

Relationship help from God

Dan Nelson - pastor

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

The television news is pondering the plight of Britney Spears. Why didn't she show up in court? What is more important to her than seeing her children? What in the world is going on with her? With all of her worldly success and the millions of young girls who idolize her, and the masses of money that she has accumulated, why can't she have a better life? Is it merely the lure of drugs, alcohol and parties or is it something that relates closer to our homes? Is this something that only famous pop stars deal with or is it symptomatic of a cancer in our society? What does this mean for our fascination with creating more American idols? Is this representative of a heart-level defect that extends out to each of us? If so, what measures has God taken to heal this culture of shattered lives and lost souls?

Most of us recognize our need for connection with others. Our families and friends become a system of strength and support for us to celebrate life's accomplishments and mourn the losses we encounter. We need each other. God designed the family beautifully in this way and then extended the reach beyond natural boundaries with instructions about friendships and what we call today "extended family." Similarly, the collective of those following Christ (aka: the church) is described as the family of God for a reason: to reveal our connection and relationship to God and to one another. And as a loving father would, God has given plenty of relationship help regarding how we are to treat each other.

The Bible has a plethora of verses with practical instruction in how to experience fulfilled friendships and family relationships. In preparing to write this, I did a simple electronic search of the Bible (www.blb.org) using the keywords "one another." I knew enough Scripture verses to consider this as good of a search phrase as any. And the result was astounding. As I read the Scripture and considered the instruction, I was reminded of some truths that have guided me for quite awhile now. In short, God has the answers people need and the help is available if only we will go to him.

Love one another. Encourage one another. Be patient with one another. Be kind to one another. Don't provoke one another. Don't envy one another. Don't lie to one another. Comfort one another. Help one another. Build up one another. Forgive one another. Don't hold grudges against one another. Confess your faults to one another. Pray for one another. Pretty basic stuff, huh? Then why don't we do it? It would merely change the world and bring happiness and fullness to every relationship.

My son came home from his high school health class talking about the things they had learned. He was surprised at the statistics of how many children are growing up without both dad and mom in their home. The lesson talked about psychological and emotional damage that prevents people from achieving their potential and the overall societal effect. The purpose was really to help young people overcome their challenges

and/or be compassionate with others who are dealing with this. My own story is one like this. I grew up in a broken home. Just like you, I want my children to experience less pain than I went through, to start off from a stronger base, to maximize their potential, to live a wonderful life. But what happens when sin gets in the way? Relationships fail!

Not only does sin create separation in our relationship with God, it separates us from one another. Put another way, selfishness is at the root of the problem. But Jesus came to deal with that. Why don't more people go to Jesus for what they need?

Marriages fail due to selfishness. Children rebel due to selfishness. Friendships crumble due to selfishness. People avoid Jesus due to selfishness. As a result, people desire peace but don't have it. They protest the world scene but peace doesn't dwell in their own heart. They experience unnecessary pain in their lives and everyone around them suffers. And they drown their minds in substances or activities that cause them to temporarily forget about their hurt.

Psychologists and therapists will charge you money to tell you what God provides free. They will give you techniques where the Holy Spirit will give you power. They will offer hints for improvement where Jesus will transform your life. Self-help books teach you to love yourself and Scripture will exhort you to lay down your life and love others. Britney Spears is like so many; lost. Her notoriety doesn't change the reality of the human condition. You and I must reckon with our issues also. Jesus is "the way." The Bible says, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray." But then, be encouraged, Jesus is the good shepherd who goes out and gets the sheep. Won't you let him find you today?

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Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



P.O. Box 1443
Ojai, CA 93024
(805) 640-9498
www.calvaryojai.org

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195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

Mid-Week Study:

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