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Building Healthy Relationships

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Building Healthy Relationships

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101
Ways to
Strengthen
Relationships
Today p.12

www.newchurch.org





- There is one loving, personal God, and He is the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The life of religion is to follow the Ten Commandments and to act honestly and faithfully in our daily occupations.
- The New Church is based on the Word of God, as revealed in the Old and New Testaments and the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.
- The Word of God (the Bible) has a deeper level of meaning, teaching about the Lord's essential nature and a person's spiritual development.
- Each of us continues life as a complete person immediately after the death of the body.
- God does not judge us, but we judge ourselves by what we love and how we live.
- People of every faith are saved if they live sincerely according to their religion.

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New Church Connection

Exists to inspire, inform, and connect people who are interested in the New Church. Every issue will have background information on New Church teachings; inspirational content from personal testimonies and quotations from the Word; and information about the organized New Church (the General Church of the New Jerusalem), and how to get connected. Each issue has a theme to help enrich your spiritual journey.

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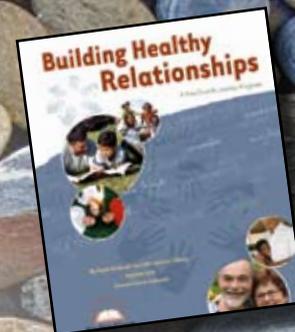
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Check out this new workbook, **Building Healthy Relationships**, by John and Lori Odhner and David Lindrooth, that will give you practical tools for your daily life and inspiration for your journey. (See a preview inside this issue.) Available from store.newchurch.org or 267-502-4980.

Do you ever wonder if the Lord cares about you? Your life? Your relationships? The New Church teaches that not only does the Lord care about all aspects of our life, He is providing for us constantly. His care and attention are intimately present as we strive to know Him while we work on relating to our spouse, family, neighbors, friends, co-workers, and new people we meet each day.



The Lord's care and attention are intimately with each of our relationships.

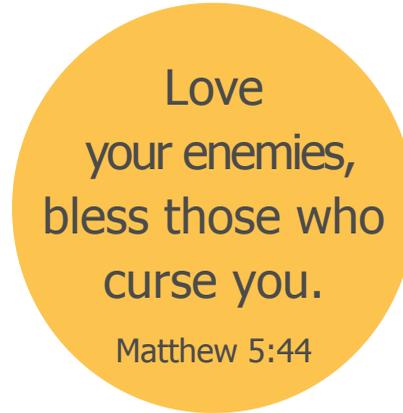
“The Lord’s foresight and providence are in the very minutest of these tiniest details connected with a person, in things so very minute that it is impossible by any thought to comprehend as much as one out of a hundred millions of them...” (*Secrets of Heaven* 3854). I’m reminded of the quote from the Psalms “How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand” (Psalm 139: 17-18).

In this issue we explore the tools the Lord provides to help us purposefully nurture the health of the different relationships in our life. We explore questions about relating with God, forgiveness, marriage, and more on pp.6-7. If you think building healthy relationships is complicated, try out some of the 101 simple approaches on p.12. We also hope you’ll take practical steps to support your relationships by engaging in a Building Healthy Relationships program with a local New Church congregation or online (see previews of this program on pp. 14-19). Whether joining a spiritual growth program or connecting with a friend, we invite you to take a step for growth in your life today.

Bronwen Henry, General Church Outreach

You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife; nor his male servant nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s. Exodus 20:17

The essence of spiritual love is to do good to others, not for one’s own sake, but for their sake. *Divine Love and Wisdom* 335



A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. John 13:34

The Lord is indeed present with each individual, but that presence is closer or more remote, all depending on how near the person is to love or distant from it. *Secrets of Heaven* 1038

Who said it?

Emanuel Swedenborg was an 18th century scientist and philosopher who strongly believed in God and who later devoted his life to the revelation of the New Church. In the New Church we believe his later works are a divinely inspired revelation for the modern age, touching on all the different aspects of religion with a very rational and common-sense approach. See www.newchurch.org/about/swedenborg for more information.

Seeking Answers

Questions about Spiritual Growth and Relationships

Q How does one have a relationship with God?

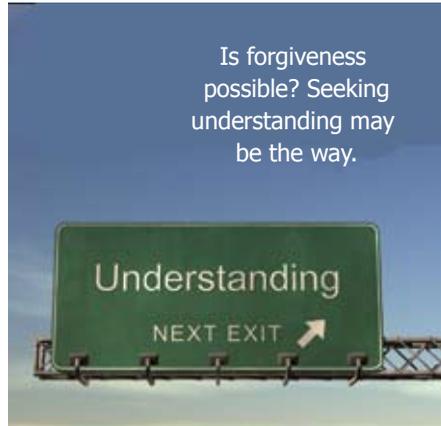
A It may seem daunting to try to build a “relationship” with God, especially if you think of Him as invisible and unknowable. But many of the same tools you use to develop your connection with your family, community and friends can also apply to your relationship with God. Three of these tools include time, communication, and trust. We can spend time with God by reading and reflecting on His Word. We can communicate through prayer, especially by remembering to listen as much as we talk. And we can learn to trust by finding little parts of our lives that we can hand over to God, saying, “I give this over to You. Please keep me open to Your leading.”

Q Does working on relationships while I’m single make a big difference to my future marriage?

A Absolutely! Any bad habits, grudges, or bad attitudes that sour our relationships with friends and acquaintances will likely cause trouble in a marriage as well. One of the best ways for a single person to prepare for marriage is to work on better communication, selfless thinking, and on developing trust in God.

Q Is forgiveness possible?

A Forgive the waitress for forgetting the ketchup? No problem. Forgive the postman for delivering mail to the wrong address? Not too hard. But what about the friend who betrayed your confidence, or the parent whose demeaning comments have left deep and painful scars on your heart? Is that level of forgiveness even possible? As hard as it may seem, God asks us to “forgive those who trespass against us.” But what



if the person we forgive keeps hurting us? When the Lord speaks of forgiveness, He primarily means “do not hold a grudge.” Forgiving in this sense should have no end. True forgiveness takes a daily effort to look for the best in those

who have wronged us. Even as we look for this best, we can also work to be strong and self-respecting—not allowing ourselves to be hurt again and again. Accomplishing this is not easy. As we try, we can remember King Solomon’s request: “Lord, give me a wise and understanding heart” (1 Kings 3:9).

Q How do I heal a relationship when the other person has passed into the spiritual world?

A If you have unresolved tension or strain with someone who has already died, you may wonder if you missed your chance for reconciliation. The wonderful truth is that it’s never too late. The spiritual world is right here with us, and loved ones are only a thought away. Efforts to heal a relationship with someone who has already passed away can bring relief, healing, and even renewed closeness. One way to begin the process is through writing letters to this person. You can include your feelings of anger, frustration, hurt, guilt, and sadness, as well as your reflections, your attempts to see from the other’s perspective, and your hopes for a better relationship. Over time, this communication may open up a new way of seeing the other, and pave the way for a joyful reunion when you join this person in the life after death.

Q What does the New Church teach about marriage?

A The Writings of the New Church teach that real joy in marriage comes from wanting the best for the other. The feelings of true love are heavenly, and after death, those who truly loved each other on earth will live together as married partners in heaven. On the other hand, those who approach marriage solely for self-satisfaction will find marriage unfulfilling and, in the worst cases, like hell. The church also teaches that those who want to be married, but who do not find a spouse on earth, will find a wonderful partner in heaven.

Q How does the present reality of the life after death impact my relationships?

A Since heaven and hell are spiritually present with every person who is alive in this world, we feel the influences of good and evil spirits in every minute, and in every thought and feeling. Spirits from hell inspire feelings and thoughts such as hate, jealousy, or anger, while good spirits inspire hope, trust, peace, and forgiveness. In every moment, we have the freedom to choose which world to live in: heaven or hell.

Changing Lives

The path of life seems to have little to do with our plan and everything to do with God's plan. **Lydia Barrett Boericke** explores the Lord's gentle leading that helped prepare her for marriage—and find the right guy.

Healthy Relationships



Lydia Barrett Boericke

A little over a year ago I quit dating. Over the course of the previous year, I had experienced a gut-wrenching breakup, followed by a string of lousy first dates. It was so bad that in an effort to make lemons into lemonade I considered writing a stand up comedy routine about my comically tragic experiences! While that didn't really pan out, I still never would have predicted the next turn of events.

In my commitment to quit dating, I first cleared my social calendar. Next, my loyal companion Wilbur (a somewhat blind, mostly deaf, slightly geriatric Shar-pei) and I hunkered down for a few weeks of sappy movie watching. One night, after a particularly tear-producing love story, I surreptitiously began to pray. Okay...not quite surreptitiously—I was under the influence of a love story, after all.

My prayer, essentially, was this: "Lord, I know I just quit dating. I know none of my relationships thus far have worked out. I certainly can't say I'm the best at relationships, but I know I want love. I want to be known. I want to get married, have kids and raise a family. And, I know that if it is Your will, it will happen in due time."

Immediately, I began to think about my life and how rich and full it was. I had wonderful family and friends who were there for me in both the best and worst of times. I had great adventures and travels. I had a cute little apartment I just loved. I was finally seeing a path in my career. I already had a wonderful life—something for which I was truly grateful. With that thought, I tucked myself

Life Faith Action

Quotations from the Lord's Word
and thoughts on how to
bring these ideas into life.



Bless the Lord, O my soul, and
forget not all His benefits!
Psalm 103:1

Reflect on the ways that you are
blessed by the Lord's presence in
your life.

You have heard that it was said to those of old,
'You shall not commit adultery.'

But I say to you that whoever looks at a
woman to lust for her has already committed
adultery with her in his heart. Matthew 5:27

Reflect on times when relationships have
become contaminated with worldly desires.
Consider ways to return honor to those rela-
tionships with what is good and true.



Continued from page 8

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Matthew 6:10

Hand a particularly difficult situation over to the Lord in prayer and say, "Your will be done."

It is a universal law that is unchanging and perpetual in the spiritual world, that you are not to do to others anything except that which you wish others to do to you.

Secrets of Heaven 8223

Think of how you like to be cared for and then try to create that level of care and attention for someone else in your life.

A wise man...built his house on the rock.... [A]nd it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. Matthew 7:25

Go forward as a powerful force for good in the world and as a positive influence in your relationships.

into bed, knowing that the Lord had just sent me comfort for my journey. As with all spiritual journeys, the work did not stop there. I was still on my no-dating diet, after all. I chose to surround myself with my friends and family, so I would have companions on my journey who could share their wisdom with me.

One afternoon, I was running through my comedy monologue on the phone with a friend. I wasn't really creating anything... it was more of a gripe session, really. Suddenly, it dawned on me, "be the change you want to see...." I stopped my rant. The Lord

was guiding me away from bitterness. It was a small step, but it was followed by innumerable, similar small steps:

- Get your mind off yourself and do something good for others.
- Forgive.
- Honor the people who have been in your life and taught you important lessons...even your ex!
- Listen to and be present with the people in your life, without judgment or criticism.
- Be a witness on their journeys.
- Share your gifts from the Lord.
- Pray, meditate and keep listening for the Lord's guidance.

As I did these things, I began to feel wealthy beyond measure. Once I started seeing things and people around me as gifts from the Lord, suddenly miracles began to show up everywhere in my life.

One night, I went out to dinner with a friend—a girl's night out. The café is a popular local eatery, so I didn't think twice when Brent walked through the door. I knew him from work, and thought to myself, "Oh, he's such a great guy," as the words "Why don't you join us?" fell out of my mouth.

I didn't know it then, but the Lord had delivered my miracle. Brent was patient as I gently resisted the pull to leave the safety of my no-date diet. He invested in being my friend and getting to know me. We took things slowly—in fact, right around the time we "officially" started dating, I knew he was someone I could marry. I could see him being a loving and supportive husband and father. Even though he often brought out the best in me, he was patient and kind when I was at my worst. Every way I looked at our relationship, I knew he was the one for me. And I knew the Lord led me to him...all I had to do was follow Him. ■

Once I started seeing things and people around me as gifts from the Lord, suddenly miracles began to show up everywhere in my life.

101 Ways to Strengthen Your Relationships

It is easy to forget that there are many different ways to work on our relationships. This list of ideas includes things (many of them fun and easy) that you can do on your own, or for or with other people (a sibling, co-worker, child, parent, spouse, or friend...you decide!) to help you build stronger, healthier relationships.

Healthy Relationships

1. Pray for hope.
2. Do anonymous acts of kindness.
3. Tell people the things you appreciate about them.
4. List things you are grateful for in your relationships.
5. Share your gratitude list with another person.
6. Send flowers for no reason.
7. Turn off the Television.
8. Dedicate quality time together.
9. Use kind words.
10. Do service work together.
11. Speak positively about others when they are not present.
12. Send a thank you or gratitude card to someone.
13. Have the difficult conversation you have been avoiding.
14. Ask for forgiveness.
15. Walk together.
16. Cook a special meal for a friend.
17. Put yourself on a judgment free diet.
18. Surprise someone with a picnic or special outing.
19. Look to the Lord for support.
20. Start conversations with a positive focus.
21. Offer help.
22. Support others on their spiritual walk.
23. Accept help.
24. Give each other space.
25. Respect the ideas of others.
26. Pray for joy.
27. Offer praise.
28. Own your role in conflict.
29. Speak from your heart.
30. Commit to communication.
31. Respect other people's time—be on time.
32. Honor others' past experiences.
33. Respect your differences.
34. Talk in person or on the phone before emailing.
35. Foster open communication.
36. Choose to be silent instead of gossip.
37. Be direct.
38. Assume positive motives.
39. Work through resentments.
40. Be gentle in offering guidance.
41. Offer advice only when asked.
42. Empower and support others.
43. Respect confidentiality.



44. Be honest.
45. Do what you say you will do.
46. Make eye contact.
47. Smile.
48. Be helpful.
49. Fulfill a request without complaining.
50. Give hugs.
51. Offer a handshake.
52. Worship together.
53. Pray together.
54. Laugh together.
55. Cry together.
56. Ask people how their day was and pay attention.



57. Remember important days, anniversaries, and milestones.

58. Acknowledge the suffering of others—but don't

- take it personally.
59. Acknowledge the anniversary of difficult events.
60. Notice body language.
61. Acknowledge what is unspoken.
62. Say hello and goodbye.
63. Turn off your phone for visits.
64. Invite people into your home.
65. Share your faith journey.
66. Share your thoughts.
67. Share ideas.
68. Share your worries.
69. Share hopes.
70. Play games together.
71. Hike together.
72. Be in nature together.
73. Listen to music together.
74. Do spiritual work together.
75. Spend time one on one.
76. Spend time in silence together.
77. Read a book and discuss it

- together.
78. Work together.

79. Prepare a meal together.

80. Offer to handle a chore/job/responsibility.
81. Reflect back when listening.
82. Ask clarifying questions.
83. Wait for other people to finish their own sentences.
84. Be patient.
85. Make relationships a priority in your schedule.
86. Reach out and help a stranger.
87. Offer a kind word to someone you don't know.
88. Send a card to someone you have lost touch with.
89. Share stories from childhood.
90. Dine together.
91. Deliver an unexpected treat.
92. Exercise together.



93. Pray for acceptance.
93. Go with someone to a place they have always wanted to go.
94. Consider another person's perspective.
95. Call to check in on a friend during difficult times.
96. Ask the Lord to show you how to be loving.
97. Let your light shine.
98. Turn your relationships over to the Lord.
99. Do your own personal work.
100. Participate in a spiritual growth group together.
101. Enjoy the blessings the Lord is giving you!

Forgiveness



Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. —
Matthew 7:1-2

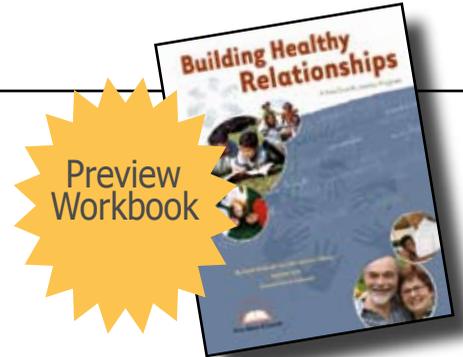
You've been told to forgive many times before, by preachers, parents, friends and even enemies. Forgiveness is a difficult process; sometimes it is excruciatingly

difficult. Forgiveness may even make things worse: forgiveness for the wrong reasons is very damaging and inhibits our ability to achieve genuine forgiveness.

Genuine forgiveness has an essential place in our lives. It certainly is a pivotal point in movies when characters reconcile; the estranged son comes home, the quarreling lovers make-up, misunderstandings vanish and magnanimity abounds. Although more dramatic and emotional, the vital role of forgiveness apparent in movies is applicable to our daily lives.

Opportunities for forgiveness occur daily. We can recognize these opportunities by noticing any feelings of resentment. Resentment is tenacious and tightly clings to our experiences. Therefore, before we get to the actively forgiving, we must look at the feelings of resentment that make it so hard for us to forgive other people.

Any spiritual idea can become distorted when we use it for selfish reasons instead of for love. Forgiveness has often been used that way. Genuine forgiveness is about reconciliation. It is a matter of establishing or re-establishing feelings of good will and trust between two people which requires honest, hard work. Because of these challenges, people sometimes look for something quick and easy—a kind of superficial forgiveness that lets them avoid pain or uncomfortable feelings. This kind of forgiveness comes from wanting the problem to just go away without facing it, taking any responsibility, or doing any work. Perhaps we learned as children that we could escape punishment for something we had done wrong just by saying, "I'm sorry, please forgive me." As adults we might feel the same desire for quick forgive-



ness. For example, when we are stopped for speeding, we want to be forgiven, but it is more a matter of not wanting to pay the fine or get our license taken away than it is about remorse for breaking the law and endangering people's lives.

This week we will look carefully at clearing the way for genuine forgiveness. If we practice forgiveness on the surface, we will probably find that it is easier at first - pretending that everything is okay and everyone feels better. We can ignore the problem. But this kind of forgiveness doesn't really solve anything, and eventually the problem comes back and gets worse.

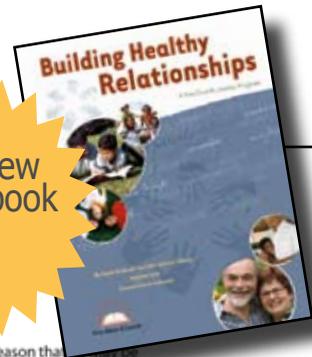
Genuine forgiveness takes more effort in the beginning, but it gets easier as we practice it. The more you practice genuine forgiveness, the easier your life becomes because it is a process of facing and resolving the problems in your relationships, which makes them healthier and happier. This chart gives an overview of some differences between genuine and false forgiveness.

Reflection

Consider where in your life have you practiced a superficial approach to forgiveness and where you are in need of genuine forgiveness. Look at the list below and circle any areas of 'genuine forgiveness' that you would like to work on.

Genuine Forgiveness vs. False Forgiveness	
Taking responsibility for your own life	Blaming others and avoiding blame
Participating in an ongoing, gradual process	Looking for an instant, quick fix
Seeking healing and reconciliation	Escaping punishment or consequences
Addressing the situation courageously	Pretending, ignoring the problem, denial
Wanting what is right	Wanting approval
Empowering	Locked in a cycle of victimization
Clarifying and honoring healthy boundaries	Disregarding and blurring boundaries
Working with the Lord	Working only from a sense of self

Hopes, Dreams, and Ideals



You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before all, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

—Matthew 5:14-16

For each of us our spiritual life begins in our inner self—in our hopes, dreams and intentions. The inner self has to be reborn before the outer self can be transformed. That is, we have an inward vision of becoming a good person before we can make that a reality in our outward life.

When we look at ourselves, many of us are painfully aware of our shortcomings. We may beat ourselves up when we fall short of our ideals. We might notice resentments or impatience towards our family members or co-workers, and feel regret or shame about what we have felt or done. Today, we invite you to reflect on the blessing the Lord has given you of your ideals. For example, if you have noticed yourself doing something unhealthy or wrong, it is because you have a conscience, ideals and values at your core that urge you to strive for something better.

Our ideals are like the light of a distant star that gives hope and direction to life, even if you feel far from achieving them. In the end it is not whether we achieve our ideals, but whether we continue to strive toward them that determines our character and eternal happiness. Your task for today is to consider your ideals and thank the Lord that you have a vision for something better in your life.

the power of hope

A person is not granted a knowledge of future events, also for the reason that he is not able to act from freedom according to reason; for it is well known that a person desires to have in effect whatever he loves, and he leads himself to this end by his reason.

It is also known that everything a person meditates in his reason arises from the love of bringing it into effect by means of his thought. Therefore, if he knew the effect or result from Divine prediction his reason would come to rest, and with it his love; for love with reason comes to an end in the effect, and from that point it begins anew.

It is the very delight of reason to see from love the effect in thought not the effect in its attainment, but before it, that is, not in the present but in the future. Hence a person has what is called Hope, which increases and decreases in the reason as he sees or looks forward to the event.

This delight is completed in the event, but it thereafter fades away with the thought concerning the event. It would be similar in the case of an event that was foreknown.
—Divine Providence 178

journey together: Small Group Activities

Relationships: Past, Present, Future

As we begin this program, we have an opportunity to consider the relationships in our lives. Where have our relationships been in the past? Where are they today? Where do we want them to be in the future?

Take time to look through the images provided by your leader (if no pictures are available, use the ones on these pages or those printed in your case). For this activity you may choose to focus on one relationship or all your relationships in general.

THE PAST: When was your relationship born in the past? What blessings do you cherish from it?

THE PRESENT: Where are your relationships today? What blessings are present in the present? What blessings do you cherish from it?

THE FUTURE: Where do you want your relationships to be in the future? What blessings do you cherish from it?

Notice the Blessings

Small Group Activity Page

Connecting with the Creator



Many of our life experiences, if we let them, can teach us about our relationship with God. Lori Odhner explores a personal relationship that helped her to connect in a tangible way with her Creator.

There are a number of people that I communicate with on a regular basis. A few I call on the phone, but rarely see. Several I write to every week but don't talk to much. Others I smile and wave to when we pass shuttling kids to school or in the grocery store. With many there is never a lapse in the laughter and conversation when we are together.

With Zachary it is different. He entered my life a year and a half ago, but for the first nine months we never saw each other. We didn't even know each other's names. In all the time I've known him, he has never called me on the phone, sent me a letter, waved or spoken a recognizable word to me. And yet the

impact on my life has been profound. He has influenced where I go, what I do, what I wear and how I feel. And while he has never asked how I am or what I've been doing, our communication has been undeniable and constant. Not having the more conventional avenue of dialogue at our disposal we have both discovered other means of connection. Sometimes he just looks at me for long luxurious minutes, as if memorizing my face. Other days he reaches his little starfish hand to touch my cheek, or coos at me like the mourning dove outside my window. Yet somehow, in these quiet ways, he has managed to express the really crucial messages, the ones that a thousand years from now will still shine untarnished. They stand like quiet

mountains, at whose feet all the endless prattle and chatter are lost on the wind.

How similar to Someone else in my life that I haven't seen in years. Although in all the time I've known Him He's never called me on the phone, sent me a letter, waved or spoken a recognizable word to me, the impact on my life has been profound. He has

influenced where I go, what I do, what I wear and how I feel. And while He has never asked how I am or what I've been doing our communication has been undeniable and constant. Not having the

more conventional avenue of dialogue at our disposal we have both discovered other means of connection. Sometimes I feel Him in the sunshine looking at me

as if memorizing my face. Other days He leaves a little starfish on the sand for me to reach down and touch, or sends a mourning dove to coo outside my window. Yet somehow in these quiet ways He has managed to express the really crucial messages, the ones that a thousand years from now will still shine untarnished. They stand like quiet mountains at whose feet all the endless prattle and chatter are lost on the wind. ■

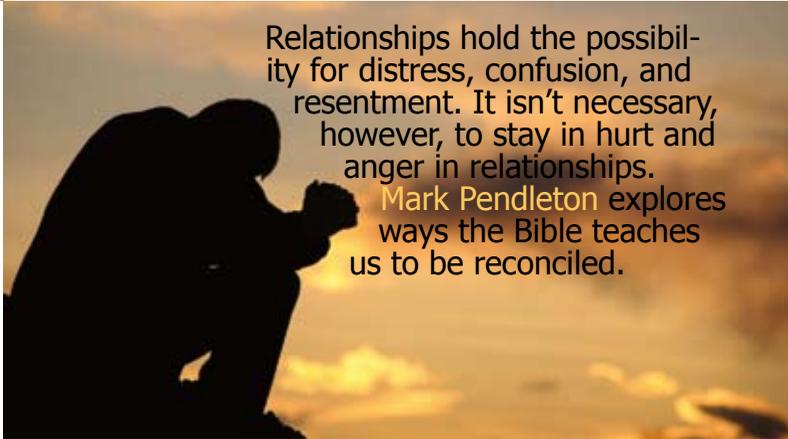
Although in all the time I've known Him He's never called me on the phone, sent me a letter, waved or spoken a recognizable word to me, the impact on my life has been profound.

New Online Program—Sign Up Today

Building Healthy Relationships
A New Church Journey Program

Connecting with the Creator is an example of the inspirational stories available for you in a new Building Healthy Relationships online program. Sign up to receive daily email inspirations, access resources, stories, and share your experiences with others at www.newchurch.org

Handling Hurt and Anger in Relationships



Relationships hold the possibility for distress, confusion, and resentment. It isn't necessary, however, to stay in hurt and anger in relationships. Mark Pendleton explores ways the Bible teaches us to be reconciled.

Three of the Ten Blessings from the Sermon on the Mount speak specifically to anger and reconciliation:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit” refers to an attitude of humility in relationships. “Blessed are the merciful” refers to an attitude of forgiveness.

“Blessed are the pure in heart” refers to an attitude of good will toward other people.

Wherever there are two people in a relationship, hurts are likely to happen. Each one of us lives in our own world of thought and feeling and intentions. Even our best attempts to know another human being (to listen to where they are coming from, to understand and respect their feelings, to appreciate their qualities and accomplishments,) may not always succeed. We may overstep a

boundary that we didn't intend to overstep, and invite hurts into that person's life. If we are on the receiving end of that situation, we may feel hurt or even a bit angry.

And what happens to the feeling and quality of a relationship that has unresolved issues of hurt and anger? That relationship can continue for a time—maybe even for months or years—with two people connecting and functioning together on an outward level, offering outward shows of politeness and respect, but inside something is wrong and not being dealt with. A sense of inner connection that the people may truly long for in their relationship is being lost; the spirit and life of that relationship are departing. Borrowing from a Scriptural image, it's as though the two

people are offering gifts to the altar on their relationship, but those gifts may seem like shams or pretenses.

Underneath there is a smoldering fire—like the fire that can exist in wood under ashes.

Hope for a relationship infected by this kind of resentment and anger lies in the willingness of both people to be reconciled to one another. “If you bring your gift to the altar,” the Lord said, “and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:23-24).

What do we picture when we think of reconciliation in a relationship? We picture two people coming together to work through their differences. The word “reconcile” means to settle, to bring into harmony, to make compatible, content and acquiescent. It means to win over again to a friendly attitude. On a spiritual level we're taught that it means each person going to the Lord and asking for His help to get into a



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charitable frame of mind (i.e., into an attitude of good will) before “coming to the table of reconciliation.” It means

opening ourselves up to feeling the Lord's life within us and being governed by His goodness from within, and guided by His truth from without, before, during, and after the reconciliation—especially before. It means being prepared to see and acknowledge if there are ways in which we have been wrong or acted unfairly within our relationships and to make changes in ourselves for the better.

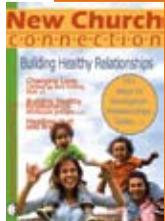
There are two things that lie at the heart of all true reconciliation, and they are all that is needed in order for any reconciliation to proceed toward meaningful and deeply satisfying conclusions. First is a willingness to recognize and turn away from our own forms of resentment and anger, and second is allowing the Lord to enter our hearts and fill us from within with His goodness. ■

Inspired by a sermon of the same title written by the Rev. Mark Pendleton, and adapted for this publication by Burgandy Alden Smith.



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- **God is Love** and nothing but what is good can come from God, because His very nature is love. God came to this world in the form of Jesus Christ, who is the one and only God.
- **The Old and New Testaments** have a deeper meaning, revealed in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, which help people learn how to live happy and useful lives to eternity.
- **All religions have goodness** in them. There are many paths and gates into the heavenly city, New Jerusalem.
- **Heaven is for everyone** who wants to live a heavenly life. Heaven is where good people from this world, now angels in the life after death, love God and others and want to be useful. While people are free to choose to live in hell, God wants everyone to live with Him in heaven.
- **The Last Judgment predicted** in the Bible is not about the physical world; nor does God judge us. He affirms the judgments we make upon ourselves according to the way we live. People who love God and try to live a good life according to their beliefs are welcomed into heaven.
- **Marriage can last forever** for God blesses people with a special love in marriage that goes on after death, even to eternity.
- **God's providence is powerful** and unending. God guides each person's spiritual path, from the smallest things up to the biggest things, and His angels are with us every moment.



Wondering what is next in a relationship?

Consider this three step approach:

Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. Psalm 37:5



True love is love to the Lord, and true life is the life of love from Him, and true joy is the joy of that life.

Secrets of Heaven 33,
Emanuel Swedenborg

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