

## Peace ( 6 ) In Practice

Text : **Prov. 27: 1-17**

### **INTRODUCTION :**

**A. We spend enormous amounts of money learning a profession or vocational skill.**

1. This is a good thing to do and the more the better.
2. Everyone needs to be able to get a job which will provide for his needs.
3. Higher qualifications give one choices and better prospects for an enjoyable job.

**B. Many elements of success are not learned in the classroom.**

1. Practical experience is essential to success in any field.
2. One must be able to apply the knowledge he has gained.
3. Skill are dynamic; they must be continually developed and so must one's character.

**C. However, knowledge and skills are not enough to ensure success.**

1. We've all seen very skilled people fail in business or the workplace.
2. **ILL. :** When I was in industry, one of the most skilled craftsmen who ever worked for me could not get his own crew. He was frustrated by working for lesser qualified people, but his lack of people skills prevented him from achieving advancement.

**D. Interpersonal skills are just as vital to success as are skills and knowledge.**

1. Learning how to communicate involves much more than classroom instruction.
2. **ILL. :** The best preacher in our college class failed as a preacher and ended up selling encyclopedias. He was intelligent and knowledgeable of scriptures and he had exceptional homiletical skills, but he had very poor people skills
3. Success requires that one be able to build and maintain relationships.
  - a. This is true at every level of society. ( *family, school, vocation, church* )
  - b. Many marriages and even more friendships fail for lack of relationship skills.
  - c. Poor interpersonal skills prevent people from receiving help at every level.

### **TRANSITION :**

**This is important for us to discuss because both individual Christians and congregations fail as a consequence of poor people skills. Failure to build spiritual relationships cause people to be lost eternally.**

## **I. It is important to be mindful that most ( *not all* ) relationships are optional.**

### **A. We cannot choose our relatives.**

1. Families provide a perfect training ground for developing relationship skills.
  - a. Whether we like our relatives or not, we must get along with them.
  - b. We learn skills when our parents force us to be nice to relatives we don't like.
2. These same skills help us in developing a happy marriage.
  - a. One learns to get along with a whole new set of relatives.
  - b. It much more difficult to be considerate of the "crazy" relatives of one's mate.

### **B. School trains us to deal with optional relationships.**

1. Like our parents, we must get along with the teachers.
  - a. Students who do not learn to work for teachers they don't like will fail.
  - b. Wise students learn that a favorable relationship with teachers is to their benefit.
2. All social relationships in school are optional.
  - a. The immature fear being without friends, but with experience comes confidence.
  - b. As one learns that friends affect success, he becomes more selective.
3. Parents and grandparents are responsible for teaching the young how to choose.
  - a. Too often parents are so pre-occupied they pay little attention to their kids friends.
  - b. It is important to have their friends into your house so they can be observed.

### **C. Those with whom we associate will affect our eternal destiny.**

1. **I Cor. 15:33- Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."**
2. **Psa 1: 1- How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!**
3. **THEREFORE : *Learning to select friends is one of the most important skills one learns in his lifetime here on earth.* ( Cf. James 4:4 )**

### **D. Other than Jesus, few friendships are forever. ( Vs. 1 )**

1. Everyone needs friends, but not everyone qualifies to be a Christian's friend.
2. Friends grow in different directions, so they loose the bond which united them.
  - a. When you meet old high school friends, you wonder how you were ever friends.
  - b. We must be careful not to allow friends to lead us in a wrong direction.
3. **THUS:** As we go through life we often need to select new friends to facilitate growth.
  - \* **Attach yourself to sails to propel you, not anchors to hold you back.**

## II. Humility is an essential ingredient to a lasting relationship. ( Vs. 2 )

### A. Self-centered people have difficulty maintaining lasting relationships.

1. We've all met manipulative people.
  - a. They're commonly called "users."
  - b. In their view, the relationship exists to their benefit so when they no longer feel a benefit, the relationship is over.
2. It is hard to have a relationship when both parties are seeking to receive.
  - a. This is the principle cause of divorce.
  - b. When taker must give, he leaves the relationship. ( **unacceptable for Christians** )
  - c. This is not the kind of friend one can count on when he needs a friend.
3. **I Cor. 13: 5** - ... **Love does not seek its own** ...

### B. In order to maintain a relationship, one must be willing to live the golden rule.

1. **Matt. 7: 12**- **In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, ...**
2. If everyone treats others as they wish to be treated, it would be different world.
3. Lasting relationships must be symbiotic, i.e, mutually dependant and beneficial.

