

What Does the Bible Say About Getting Along With Others?

There's no way around it, we have to interact with others. It starts with our parents, then our siblings, school classmates, coworkers, spouses and children. Our lives are made up of relationships, and relationships are what help make our lives enjoyable and meaningful. But broken relationships can make our lives miserable. The simple fact of the matter is our relationships work best when we get along. For God Himself says, "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

What is a crucial ingredient in getting along with others?

Matthew 5:9

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Proverbs 17:14

The beginning of strife is like releasing water; therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts.

Being a peacemaker is necessary to get along with others. When our words and actions are peaceful, we are on the right track on getting along. God says to avoid strife whenever possible, because when strife enters a relationship, problems will flood in.

What else is necessary for a good relationship?

Philippians 2:3-4

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

1 Peter 5:5

Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Humility is important in getting along with others. When we focus on others and their needs, and not just on our needs, good relations will follow. We like it when someone is looking out for us, and the Bible says we are to look out for others.

How does a good relationship start?

Matthew 7:12

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

Proverbs 18:24

A man who has friends must himself be friendly.

If we want others to like and welcome us, then we must first be willing to like and welcome them. We are to take the initiative to be friendly, regardless of how the other person treats or mistreats us. First impressions go a long way in building a relationship, so demonstrating a genuinely friendly disposition will open the door to a good relationship.

What builds a good relationship?

Proverbs 16:24

Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.

Philippians 4:5

Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

Both our words and actions need to be encouraging. People should be glad to see you come, not glad to see you leave. The Bible says uplifting words and actions will help you get along with others.

What tears down a relationship?

James 3:6-10

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

Proverbs 16:28

A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends.

Proverbs 17:9

He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends.

Proverbs 18:19

A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle.

Our words can build up others but can also tear others down. God says this is destructive to both them and ourselves. Gossiping is a sure way to make a relationship go bad, and sometimes it is nearly impossible to repair the damage done as a result.

How do you get along with someone who mistreats you?

Matthew 5:43-48

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

"For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

"And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

"Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Romans 12:17-21

Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

How we treat others is not dependent on how they treat us. God wants us to be friendly toward all, just as He is to all of humanity. Treating a contentious person in a nice way definitely affects them. When the Bible says good deeds toward an unfriendly person will "heap coals of fire on his head," this does not mean our intent is to hurt the person. Our pure motive should be to treat others the way we want to be treated. Our hope is that they will in turn begin to treat us right, not get their heads burned!

How do you deal with someone who, regardless of what you do, only wants to cause strife?

Proverbs 22:3

A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.

1 Timothy 6:3-5

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

There are times when we need to try to avoid such individuals and their ways. For more about handling these challenging situations, see the lesson "Dealing With Difficult People."

What does God say will happen to those who strive to get along and are friendly toward others?

Matthew 5:9

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Matthew 25:31-40

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

"All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

"And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?'

"'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?'

"'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'"

The Bible says that those who care for others will be a part of God's Kingdom. Those who strive for peace will be called the sons of God. God knows our hearts, and we make our true motives known by our words and deeds (Luke 6:45).