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What's MY Role?

Ephesians 5:15: (NKJV) *See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.*

Each and every day of our lives, we are all involved in a wide variety of (hopefully) working relationships with others. For everyone we come in contact with, there is a pattern of behavior that is displayed by both parties that reflects what the relationship is that exists between them. For the most part, this pattern of behavior is not ever given much thought, rather it is practiced based on habit or our present emotional state - which brings us to our question: What should our role be in various relationships? Are there sound guidelines that transcend etiquette and culture? Stay with us as we look into the Bible and try to figure out some details on how to best get along with the world around us!

Questions for Consideration:

1. What kind of relationships are we focusing on?
2. How do I play MY role in this particular relationship?

1. What kind of relationships are we focusing on?

Ephesians 5:19: (NKJV) *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*

...Our relationship with those friends who are closest to us;

Ephesians 5:22: (NKJV) *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

Ephesians 5:25: (NKJV) *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her,*

...Our relationship with our spouse;

Ephesians 6:1: (NKJV) *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

...Our relationship with our parents;

Ephesians 6:4: (NKJV) *And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

...Our relationship with our children;

Ephesians 6:5: (NKJV) *Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;*

...Our relationship with our employer; and

Ephesians 6:9: (NKJV) *And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. ... finally our relationship with our employees.*

With each of these relationships to be discussed, notice that the key question will be, "how do I play MY role in this particular part of MY life," not "why isn't the other party playing their part?!"

We have the power to contribute or detract from each relationship. How do we take that power and contribute it to our relationships?

2. How do I play MY role in this particular relationship?

Ephesians 5:19: (NKJV) *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*

...Our relationship with those friends who are closest to us;

Proverbs 17:17

Proverbs 18:24: *Too many friends is not a good thing - spreading yourself too thin is not best.*

Ephesians 4:29, 32: *We should never build ourselves up at the expense of anyone else - even with our closest friends.*

Universal Principles:

Speak only that which is true, kind and necessary! Be kind! Be forgiving!



Colossians 3:12-13: We want the best for those around us. In order to give them the best, we have to forgive them and not take everything personally. Matthew 18:21-22 Philippians 2:3-4

Universal Principles:

**Speak only that which is true, kind and necessary! Be kind! Be forgiving!
Be humble! Be interested - look out for the interests of others!
See through the eyes of selfless love!**

Being a meaningful friend takes work. 1 Peter 4:8-10: When you have a friend, love them for the sake of who they are without thinking of what you are getting back.

Ephesians 5:22: (NKJV) *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*
Ephesians 5:25: (NKJV) *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her,*
...Our relationship with our spouse;

Genesis 2:21-24: What were the key elements of this first marriage?



First was the recognition of the man and woman as similar, connected and yet different creations of God. The differences are what created the compatibility as God created man and woman to supplement and support one another.

Second was the life changing decision for a man to leave his parents in favor of his wife.

Third was the striking description of cleaving to one's wife. The word for "cleave" carries such meanings as cling, stick, stay close. While translated in a variety of settings, it is most strikingly used relating to Israel's necessary clinging to God, and it is in this light that we see the depth of the marriage commitment.

These three key elements affirm that which was proclaimed in Genesis - that the marriage arrangement was meant to be a permanent and unbreakable promise, invented and sanctioned by Almighty God himself!

What is *your* role in *your* marriage?

Matthew 19:6: In addition, what is your role if your friend or child is in marital distress? It is for you to build them both up and do your best to keep that marriage together. Don't undermine someone else's relationship.

Ephesians 5:25-28: Jesus loving the church is an example of his selflessness. Husbands can take this example. There is a necessity for putting our love for one another in perspective.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5: All of these things add up to one thing - to play your role in your marriage to your best ability, **YOU MUST CHERISH YOUR SPOUSE!**

Ephesians 6:1: (NKJV) *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*
...Our relationship with our parents;

Hebrews 13:17: Colossians 3:20: Exodus 20:12: We live in a time when parents want to be friends with their children. We believe you can be friendly and have fun with your children; but until they become adults, it isn't your job to be their friend. Proverbs 6:20 Proverbs 20:20

Universal Principles:

**Speak only that which is true, kind and necessary! Be kind! Be forgiving!
Be humble! Be interested - look out for the interests of others!
See through the eyes of selfless love!
Be respectful! Be obedient!**

When we are children, our role needs to be to obey, growing up in the pattern our parents are setting up for us.



Next is our role in the relationship we have with our parents when we are grown: Exodus 20:12: This commandment was directed towards adults, showing a general principle. Genesis 2:24 Matthew 19:6: There is a difference in the relationship now but with no less honor. This transition can sometimes be difficult in establishing what our role ought to be, especially if there are past resentments. But we have to learn to choose the role we will play so that it can be focused on doing those things which are good, right, true, just and honest in the sight of God and in our relationships with one another.

Parental honor must come in the context of cherishing one's spouse: Matthew 19:16-19

Ephesians 6:4: (NKJV) *And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

...Our relationship with our children;

This role is not only important, it is complicated: Colossians 3:21 Proverbs 22:6 Proverbs 22:15 Proverbs 19:18-20: The role of a parent with discipline is difficult but necessary and should begin early. The "fun" parent is rarely the best parent. Also remember that children learn by example. Your role is to be completely engaged in their development.

With all of these varied ingredients, it is important to firmly establish our parental perspective: Proverbs 4:1-2: Establish yourself as their primary source of instruction.

Proverbs 4:3-4: Draw on your own experience of learning. Whether good or bad, the key is that you learned! Proverbs 4:5-7: Guide your children clearly and emphatically.

Universal Principles:

Speak only that which is true, kind and necessary! Be kind! Be forgiving!
Be humble! Be interested - look out for the interests of others!
See through the eyes of selfless love!
Be respectful! Be obedient!
Be an example - in your life and in your observation of your own past!



We can improve our relationships with those close to us by our actions in our role towards strangers. There are no "other people" in Christ. Practicing love towards all strengthens our love in general and particular.
1 John 2:9:
Whoever says he is in the light yet hates his brother is still in darkness.



In all roles, practice engaged listening.

Ephesians 6:5: (NKJV) *Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;*

...Our relationship with our employer;

Obviously we do not have the same working relationships between workers and employers as in those days, but the principles are the same.

Ephesians 6:5-8: You don't have to like your employer, but you do have to do your job and put your heart into it. Serve from the heart and serve with goodwill.

1 Timothy 6:1-3: As a Christian, it is our responsibility to serve our employer at a high level, whether we like them or not. You are representing the name of God. Serve with respect - even if you may feel resentment.



Universal Principles:

Speak only that which is true, kind and necessary! Be kind! Be forgiving!
Be humble! Be interested - look out for the interests of others!
See through the eyes of selfless love!
Be respectful! Be obedient!
Be an example - in your life and in your observation of your own past!
Be content and diligent in your dealings with others!

Our role ought to be one of contribution in building others up.

Ephesians 6:9: (NKJV) *And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*

...and finally our relationship with our employees.

Once again, the circumstances are different, but the principles remain the same. The concept of honor and respect goes both ways: Leviticus 19:13 Colossians 4:1 Matthew 7:12: Be fair, just and giving. Philippians 2:3,4 Galatians 6:2-5,9-10 Romans 12:9-10

Finally, for those who have the solemn responsibility of guiding the flock: Titus 1:7-9

Our role in our relationships give us a choice as to how we play that role - as a contributor or a detractor. Choose to be a contributor, because in so doing, you will make your life and the lives of those around you so much fuller.

So what's MY role?

*For Jonathan and Rick (and Vicki!) and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!*

Audio Clip References:



Some relationships are much more challenging than others!
Track 1: *Everybody Loves Raymond*, "Fruit of the Month"



Sometimes a very simple act can begin the piecing together of the broken pieces of our lives.
Track 2: *Field of Dreams*, "Play Catch"



One of the very basic needs of our lives is to have relationships, for without them we would be cast into the depths of loneliness and despair.
Track 3: *Castaway*, "Losing Wilson"



When great challenges come to our lives, our role as a friend, protector and supporter can vary. There are times when we must simply let go, knowing that our part is to climb a different mountain.
Track 4: *Fellowship of the Ring*, "Parting of Frodo and Aragorn"



And then there are times when it is our privilege to walk side by side...
Track 5: *Fellowship of the Ring*, "Sam Follows Frodo into the Boat"