### C. Each party to a relationship must be cognizant of the needs of the other.

1. **Gal. 5: 13-14** **For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.** **14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."**
  - a. Love is defined as : ***The sincere and consistent desire to selflessly advance another's good above one's own.***
  - b. Agape love has no sexual component and is not dependant upon reciprocation.
2. Every relationship is maintained on this basis. ( **That's why so many fail.** )
  - a. Employees recognize the need of the employer to make a profit.
  - b. Employers understand the employees need for security.
  - c. Every person needs something from a relationship.
3. **Eph. 5: 21**- **be subject to one another in the fear of Christ**
  - a. When each party in a relationship is looking out for the other, needs are met.
  - b. **This is the essence of the Christian's relationship with God and His church.**

### III. Relationships are built on a foundation of trust. ( Vs. 10 )

#### A. Whatever the relationship, each party expects the dependability of the other.

1. This is true of all sustained relationships.
  - a. Friends
    - Prov. 17: 17-** A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.
    - Prov. 18: 24-** But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
  - b. Employer – Employee ( each depends on the other )
  - c. Marriage ( each must be able to trust the other )
2. God views disloyalty as *spiritual adultery*.
  - a. **James 4:4-** You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
  - b. Every relationship has parameters so we must know them and observe them.

#### B. Trust takes a long time ( *often years* ) to build, but can be destroyed by one act.

1. Lifelong friendships can be destroyed by one lie.
  - Eph. 4: 25-** Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.
2. Innumerable marriages have been destroyed by one indiscretion.

#### C. Each party in a relationship must be able to trust the other with his confidences.

1. It seems the hardest thing for some people to control is their tongue.
    - James 3:2-** ... If any man does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man ...
  2. An honorable person does not break a confidence.
    - Prov. 17: 9-** He who conceals a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.
  3. There is no excuse for a Christian violating a trust.
    - a. When there is conflict in a relationship there is temptation to “tell your side.”
    - b. When a relationship ends there is the temptation to blame the other party.
    - c. *No person has the right to knowingly hurt another person for any reason.*
- \* **Be careful from whom you seek counsel and in whom you confide.**

#### D. No matter how much a broken trust hurts, remember you are a Christian.

#### IV. Open, honest communication is the cornerstone of any relationship. ( Vs. 6, 9 )

##### A. I can't count the counseling sessions I've had with people whose feelings are hurt.

1. "He doesn't know how much it hurts me when he says things like that !"  
Have you told him it hurts your feelings ? "No, he might ..."
2. No one knows how you feel until you tell them.
3. No one except God knows what you think until you tell them.

##### B. The kind of relationship will determine the topic, but all relationships require openness to survive.

1. Some employees will not tell their boss they don't understand how to accomplish their assignment. (*Doesn't want to appear incompetent.*)
  - a. That's a problem for both parties.
  - b. The job won't get done.
2. Friends won't stay friends if they don't feel comfortable to talk with each other.
3. Married people who aren't close enough to talk about things on an emotional level won't stay married.
  - a. **Some live together for 50 years without ever really connecting. In doing so they miss out on the very best part of marriage.**
  - b. **Prov. 18: 21- Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.**

##### C. Those in any relationship owe the other frank, constructive criticism.

1. The Law of Moses required it :
 

**Lev. 19:17-** You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him.
2. Jesus warned his friends :
 

**Luke 12:4-5** I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. **5** But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!
3. If you were about to make a costly mistake or injure yourself, wouldn't you want to be warned.
  - a. **Psa. 141: 5-** Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; It is oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse it, For still my prayer is against their wicked deeds.
  - b. **Prov. 27: 6-** Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy. (**Gal. 6: 1-2**)

## **CONCLUSION :**

- A. We've looked at a few key factors in practical peacemaking.**
1. With important exceptions, most relationships are optional and temporary.
  2. Relationships only last when a generous portion of humility is mixed in.
  3. The foundation of successful relationships is trust.
  4. The cornerstone of productive relationships is open and honest communication.
- B. The key to opening a relationship is to choose carefully with whom you have one.**
1. Since most relationships are voluntary, one has options from which to choose.
    - a. We are not forced to work in just one place. *Choose a good atmosphere.*
    - b. We do not have to live on one certain neighborhood.
      - \* **When a friend graduated from dental school, he chose the place he would establish his practice by visiting the church in each prospective location.**
    - c. We are not required to be friends with unbelievers or profane people.
  2. *Sometime we have to have the courage to get a whole new set of friends.*
  3. Sometimes we have to counsel a friend about things that they may not want to hear.
- C. What friend would let another friend stay lost ?**

## **INVITATION :**