

# Other Christians

## How Do I Relate To Other People Who Are Saved?

As we learned in Lesson 2, when you got saved, you moved from the devils' family to God's family. Spiritually, you now have a new family with many brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. We saw how the church is likened to a body in the previous lesson, and in this lesson, we will study the special relationship which you now have with your spiritual family. This lesson is designed to give you a clear understanding of how the local church operates as a family unit.

- I You are related to other Christians by your new birth.
  - A You were born again by the blood of Jesus Christ when you were saved. Your new birth gave you many brothers and sisters in Christ. John 1:12-13, 3:1-6, II Corinthians 6:17-18, Romans 8:29
  - B Not all people are born of the same blood line. Those who have not received Jesus Christ as their Saviour are NOT the children of God, and not spiritually related to you. Romans 9:8, Galatians 4:28-31, Ephesians 2:1-3
- II Family relationships carry a unique responsibility. Although these things should be true of our relationships with all people, they are a priority within the body of Christ. These are things we will do for family first, and then for others.
  - A You have spiritual responsibilities to your brothers in Christ.
    - 1 Pray for them. I Thessalonians 1:2-3, II Timothy 1:3
    - 2 Labor together with them for the gospel. I Corinthians 3:5-10
    - 3 Help restore those who have encountered problems. Galatians 6:1
    - 4 Share the burdens of life and ministry with them. Galatians 6:2, Romans 15:1-3, 12:15, I Corinthians 12:26

I thank God, whom I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;  
2 Timothy 1:3

B You have physical responsibilities to your brothers in Christ.

- 1 Be sensitive to their needs.  
I John 3:16-18, James 2:15-16
- 2 Minister physically and materially to them as you have opportunity and ability. This begins with your immediate church family, and at times extends to others in the body of Christ.  
Romans 12:13, Galatians 6:10, Acts 11:27-30
- 3 Serve them in humility.  
Philippians 2:3-4, Matthew 20:25-28

C You have personal responsibilities to your brothers in Christ.

- 1 Encourage and support them.  
I Thessalonians 5:11-14
- 2 Love them Biblically with pure motives.  
John 13:34-35, I John 3:14-16, I Peter 4:8
- 3 Be patient with them; as patient as God is with you.  
Romans 15:5-7
- 4 Be forgiving of them; again as God is forgiving with you.  
Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13

III Biblical fellowship is the essence of your relationship to other Christians.

A "Fellowship" is a common Christian term describing our spiritual life in Jesus Christ. It is the result of a common bond that unites all believers in the person of Jesus Christ.  
Philippians 1:3-6, 2:1-2, Ephesians 4:1-3

B Fellowship occurs when spiritual life is shared. The Holy Spirit works to unite believers as they participate in these spiritual activities.

- 1 Prayer.  
II Corinthians 1:11
- 2 Faith.  
Romans 1:12, Philippians 1:27
- 3 Ministry and service.  
II Corinthians 8:4, Galatians 2:9
- 4 Suffering.  
Philippians 3:10, II Corinthians 1:3-7, Hebrews 13:3

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I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.  
Ephesians 4:1-3

- 5 Teaching of the word of God.  
Acts 2:42, John 17:8, 20-21

C Fellowship is based upon Biblical character.

- 1 Humility  
Philippians 2:3-8, I Peter 5:5
- 2 Honesty  
Ephesians 4:25, II Corinthians 4:1-2
- 3 Love  
John 13:35, Galatians 5:13-15
- 4 Hospitality  
Titus 1:8, Acts 2:46-47, I Peter 4:8-9

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Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.  
Ephesians 4:25

THE KEY POINT OF THIS LESSON:

*True Biblical fellowship is ONLY in the person of Jesus Christ. It is not built around physical matters such as social status and common interests. Fellowship is not even built on similar doctrinal beliefs, even though doctrine is important. You must learn to have personal fellowship with Jesus Christ before any Christian relationships can be proper. Biblical fellowship cannot take place when a believer is disobeying the word of God and consistently violating his personal fellowship with Jesus Christ.  
I John 1:3-7, I Corinthians 1:9-10*

IV.) How to deal with offenses among Christians.

Unfortunately, offenses in your church will certainly happen, just like brothers and sisters fight within a physical family. These offenses are often difficult to deal with, because of how close we SHOULD be as members of a spiritual family. It takes courage, character, and maturity to resolve conflict among family members. The love, patience, forgiveness, and care we are to show to one another will cover most "offenses" that are minor in nature. But when an offense is serious enough, the Bible gives us definite principles to resolve a conflict between brothers in Christ.

- A Seek to reconcile the offense. Do not ignore the issue and allow Satan an advantage.  
II Corinthians 2:11

- B Always be “easily entreated”.
- 1 This means to be approachable and mature, and not easily offended.  
James 3:13-18, Psalm 119:165
  - 2 Those who are NOT “easily entreated” allow pride and emotions to rule them and prevent God from working in their life.  
Proverbs 25:28, 16:32, I Samuel 25:17
- C Take the matter to the person who offended you - directly, personally, and privately. Do not talk ABOUT the other believer to others who are not involved in the matter. That is gossip, and sin. When both of you follow Biblical guidelines with maturity, MOST conflicts will be resolved with a minimal amount of hurt, and in many cases, the conflict will serve to “gain a brother” and give both of you an even greater love for each other.  
Matthew 18:15
- D If the matter cannot be resolved privately, take a mature believer with you to help mediate the conflict. This person should be a leader in your church with Biblical knowledge and ability to judge who can give an objective view.  
Matthew 18:16, I Corinthians 6:1-5
- E If the matter still cannot be resolved, take it to your pastor and submit to the Biblical authority of the local church. Once you have followed these principles and reached this stage in the matter, it now becomes the responsibility of the church leaders to handle it in the body, and your “case” is to be submitted to pastoral leadership.  
Matthew 18:17
- F When an offense is turned over to church leaders to resolve, your direct involvement is over, but you still bear certain responsibilities.
- 1 Do not go to the lost to resolve a church conflict.  
I Corinthians 6:6
  - 2 However, God has established and ordained the law of the land for the proper function of society and the protection of all its citizens including Christians. Use the law if a crime has been committed, or if it is absolutely necessary in the matter. Seek pastoral counsel in such a matter!  
Romans 13:1-5

- 3 DROP IT! Even if you have suffered wrong, give the matter to God and don't take it back from him. Satan destroys churches and believers through these types of personal conflicts. Do not allow him this opportunity in your life. The mission of God and your spiritual walk with him are far more important than a personal grievance, no matter how serious it is.  
I Corinthians 6:7, II Corinthians 2:10-11
  - 4 Trust God to resolve the matter, even if doesn't happen until heaven.  
I Peter 2:19-24, Romans 12:17-21
  - 5 Trust God to work through the leadership of your church.  
Hebrews 13:7, 17
  - 6 Be ready to forgive your brother in Christ if they repent. Understand that reconciliation and restoration cannot take place unless the offending party repents. (Example: God forgave your sins when Jesus Christ died on the cross; but you did not access his forgiveness until you confessed your sin and received Christ as your Saviour.) A forgiving spirit will cleanse your own heart, but forgiveness is not received by the offending party until he repents.  
Matthew 18:21-22, Luke 17:3, Colossians 3:13
  - 7 Do not harbor bitterness. It hurts you most, and affects others in your life.  
Hebrews 12:14-15, Ephesians 4:31-32
  - 8 Pray for your brother with pure motives.  
Matthew 5:43-48, Romans 12:14
  - 9 No matter how much it may hurt and how difficult the conflict, ask God for the ability to continue to love your brother.  
John 13:35
  - 10 Remember above all else: God is the God of reconciliation. When conflict resolution is handled Biblically, God gets the glory.  
II Corinthians 5:17-21
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## Basic questions you may be asking:

What should I do if I think I may have offended another Christian?

Everyone is capable of offending others, no matter how sincere and honest they are. If you know you have offended someone, go to them. They may not come to you for a number of reasons. But ask God to give you the strength of character necessary to resolve the conflict. The same conflict resolution principles from above apply. But until you handle a known offense, your spiritual growth and fellowship will be hindered.

Matthew 5:23-26

Do you have any other questions about this subject?

## REVIEW AND DISCUSSION:

There are many popular beliefs which are contrary to the truths of the word of God. A discussion of these issues in light of the principles you just learned should give you a proper understanding of this lesson and correct some of these misconceptions:

1.) What is the extent of our association with Christians who do not believe exactly as we do?

2.) Why is true Biblical fellowship not always centered around a meal or an activity?

3.) If you are offended by a church member, what is the first thing you should do about it?

4.) Why should you NOT ignore a conflict long enough, hoping it will just go away?

## Memory Verses:

**Ephesians 4:32:** "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

**John 13:35:** "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

**1 John 1:7:** "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."