

InShape *for 2008*

Relationships: Worth Fighting For

The topic of Relationships is Everywhere

Amanda Ford "How to be a Friend" (www.ehow.com)

"A good friend is always a precious gift, but true friendship takes work. We're all familiar with people we meet, think we connect with and then end up chasing them to keep the friendship going. The time you invest in a good friendship brings rewards far beyond the work that goes into building and maintaining it."

Debbie Barr "How to be a BETTER Friend" (www.ehow.com)

Here are a few tips for being a better friend:

- Listen _____ more
- Reach out _____
- Keep confidences _____
- Be an encourager _____

Personality Page (www.personalitypage.com/relationships)

"Most of us are probably allured by the attractive notion that effortless relationships exist. Whether it be happily-ever-after marriages, or friendships which last forever, or parent/child bonds which supercede the need to understand each other, we'd all like to believe that our most intimate relationships are unconditional, and strong enough to withstand whatever may come. However, at some point in our lives most of us need to face the fact that relationships require effort to keep them strong and positive, and that even wonderful, strong relationships can be destroyed by neglect."

Because God is love, He treasures relationships

and the Bible is filled with principles to make them the best they can be.

- As friends: Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 27:9-10,17
- As spouses: Ephesians 5:33
- As children: Ephesians 6:1-3
- As parents: Ephesians 6:4
- As employees: Ephesians 6:5-8
- As employers: Ephesians 6:9

"An offended friend is harder to win back than a fortified city. Arguments separate friends like a gate locked with bars." Proverbs 18:19 NLT

Relationships are always worth restoring

(The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren - Chapter 20)

Matthew 5:9 – The Message

You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

- He did not say the "peace lovers."
- He did not say the "peaceable."
- Peacemakers are those who "actively seek to resolve conflict." *It's hard work!*

How to Restore a Relationship

- **Talk to God** before talking to the person.
 - Prayer is always better than gossip
 - We must look to God for our satisfaction instead of looking at people.
- **Always take the initiative**. (Ephesians 4:26-27)
 - Act quickly to reduce relational damage.
 - Act quickly to reduce spiritual damage.
- **Sympathize with their** feelings. (Romans 15:2)
 - Use your ears more than your mouth
 - It is a sacrifice to absorb the anger of others, especially if it is unfounded, but remember, that is what Jesus did for you.
- **Confess your** part of the conflict. (Matthew 7:5)
 - Confession is a powerful tool for reconciliation.
 - Don't make excuses or shift the blame.
- **Attack the problem**, not the person. (Eph. 4:29)
 - You cannot fix the problem if you're consumed in fixing the blame.
 - In resolving conflict, how you say it is as important as what you say.
- **Emphasize reconciliation**, not resolution.
 - Reconciliation focuses on the relationship, while resolution focuses on the problem.
 - **1 Peter 3:8-9**

Peacemakers are doing the work that God does!