



## What Are the Keys to Building Healthy Relationships?

*“If God has something to say about everything in my life, what is He saying about my relationships with other people? What does it mean to have healthy relationships and how can I build them so they honor God?”*

Do you ever wonder why our relationships mean so much to us? God is relational and because we are made in His image, so are we! God not only wants to have an awesome relationship with us, but He also wants us to build healthy relationships with others. Matthew 22:37-40 *“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

Our relationship with God should be our highest priority, because through it, we will know how to relate to others. God, through the Holy Spirit, encourages us and convicts us about the relationships that we have. It is important to exercise caution whenever we journey into new friendships.

Until our relationship with God is solid and our walk with Him steady, we better be careful in developing new ones, because we can easily compromise ourselves, our beliefs, and our values when we are pressured by those we like. Again, reading the Scriptures and praying and seeking wise counsel will allow us to make good choices.

Solid friendships are the most important earthly relationships we have. A great question to ask ourselves before entering any friendship is, “What kind of relationships do I want in my life?” If we want healthy ones that build up and encourage each other and glorify God in the process, we need to get serious about our faith. It is critical that the friends we make, and maybe eventually date, all share a love for God. There is serious danger in dating a non-believer, hoping that they will believe in the future. The hurt and pain of breaking a relationship because both parties do not believe is not worth it. Set boundaries early and stick to them.

However, one of the biggest mistakes Christians make is to stay away from those who think differently and do not have a solid relationship with God. God calls us all to go into the world and witness the truth by the way we live, talk and love others. A word of caution with friends that are non-believers: stay focused on God and be careful that such friends do not pull you away from your passion for God and doing the right thing. You should never feel like you have to abandon your faith to maintain a friendship. That is one reason why it is so important to know what and why you believe in the Christian faith. The closest that many of your friends are going to get to a church or to God is through you!

Accountability relationships are overlooked by many of us, but we must have them if we want to grow in our faith. Accountability involves seeking out other Christians who can provide moral support, encouragement and accountability in our relationship with God and others. Our first priority in this kind of relationship should be truth. Holding someone accountable and being held accountable requires asking tough questions and being completely honest in the pursuit of spiritual growth. Accountability partners should encourage one another to continue good choices and alert each other when they start to stray. Having an accountability partner is one of the greatest ways to grow in your relationship with God!