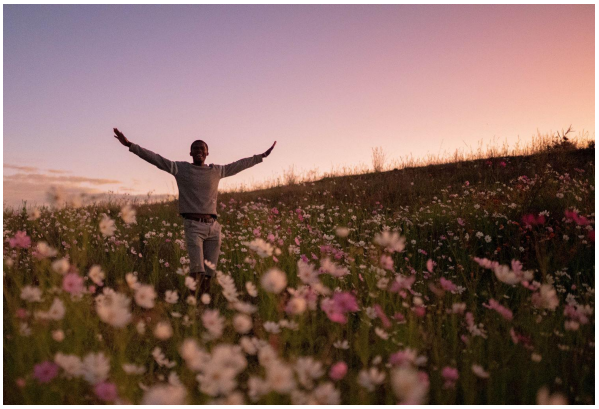
Transcript: TS-R002-101-ENG
Last Updated: 13 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

Bible Teaching Resources



Books

Illuminate and expand your understanding of the Bible with the Derek Prince collection of Christian books.



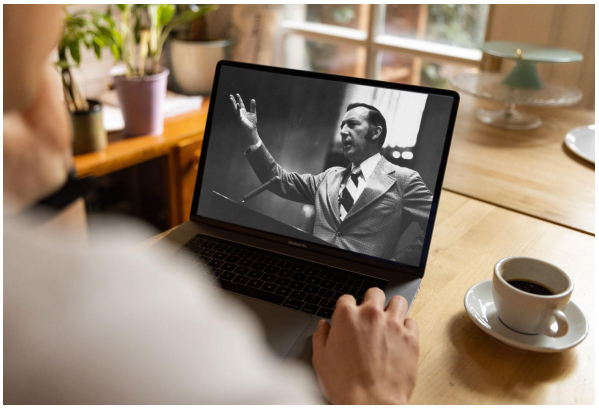
Daily Devotionals

Browse free biblically inspired daily devotionals by Derek Prince for practical teachings to uplift your Christian faith.



Legacy Radio

Listen to inspiring 10-minute messages and connect faith to life with the Derek Prince Legacy Radio podcast.



Sermons

Watch original and digitally remastered sermons by Derek Prince. Includes full message transcripts (free download).



Official App

Available free, download the official Derek Prince Ministries app and equip your faith, anywhere, anytime.



Proclamations

Declare life and experience the transformative power of God's Word with our bible-based Proclamations.

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries