



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: (NKJV) *A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

Proverbs 18:24: (ASV) *He that maketh many friends doeth it to his own destruction; But there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*

Too many friends is not a good thing - spreading yourself too thin is not best.

Ephesians 4:29, 32: (NKJV) ²⁹*Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.* ³²*And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*

We should never build ourselves up at the expense of anyone else - even with our closest friends.



Speak only that which is true, kind and necessary!



Be kind!



Be forgiving!

Colossians 3:12-13: (NKJV) ¹²*Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;* ¹³*bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*

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: (NKJV) ²¹*Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"* ²²*Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.*



Philippians 2:3-4: (NKJV) ³Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.



Be humble!



Be interested - look out for the interests of others!



Being a meaningful friend takes work.

1 Peter 4:8-10: (NKJV) ⁸And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." ⁹Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.



See through the eyes of selfless love!

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: (KJV) ²¹And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; ²²And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. ²³And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

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: (NKJV) *So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.*

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: (NKJV) ²⁵*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her, ²⁶that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷that he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.*

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: (NRSV) ⁴*Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;*

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: (NKJV) *Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.*

Colossians 3:20: (NKJV) *Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.*







Exodus 20:12: (NKJV) *Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.*

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: (NKJV) *My son, keep your father's command, and do not forsake the law of your mother.*

Proverbs 20:20: (NKJV) *Whoever curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in deep darkness.*



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



Be obedient! (When appropriate - there is a transition between childhood and adulthood, such as when connected to a spouse)

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: (NKJV) *Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.*

This commandment was directed towards adults, showing a general principle.

Genesis 2:24: (NKJV) *Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined..*

Matthew 19:6: (NKJV) *So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.*

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: (NKJV) ¹⁶Now behold, one came and said to him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" ¹⁷So he said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." ¹⁸He said to him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' ¹⁹'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"



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: (NKJV) *Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*

Proverbs 22:6: (NKJV) *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

Proverbs 22:15: (NKJV) *Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him.*

Proverbs 19:18-20: (NKJV) ¹⁸*Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction. ¹⁹A man of great wrath will suffer punishment; For if you rescue him, you will have to do it again. ²⁰Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days.*

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: (NKJV) ¹*Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, and give attention to know understanding; ²for I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law.*

Establish yourself as their primary source of instruction.

Proverbs 4:3-4: (NKJV) ³*When I was my father's son, tender and the only one in the sight of my mother, ⁴he also taught me, and said to me: "Let your heart retain my words; Keep my commands, and live.*

Draw on your own experience of learning. Whether good or bad, the key is that you learned!

Proverbs 4:5-7: (NKJV) ⁵*Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. ⁶Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you. ⁷Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.*



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.

Guide your children clearly and emphatically.



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

-  **Be respectful!**
-  **Be obedient!**
-  **Be an example - in your life and in your observation of your own past!**



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: (NKJV) ⁵*Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;* ⁶*not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,* ⁷*with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,* ⁸*knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.*

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: (NKJV) ¹*Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.* ²*And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.* ³*If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,*



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.



- ★ Speak only that which is true, kind and necessary!
- ★ Be kind!
- ★ Be forgiving!
- ★ Be humble!
- ★ Be interested - look out for the interests of others!
- ★ 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: (NKJV) *You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.*

Colossians 4:1: (NKJV) *Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.*

Matthew 7:12: (NKJV) *Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

Be fair, just and giving.

Philippians 2:3,4: ³*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.* ⁴*Let each of you look out not only for his own interests but also for the interests of others.*



Galatians 6:2-5,9-10: (NKJV) ²*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.* ³*For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.* ⁴*But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.* ⁵*For each one shall bear his own load...* ⁹*And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.* ¹⁰*Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

Romans 12:9-10: (NKJV) ⁹*...Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.* ¹⁰*Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;*






Finally, for those who have the solemn responsibility of guiding the flock:

Titus 1:7-9: (NKJV) ⁷*For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,* ⁸*but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,* ⁹*holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.*

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"