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ఇవాంజిజం



Spreading the gospel Through personal connections

Did you know that God created us in His own image? It's true! In the book of Genesis, it says that God made us in His image and breathed life into us (Gen 1:27). But what does it mean to be made in God's image? And what kind of relationship does God want to have with us?

We know that God is made up of three parts: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is called the Trinity. We are also made up of three parts: our soul, our spirit, and our body. These three parts of us imitate God's nature of love that exists between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:14).

God really wants to have a relationship with us. It says that God used to talk to Adam every day during the cool hours of the day (Gen 3:8). How awesome is that? God wanted to spend

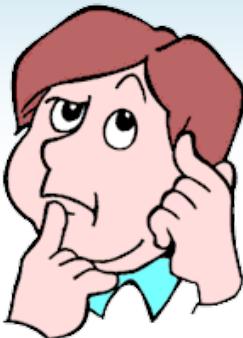
time with Adam. And you know what? God wants to do the same with each and every one of us. He wants to have a special relationship with you!

To emulate God's ways, let us try to understand His relationships with different people.

1. God's relationship with Zacchaeus

When Jesus arrived at a certain place, He looked up and saw Zacchaeus. Even though there were many people around Him, Jesus' focus was on Zacchaeus. He called out to him and asked him to come down quickly because Jesus wanted to stay at his house that day (Lk 19:5).

Zacchaeus was considered a sinner by the people around him, so they were surprised and maybe even upset that Jesus wanted to spend time with him. But Jesus had a dif-



Sometimes, we think that certain people will never accept the good news about God.

ferent plan. He told Zacchaeus that salvation had come to his house that day because he, too, was a son of Abraham (9v).

Even though Zacchaeus was not well liked by others, God offered him an incredible gift, i.e., salvation. This gift was so amazing that it was hard to put into words. God not only offered salvation to Zacchaeus but also to his entire family.

2. God's relationship with the Samaritan woman

When Jesus' disciples saw Him talking to a Samaritan woman, they were really surprised (Jn 4:27). You see, Samaritans and Jews didn't usually talk to each other because they didn't get along. But Jesus wanted to save her and help this woman understand something important about God, so He exposed her sinful life and showed her that He was more than just a prophet (Jn 4:18–19, 25–26).

In Matthew 16:20, Jesus told his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ. He wanted to keep his true identity a secret. He knew that the time would come when everyone would know, but for now. But Jesus

revealed himself as the Messiah to her, even though he had kept it a secret. This special relationship brought the sinful woman close to Him and the whole village found out that Jesus was the Messiah and wanted to be saved too!

3. God's focus on Jethro

God brought in Moses to explain His great works performed while bringing Israelites from Egypt to Canaan through Moses to Jethro, who was a priest of the Midian gods (Exodus 18:1).

After listening to Moses, Jethro was completely convinced that the God Moses was talking about, Yahweh, was greater than all the other gods he knew (11v). Jethro was so amazed by God's greatness that he offered burnt offerings and sacrifices to Yahweh (12v).

Sometimes, we think that certain people will never accept the good news about God. Our God is different. He loves and accepts everyone, no matter who they are or what they believe in. Jethro is a perfect example of this. Even though he was a priest of other gods, God still showed him His

amazing works, and Jethro's heart was changed.

So, never judge or avoid someone just because you think they won't accept the gospel. God's love is for everyone, and He can change anyone's heart, just like He did with Jethro.

4. God's supernatural promise to Peter

Supernatural powers are abilities that go beyond what is considered normal or natural. They are extraordinary and can't be explained by science or the laws of nature. These powers come from a higher source, like God or divine beings.

Here are a few examples of supernatural powers:

- Healing the sick
- Performing miracles
- Controlling the elements (like calming a storm)
- Knowing things that others don't (like reading minds)
- Having power over life and death

In Matthew 16:18–19, Jesus promised Peter supernatural powers. He said, "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Jesus was giving Peter the authority to spread the gospel and make decisions on behalf of the church. Peter would have the power to bind and loose things on earth and in heaven. This meant that Peter had the abil-

ity to make important decisions and have control over both the earthly and heavenly realms.

Jesus had supernatural powers that went beyond what was possible on Earth. He used these powers to spread the gospel and make personal connections with people. Peter was also given supernatural powers by Jesus, which gave him authority over the earthly and heavenly realms. It's incredible to think about the impact these supernatural powers had on the world and how they continue to inspire and guide people today.

5. God's friendly relationship with Abraham

Have you ever wondered how God spreads His message to people? One way He does it is through personal connections. Let's take a look at how God trusted Abraham and shared His plans with him!

God had so much trust in Abraham that He didn't keep anything hidden from him. In fact, He even shared His plans to judge the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with Abraham! (Genesis 18:20–21).

God's relationship with Abraham shows us that personal connections are important in spreading the gospel. When we have strong relationships with others, we can share God's message with them more effectively.

