

Growing Through Life in Relationship With God³ and Each Other

How Do We Show "All Are Welcome" in friendship/relationship/ association?

How Do/Should We Act Out Our "Roles" as Christians?"

How Does How We Act Reflect What We Believe and Have our Faith In?

How can we use our gifts and work together to be the whole people of God?

Most of what follows can be read in most "self-help how to" books, which mine the Biblical wisdom treasure here without giving the Bible credit. We will give it credit. When we think of "roles" to follow as Christians in our interaction with each other and others, whether in this class, at home, at school, at work, or anywhere else, we often think of the most famous of the rules and role definitions in the Bible:

- (1) God to Moses to us: The Ten Commandments: **Exodus 20:2-17**
- (2) David on "The Divine Shepherd" in The **23rd Psalm**
- (3) Jesus' The Lord's Prayer: **Luke 11:2-4**
- (3) Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: **Matthew 5-7**
- (4) Jesus' "The Greatest Commandments": **Mark 12:28-31 (love God, love others)**
- (5) Jesus' 40 Parables (see the "List of Parables" which are usually listed in study bibles)
- (6) Jesus' Promise of the Holy Spirit: **John 14:15-17, 25-26**
- (7) Jesus' Great Commission: **Matthew 28:18-19**

Words from these 7 and the 10 below appear in our Apostles Creed and in the Nicene Creed, as well as in Luther's home study course in his Small Catechism, and are read on Sunday mornings as part of the Epistle and Gospel lessons. The 10 below are additional "definitions" or "how to's" to carry out the 7 above, and can be used to evaluate our own relational "performances". Do you have favorite verses we should add above or below? We all need to consider the personal riches to be mined from the Bible as we wrestle with how to "be/play the role" of "Christian" in our daily lives. The key: "**Don't break role!**" This is actually the key, #1 rule of roles for all personal and professional relationships and friendships. Roles are our "instinct substitutes". Let us follow:

1. **Micah 6:8**: "what the Lord requires of you" is to "do justice, and love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" in our friendships together.
2. Any of the **Proverbs**.
3. **John 13:34**: to "love one another, just as I have loved you" or **Matthew 22:39** and **Galatians 5:14**: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself".
4. **Galatians 5:22-23** (summarizes I Cor. 13 re how to be brothers and sisters in Christ) and exhibit/model the "the Fruit of the Spirit": "...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." [If we do this, we can say to each other: "I see God in you".]
5. **Ephesians 4:1-3, 25-26, 31-32**: "...to lead a life worthy of the calling to which [we have] been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ... So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil." ... Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you."
6. **Romans 12:9-21**: For "home repair" on the self and for "home repair" for the church community, what some call the "marks of the true Christian":
 - (9) Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good;

- (10) love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. (11) Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord.
- (12) Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.
- (13) Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.
- (14) Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.
- (15) Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.
- (16) Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are.
- (17) Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.
- (18) If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.
- (19) Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."
- (20) No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads."
- (21) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

7. Ephesians 4:1-6 (Unity in the Body of Christ)

(1) I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worth of the calling to which you have been called, (2) with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, (3) making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (4) There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, (6) one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

8. Ephesians 3:20-21: "Living by faith leads to inner happiness. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

9. I Cor 7:5: "...for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer". We each need to pray daily for each other and each other's families

10. Additional Biblical verses (KJV) on which to meditate and which to follow [From Hill & Stone, Success Through A Positive Mental Attitude, pp. 45-46]:

- As he thinketh in his heart, so is he.
- If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.
- Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!
- According to your faith be it unto you.
- Faith without works is dead.
- What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.
- If God is for us, who can be against us?
- Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Let us harness the power of promise and the power of forgiveness, with grace and forbearance, as we wrestle with the issues of relationships, whether close or strained, whether regarding acceptance or rejection, and with other life course issues. As Hannah Arendt states: when we **keep promises**, we keep unpredictability and chaos at bay, and when we **forgive**, we relieve what cannot be reversed, that which has been said or done, especially when we did not and could not see the

consequences. Steven R. Covey and his son Sean Covey. in their "7 Habits" books (Sean's is for teen-agers), invites us to create what he calls a "Habit 4, 5, 6 culture" [4=think win-win; 5=seek to understand then be understood; 6=synergize]: "the purpose of which is to "involve people in the problem to work out the solution together" (which is a "synergy" of "significance"). Let us pledge to create such a culture. This is a great way to honor and respect each other.

Peter J. Jessen, March 1999; adapted for St. Luke Confirmation Class, Sept. 1999