

Lesson
13

Our Relationship to Others

It was testimony time in the Monday morning chapel service at the Bible School. A girl named Olga stood to testify.

She and a fellow-student had gone to work in one of the local churches the day before. While they ministered, several inebriated men entered the church and began to fight. As the believers fled, one of the men accidentally stabbed his own son who was also inebriated. When Olga saw that the young man was injured, she and her friend stopped and began to help him. Their own lives were in danger but they saved the life of an enemy. “Let’s pray,” she said, “that the young man will live and find Christ as His Savior.”

We bowed our heads in prayer, but I wasn’t praying only for the young man. I was also thanking God for Olga and her love for others—even her enemies!

Olga had learned what we learned in Lesson 12. One way to show our love to God is by loving and helping others. Let’s see what God’s Word says about our relationship to others.



In this lesson you will study...

Those Over Us

Those Around Us

Those Against Us

This lesson will help you...

- Accept your responsibilities in your relationship to others.
- Apply love to every relationship.

THOSE OVER US

Objective 1. *Identify whom a believer must honor and obey.*

Everyone at one time or another has had someone in authority over him. Children have parents over them, parents have religious and political leaders over them. Even those leaders have others who tell them what to do. What does the Bible say about our relationship to those who are over us?

Parents should be loved, honored, and obeyed. You will remember this as one of the commandments that we studied in Lesson 11. Ephesians 6:1-2 also tells us, "Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your parents, for this is the right thing to do. Respect your father and mother."

Rulers such as policemen, judges, and governors should also be obeyed. "Everyone must obey state authorities, because no authority exists without God's permission, and the existing authorities have been put there by God" (Romans 13:1).

As believers we have leaders like our pastor, the church board, and Sunday School teachers. They should be respected and obeyed in matters pertaining to their responsibilities.

Obey your leaders and follow their orders. They watch over your souls without resting, since they must give to God an account of their service. If you obey them, they will do their work gladly; if not, they will do it with sadness, and that would be of no help to you (Hebrews 13:17).

Only the authority of God is higher than that of the leaders over us. The only time that obedience is not required is when they would ask us to do something that is expressly against God's commandments or will. This happened to Peter and the other apostles when they were forbidden to preach. Peter knew that God must be obeyed above all else. Acts 5:29 says, "Peter and the other apostles answered, 'We must obey God, not men.'"



For You To Do

1 Read the verses below. Write in front of each verse the number of the description it matches.

- | | | |
|--------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| a | 1 Timothy 5:17 | 1) Honoring parents |
| b | Colossians 3:20 | 2) Honoring civil authorities |
| c | 1 Peter 2:13 | 3) Honoring church leaders |
| d | Proverbs 6:20 | |
| e | Matthew 22:17-21 | |

2 Read the list below, then put an X by any one or more that you have trouble respecting or honoring.

Father Mother

Pastor Board of Church Police

If you have put an X beside any of the above, ask the Lord to help you understand why you have problems honoring them and to help you respect and obey them from now on.

THOSE AROUND US

Objective 2. *Recognize correct applications of the biblical principle of loving others.*

One day a friend said to me, “If unbelievers treat me badly I can still love them. But, I will not tolerate bad treatment from another Christian. They know better!”

What would have happened to Peter and the other apostles if Jesus had felt that way? They knew better and yet they all failed Him when he was arrested and taken to His trial. Even so, when He arose, He appeared to them and assured them of His love.

We have failed the Lord many times and yet He continues to love us. The Lord asks us to love other Christians as He loves us. “As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34).

Our friends and neighbors should be treated as we would like to be treated. Luke 6:31 says, “Do for others just what you want them to do for you.” “Love your neighbor as you love yourself” is found in Romans 13:9.

Our relationship to the unsaved is also one of love. We should show them by the way we act that Christ lives in us.

Richard Wurmbrant, a Christian pastor who was jailed for his faith, tells the story of a fellow-prisoner who was also a pastor. He was known for his outstanding Christ-like character.

Later, a young communist was jailed and put in the same cells as these pastors. The pastors witnessed to him and told him to accept Jesus as his Savior. But the young man refused.

One day the young man was arguing. “How can I accept someone as my Savior,” he said, “if I’ve never met Him and don’t know what He’s like?”

“I’ll tell you who Jesus is like,” replied the pastor, “He’s like me!”

Without hesitation, the man answered, “If He’s like you, I’ll accept Him as my Savior right now!”

What a marvelous testimony that pastor had. I’m afraid there are very few believers who would dare to say, “Jesus is like me!” But, this is what the Lord wants—that we be so much like Him, that people can see Him in us! Matthew 5:16 says, “Your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.”

Let’s tell the Lord every day that we want to be more like Him! Then, it’s time to put action to our words and begin to be like Him.



For You To Do

3 Think about the following possible situations. According to what we have just studied, which of the situations are **RIGHT** for believers and which are **WRONG**? Write **R** before those that are right and **W** before those that are wrong.

- ... **a** A fellow Christian slanders your name. You are thinking about taking him to court.
- ... **b** Your neighbor says, “Don’t ever come back to talk to me about Christ again!” But the next day when he needs help, you go over and help him.

- **c** Your pastor preaches something you don't like so you get up and walk out of church to show your displeasure.
 - **d** A Christian friend falls into sin and instead of exposing him before the church, you go to him privately and help him repent and get right with God.
- 4** Read 1 John 4:7-21. According to these verses which of the following statements are TRUE?
- a** We love because God first loved us.
 - b** Whoever does not love does not know God.
 - c** There is fear in love because love might be rejected.
 - d** Loving God is enough; there's no need to love a brother if he treats you wrongly.

THOSE AGAINST US

Objective 3. Compare your own actions to the biblical principle of loving others.

Remember the story of Olga at the beginning of this lesson? Did Olga love those who wronged her? Instead of asking prayer that the injured man be healed, Olga could have asked that God punish them for their wicked ways.

Would that have been a Christ-like attitude? No. What did Jesus do the night he was arrested and Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's slave? That slave was an enemy of Jesus, but Luke tells us, "But Jesus said, 'Enough of this!' He touched the man's ear and healed him (Luke 22:51).

We want to be like Jesus who loved his enemies and forgave them. In Matthew 5:44 He said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." And again in Matthew 6:15, "If you do not forgive others, then your Father in heaven will not forgive the wrongs you have done."

Love is the greatest Christian virtue. First Corinthians 13:13 tells us, "Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love."

Christians should love God first. He will in turn put His love in our hearts so we can love both friends and enemies. "Jesus answered, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind'" (Matthew 22:37).

"And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34). Memorize this verse and repeat it often, remembering that a believer's most important responsibility to God *and to his fellowman* is love.



For You To Do

- 5** Which of the following statements are TRUE in your life?
- a** The way you treat your family influences them to accept what you say about God.
 - b** Your actions make your friends want the same power of God that has changed your life.
 - c** You are praying every day that when people see you they will be able to see Jesus, too.
 - d** You are praying for friends who are having a hard time loving others.



Check Your Answers

- 1 a** 3) Honoring church leaders.
b 1) Honoring parents.
c 2) Honoring civil authorities.
d 1) Honoring parents.
e 2) Honoring civil authorities.
- 4 a** True.
b True.
c False.
d False.
- 2** Your answer.
- 5** Your answers. If some of the statements are NOT true for you, go over the lesson again, point by point. Examine your actions and ask God to give you strength to live up to HIS standards day by day.
- 3 a** Wrong.
b Right.
c Wrong.
d Right.