

#1 "It Starts With You"

1 John 4:11 (TLB) Dear friends, since God loved us as much as that, we surely ought to love each other too.

Romans 12:18 (AMP) If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 14:19 (MSG) So let's agree to use all our energy in getting along with each other. Help others with encouraging words; don't drag them down by finding fault.

Colossians 3:12-15 (NLT) Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

1. To improve your relationships, you must _____.

Genesis 4:6-7 (NIV) Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."

Matthew 7:1-5 (TPT) Refuse to be a critic full of bias toward others, and judgment will not be passed on you. For you'll be judged by the same standard that you've used to judge others. The measurement you use on them will be used on you. Why would you focus on the flaw in someone else's life and yet fail to notice the glaring flaws of your own? How could you say to your friend, "Let me show you where you're wrong," when you're guilty of even more? You're being hypercritical and a hypocrite! First acknowledge your own "blind spots" and deal with them, and then you'll be capable of dealing with the "blind spot" of your friend.

2. We need more than personal improvement; we need _____.

There are 5 important experiences you need with God to improve your relationships:

- Salvation.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT) This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

- Revelation and information.

John 8:31-32 (NIV) To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 8:31-32 (TPT) Jesus said to those Jews who believed in him, "When you continue to embrace all that I teach, you prove that you are my true followers. For if you embrace the truth, it will release more freedom into your lives."

- Dedication.

James 1:23-25 (NIV) Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

- Inner healing.

Psalms 147:3 (NIV) He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

- God's power.

Ephesians 6:12-13 (NLT) For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (GW) Of course we are human, but we don't fight like humans. The weapons we use in our fight are not made by humans. Rather, they are powerful weapons from God. With them we destroy people's defenses, that is, their arguments and all their

intellectual arrogance that oppose the knowledge of God. We take every thought captive so that it is obedient to Christ.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT) But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

3. There's _____ for you, and your relationships.

Matthew 11:28 (NLT) Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."