Just like God trusted Abraham, we need to build trust with the people around us. When we show love, kindness, and honesty, others will be more open to hearing about God's love for them.

Abraham was not only a messenger but also a friend of God. Similarly, we can be friends with those around us and show them God's love through our actions and words.

God spreads His message through personal connections, just like He did with Abraham. By building trust, being friends, and sharing God's love, we can spread the gospel to those around us.

6. God's Relationship with Noah

When God had a big plan to destroy all the living creatures on earth, He wanted to give Noah a heads-up. God personally spoke to Noah and told him about His plan.

You might be wondering why God chose Noah to deliver this important message. Noah was a righteous man who followed God's ways. He had a strong connection with God and was faithful. God knew that Noah would listen and take action, so He chose him to be the messenger.

After God told Noah about the upcoming flood, He also gave him instructions on how to save himself, his family, and a pair of every animal. God told Noah to build a huge boat called an ark. It was a massive project, but Noah trusted God and started building it. He worked hard for many years to complete the ark, and people probably thought he was crazy. But Noah knew that God's plan was real, and he followed through.

Just like He chose Noah to deliver His plan, God often uses people to share His message with others. He wants us to connect with one another

and spread His love and teachings. God wants us to share His word with our friends, family, and even strangers. When we have a personal connection with someone, it's easier to talk about our faith and what God means to us. We can tell them about the amazing things God has done in our lives and how He can bring hope and joy to theirs too.

7. God's personal contacts for salvation

All these examples show that God's personal contacts with people are meant to save them. He wants to establish a relationship with us and bring salvation. In the case of Zacchaeus, his salvation led to the salvation of his whole family. The Samaritan woman's encounter with Jesus led to the salvation of her entire village. Jethro's relationship with God brought him and his people closer to salvation. God's personal contacts with Abraham and Noah also had significant impacts.

Following God's example and great commission (Mt 28:19–20), we are called to spread the gospel by establishing personal contacts with people in our extended families, neighbourhoods, and workplaces. While walking in the footsteps of God, me and my family tried to maintain personal contacts with extended family members, servant maids, neighbours in our residential area, colleagues in our working places, and students.

- Prof (Dr) CH Satyanarayana,
Hyderabad

Relationships

Relationships are super important! They are like the building blocks of human connection and they have a big impact on our lives. Whether it's family, friends, or anyone who loves us, trust, respect, encouragement, and security are key in relationships. However, personal holiness is crucial for maintaining healthy relationships.

The meaning of 'holiness'

The original meaning of holiness is "the state of proper functioning". Being holy means being set apart from sin and its influence on the proper functioning of our being.

It also means living an exemplary life with moral purity. Holiness is not just about avoiding sin but actively doing what is right. God is holy with absolute holiness, and He always expects holiness from us.

Examples of holiness in the Bible

- 1 Peter 2:9 - Our position in Christ automatically sets us apart from the world
- Philip 4:8 - Live according to godly standards. Be holy in your thought life.

- I Peter 1:15, 16 - Reflect God in our relationships and be different from our fallen nature
- I Timothy 4:12 - God expects holiness in all walks of life
- II Corinthians 7:1 - Cleanse ourselves from every defilement, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God
As R.C. Sproul says, "God is eternally holy, man is eternally sinful." So, to become holy, we need to have a right relationship with God by believing in Jesus Christ as our Savior. Pursuing holiness without faith in Jesus is in vain. We must live a set-apart life, not trying to blend in with the world but instead living according to God's Word. Being God-conscious, strong in God's Word, and having a strong prayer life are important aspects of holiness.

The importance of healthy relationships

What do you want most out of life? Healthy relationships! The Bible ranks healthy relationships as the most important thing in life. Jesus even said that the greatest commandment is to love God

and others. Healthy relationships make life enjoyable and fulfilling.

Why do healthy relationships matter?

- Even if your health isn't the best, if you have loving relationships, you can still enjoy life.
- You can have lots of money, but if your relationships are broken or shallow, your life will feel empty.
- A poor person with a loving family and good friends is far richer than a rich person who lacks meaningful relationships.

The meaning of 'relationships'

When we talk about relationships, it can mean different things to different people. Personal relationships refer to close connections between people, formed by emotional bonds and interactions. We are not complete without relationships.

The basis of relationships

The whole Bible is fundamentally about relationships. Our God is a relational God, existing eternally in relationship with Himself as the Trinity. He sent Jesus Christ to restore the relationship between God and humanity. The basis of all relationships is reconciliation made possible through the cross.

So, remember, personal holiness and healthy relationships go hand in hand. By pursuing holiness and nurturing healthy relationships, we can experience a fulfilling and meaningful life.

