

## **GODLY PROSPERITY IN RELATIONSHIPS**

### **GENESIS 1:26-28**

**1. WE LIVE IN RELATIONSHIPS.** The fact of each of our lives is that we live in relationships. From the very first days of our lives...for the most part, each of us live in a home with a mother, father, and possibly brothers and sisters. As we grow and into adulthood, we seek for that partner in life...that spouse to live with according to God's plan. In the very first book of the Bible, God designed Adam and Eve to live in a relationship with one another...and to live interdependent on each other. *Genesis 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.* In the Ten Commandments...the very nature of the Ten Commandments deal with "relationships"...our relationship with God, and then our relationship with family and others. It is the heartbeat of God that we live in a right relationship with Him and others.

**2. WE HAVE BEEN CREATED FOR INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS. FIRST WITH GOD...** God placed Adam and Eve in the midst of the Garden...but have you ever asked why? God Almighty wants to have an intimate relationship with mankind...because that is His nature. God created man for intimate relationships...giving us the example that our life is designed for loving intimate relationships. *Genesis 1:29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.*

Adam and Eve lived in security for a season of time...because they knew that out of God's overflow of love...He would provide for them...all that they needed. One of the reasons why the world is so stressed out...so worried, and fretful is found in this one reality...mankind has not allowed himself to enter into a real relationship with the God that created him.

When we fail to understand that God wants an intimate relationship with us...which will provide: our needs, our security...and all the good things of God...we live life in a panic. One sobering truth in all the Bible is this...godly prosperity begins with realizing that God of the Bible is not out to simply give you directives...He wants a relationship. Paul was probably the most prosperous person in the New Testament...but it wasn't in money...it was in the deep realization of knowing God. *Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

Paul could live in a loving relationship with God because he realized that God loved him "just the way he was". Irregardless of Paul's past, it was the nature of God to forgive him and cleanse him through the blood of Christ.

**SECOND...WITH OTHERS.** It is the will of God that we have loving relationships with others. The Bible declares in Mark 12:31, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*" God has created you for wonderful relationships of all types. You are created to love friends, family, neighbors. And God declares that we are not only to love our friends, but we are to love those that even mistreat us. Because that is the very nature of God!

**3. IT IS THE WILL OF GOD THAT WE HAVE INTIMATE LOVING RELATIONSHIPS.** Probably most of us were never told when we were growing up that God wanted us to have intimate loving relationships...but a glance in Scripture reveals that the God of all creation desires that we enjoy loving relationships. God's interaction with the first couple reveal it. God's desire that a man and woman be joined together for marriage...is the revelation that God wants wonderful loving intimate relationships. God revealed that He wanted an intimate relationship with the nation of Israel by demonstrating His wonderful care and protection for them. God's plan through the avenue of prayer reveals that He wants us to interact with Him, talk to Him, and be willing to listen to Him as He speaks back to us...in relationships.

Jesus call of the 12 disciples...revealed that He wanted to interact and teach these men the ways of God through loving close relationships. The disciples followed Jesus wherever He went, they ate together, walked together, fellowshiped together...because that was and is a part of God's plan for true biblical prosperity...that we prosper in relationships. No doubt the disciples would never forget their time with Jesus on earth...and those events would be etched in their mind until the day they went home to be with the Lord. Imagine what Jesus taught them. No doubt He laughed with them, fished with them...and demonstrated before them the full abundant life that God desired for each of them.

We cannot enter into abundant life...the life that Christ wants to give us...if we miss out on developing intimate relationships. When we enter into that intimate relationship with the God that created us...He has a way of taking mountain size problems and reducing them minute matters.

**4. WHEN RELATIONSHIPS ARE RIGHT.** What are the benefits of prospering in relationships? a) Hearts filled with joy....and we have someone to share the exciting times of life with...as well as the sorrows. b) Life is enjoyable....we are mentally, physically and emotionally whole. c) We can look forward to each day...because there are loving relationships...we anticipate being with friends family. d) Life on earth becomes like a miniature heaven...while this life will never be heaven, when we have wonderful relationship, this life is like a foretaste of heaven to come.