Types of relationships

1. Between parents and family members (Gen 43:7, 27-33)

When Joseph saw his brothers some 13 years later, he was a bit harsh at

first, but we can see that he learned about the well-being of his father and his brother, as well as the well-being of his relatives. Due to this, we can see a loving and affectionate family relationship in life. In Genesis 43:30, when Joseph remembered his brothers who came to him as the prime minister of Egypt, Joseph's love for his brother came to him, so he hurriedly looked for a place to cry and went into the inner room and cried there.

2. Among friends (I Sam 18; II Sam 9)

A friendly relationship between friends can be seen between David and Jonathan. Jonathan's heart joined David's heart; Jonathan considered David his best friend and loved him. Jonathan considered David his best friend, loved him and made a covenant with him. And Jonathan took off his blanket, his sword, his bow and his belt and gave them to David. Even though Jonathan's father, Saul, looked down on David, Jonathan was very fond of David. Saul tried to kill David several times, but each time Jonathan spared David. When Jonathan knew that his father was planning to kill David, he got up from the table and because he had insulted his friend David, he did not eat the meal on the day after the new moon. Because of the friendship between the two of them, even after Jonathan's death, David really showed kindness to Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, for Jonathan's sake, and his father Saul gave him all the land again. And Mephibosheth was always eating at the king's table.

3. Among fellow believers (Dan 2:17, 18)

We can see the good relationship between Daniel and his fellow believers. Daniel begged the king to give him time to tell Nebuchadnezzar the dream and the meaning of the dream. Then Daniel went to his house and told his fellow believers, Hananiah, Mishaelun, and Azariah, and warned them that he would not perish with his friends and the wise men in Babylon, so that he would beg God in heaven for insight into the secret of the dream. It can be seen that Daniel sought the prayerful cooperation of his fellow believers in the midst of difficult circumstances.

4. Among students and graduates (Acts 9:27)

The Apostle Paul spent some days with his disciples in Damascus after his conversion. After many days, the Jews wanted to kill him. He came to Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples, but everyone was afraid of him, believing that he was a disciple. But Barnabas brought him to the apostles and told them in detail that he had seen the Lord at Troas, that the Lord had spoken to him, and that he had boldly preached in Damascus in the name of Jesus. Here we see Barnabas taking the initiative as a graduate and introducing Paul, a newly saved student, to his fellow believers and the congregation.

5. Among committee members (Neh 5:15)

In the EU or the EGF committees, it is crucial for committee members

to treat each other with respect. This means being humble and having good relationships with one another. We should not judge whose responsibilities are more or less important, and we should avoid any sneaky behaviour. Let's remember that we are doing God's work and strive to be faithful, just like Nehemiah.

6. Among Men and Women (II Cor 6:14)

It is important for both men and women to treat each other with respect and sobriety. While cultural values may vary, biblical values remain the same. We should treat young men as brothers, older women as mothers, and young women as sisters. This means behaving with the utmost chastity when interacting with the opposite gender. By following these principles, we can build healthy relationships with one another, just like the UESI teaches us.

The 3-3-3 Principle

The 3-3-3 principle is a helpful guideline for maintaining appropriate boundaries in our relationships:

- Only three minutes to speak.
- Speak in third person.
- Talk at a distance of three feet.

By following this principle, we can foster healthy and respectful relationships with one another.

(To be continued in the next issue)

**- Triveni Srinu,
Ramantapur Zone, Hyderabad**

అర్పింతు దేవా

అ ర్పింతు దేవా - ప్రాణాత్మదేహం
నీ సేవ చేయగ - నీ మాట చాటగ అర్పింతు దేవా

1. నను నీకై జేసితివి - ననుకోరి చేరితివి
నను కొనగ నా కొరకై - క్రయధనము నిచ్చితివి
నను నీదు సాత్మగజైని - కృపచేత బ్రోచితివి
నను నీదు సంకల్పములో - స్థిరపరచి గాచితివి
అర్పింతు జీవితం - అంగీకరించుమా
యజమానుడా దేవా - సర్వాధికారివి
2. విద్యాధి లోకంలో - నిను నేను సేవింపన్
బాధ్యతల నిచ్చితివి - భారంబు మోపితివి
పుద్ధికరించితివి - శుభవార్త నొసగితివి
ఉద్యోగ వరములతో - దీవెనలు నింపితివి
అర్పింతు జీవితం - నీ సేవచేయగా
యజమానుడా దేవ - సర్వాధికారివి
3. నీ వాక్యం ధ్యానింతున్ - బోధించి నేర్పింతున్
నీ వాక్యం పాటింతున్ - ప్రార్థించి ప్రకటింతున్
నీ వాక్య సత్యాలే - సవాత్మ లోకంలో
నీ వాక్య భావాలే - బాధలకు ఔషధముల్
అర్పింతు జీవితం - నీ వాక్య సేవకై
యజమానుడా దేవ - సర్వాధికారివి