**5. HOW TO PROSPER IN RELATIONSHIPS?** *First, realize that God wants an intimate relationship with you.* Until you realize that intimate relationships are God's idea, you will struggle all of your life. Sadly...in the lives of many people, especially men...there is a struggle to have intimate loving relationships...but something happens and changes when we realize...they are God's idea. If you struggle loving and having deep meaningful relationships it may well be that you have never come to understand that the God that created you wants you to enjoy and live a life filled with loving meaningful relationships.

*Second, there must be a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.* Scripture declares in *1 John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

The Bible declares that God and God alone is love... it is only when we know Him by grace through faith that we are genuinely able to love and develop authentic relationships. If you never come to know Jesus Christ...you are missing out on the One that is the Source of all true genuine relationships. When you come to know Christ, and come to experience His love, you want to love for the simple reason that He loves you.

*Third, recognize that God has done all that is necessary in order that we can have a right relationship with Him and others.* When God gave His Son on the cross...it was for the purpose that we could have a right relationship with Him. When Jesus Christ died on the cross...He was the full and total payment, forgiving us, and releasing us to enjoy a meaningful relationship with God. We do not have to live deprived, guilt-ridden, beating ourselves for our own sins...because Jesus Christ has forgiven us, and He enables us to live this life in victory. If you believe any other way, you will struggle with a right relationship with God, and you will want others to meet up to some unrealistic standard before you show love and acceptance.

*Third, there must be a ready heart that is willing to forgive.* If there is one thing that stifles and hinders countless relationships...it is the reality that there have been ruptures made in relationships and wrongs that have been committed. Many individuals find themselves estranged and separated in relationships because of an unwillingness to forgive. A husband and wife are estranged because there is an unwillingness for one to forgive the other. Church members are at odds with one another, because there is an unwillingness on the part of one member to forgive the other. *Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

*Fourth, refusal to harbor ill will against others.* In the world of soured relationships, there is the sobering reality that one person has chosen to harbor ill will against another. The truth is, we all live in a human body

where we hurt and get hurt. For our soul to prosper in relationships involves "a willing and deliberate refusal" to hold another person hostage...when they have wronged us. *Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:* Not only does ill will prevent prosperity in relationship, but our prayers will be unheard by the Lord God...He has declared it.

*Fifth, recognize that there is a day of accountability.* The Bible declares that we will be treated in a precise way as to how we have treated others. *Matthew 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.* When we realize that there is a day of reckoning, in which we will be judged for our words toward others we live with and live around...something sobering will happen in our spirit. The Lord God wants us to know that we will be judged according to "the way" we judge. We will give account before a holy God for all that we have said, and all that we have done in the area of relationships.

*Sixth, realize the power of the tongue.* *James 3:6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.* Sadly, in most relationships that have turned south, there is little realization of the power of the tongue. When a husband uses his tongue to degrade his spouse...those words cannot be taken back, and when a spouse does that to her husband, the same holds true. The Bible declares that the tongue is a "fire". What we say can burn and burn deeply. When we refuse to "hold our tongue" we are acting unwisely. It is a wise person that realizes that within the tongue there is great power...and the potential for great harm or help.

*Seventh, recognize your responsibility in the relationship process.* Many relationships turn sour and go bad for the simple fact of "selfishness" and "self-centeredness". The fact is, if we are saved by the grace of God, we have a responsibility to focus on others...to encourage others...to lift others up. *John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* It was the nature of Christ to focus on uplifting others. The call of God is not to get others to "be your servants" but rather to be a servant to others. In the relationship process...Jesus revealed to the disciples that His nature was to serve. *John 13:14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.* When we approach relationships with a servant spirit rather than a selfish spirit...then and then alone do relationships prosper. However, the choice is ours to make.