

MANAGE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS THE KINGDOM WAY

PART 1

WHY ARE RELATIONSHIPS IMPORTANT FOR APOSTLES AND LEADERS?

Relationships are very important specifically for Apostles and Leaders because we have not been called to establish and manage the Kingdom of God alone. There are great benefits that can be gained from engaging in good relationships. However, there are equally a lot of liabilities that can be inherited as a result of engaging in bad relationships. Therefore, it is important to understand, categorise and manage relationships in order to benefit from the good ones and protect yourself from the bad ones.

Wise Kingdom Apostles and Leaders know that the management or mismanagement of relationships has a direct impact on the quality of their life, their future and their Kingdom Purpose. Kingdom relationships must have a purpose. If a Kingdom relationship has no 'Purpose' or nothing to be gained then Apostles and Leaders should consider moving on. Relationships for Kingdom Purposes should be more pleasurable than painful most of the time.

Apostles and Leaders must manage their relationships with wisdom and excellence so that they can lead the family of Christ by example. Apostles and Leaders have a responsibility to teach those under their care and leadership on how they can better manage their relationships. Not doing so brings about all kinds of disorder, dysfunction, pain, strife, problems and conflicts into the family of God.

SO WHAT DO WISE KINGDOM APOSTLES AND LEADERS LOOK FOR IN RELATIONSHIPS?

Kingdom Apostles and Leaders engage in relationships that are required for fulfilling their Kingdom Purposes. This means that they look for relationships that will help them grow, advance and achieve their Kingdom Objectives and Goals. They can quickly detect and stay away from people who come along to take them backward, stop them or slow them down from fulfilling their God-Given Purpose.

They look for relationships that will bless them instead of diminish them. In other words they look for people that will increase or add to their strengths. They look for people that will help them multiply their output and/or their effectiveness. They minimise engaging with people that come along to subtract or reduce their strengths. They protect themselves from those that come along to divide or decrease their productivity and/or success.

Kingdom Apostles and Leaders assess a prospect's **character, personality and maturity level**. While they may love all different kinds of people they are very careful about whom they **trust** and how much **expectation** they can place on people who are in relationship with them. Kingdom Apostles and Leaders qualify their prospects in all these areas before they will enter into a mutual relationship or prior to elevating its level of interaction.

CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

When you're looking for a Kingdom Spouse, a Kingdom Friend, a long-term Kingdom Partner or a Kingdom Leader you're in character assessment to see whether the person bears any fruit. Like vegetation **if a person is not showing any fruit it means that they are not fruitful yet**. However, if they do show any unripe or ripe fruit you must check to see whether their fruit is good or bad.

THE PRINCIPLE OF CHARACTER

1 Samuel 16:7 (NKJV)

⁷ for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

1. ASSESS A PERSON'S CHARACTER, NOT JUST THEIR PERSONALITY.

Matthew 7:16-18

¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

2. DON'T DECEIVE YOURSELF BY GOING AND LOOKING FOR GOOD RELATIONSHIPS FROM PEOPLE WITH BAD CHARACTER.

Please note that bad trees and fruit are not referring to trees and fruit that have been seasonally/temporarily damaged by external circumstances. For example a cherry tree may have been damaged by hail one season/year but bear excellent fruit the next.

Good fruit comes from good trees and good trees come from good roots. In the same manner, good character traits come from good character and good character comes from good beliefs, good thinking and good consistent actions. What you believe and think about most of the time shapes your character (*for as a man thinketh in his heart so is he*). Your repetitive actions also form your habits and your habits also shape your character.

Character once developed definitely bears fruit. However, if you do not know how to discern the difference between character and personality you can mistake a personality trait for a character trait. For example a gifted, talented, skilful, educated and experienced individual can fool you if you do not know how to recognise the fruits of character. So what do you look for? You focus on the inner man rather than the outer man because it is the inner man that produces the fruits of a person's character.

3. REMEMBER ALL FRUIT (GOOD OR BAD) COMES FROM WITHIN.

FRUITS OF CHARACTER

But the fruit of the Spirit is: Love, Joy, Virtue, Peace, Longsuffering / Perseverance, Knowledge, Brotherly Kindness, Goodness, Godliness, Faith / Faithfulness (loyalty), Gentleness and Self-control/Disciplined (Galatians 5:22-23 & 2 Peter 1:5-7).

When you're assessing character traits you're assessing the inner (hidden) man and the areas that a person doesn't necessarily want you to see. For example is someone:

Trustworthy, disciplined, consistent, honest, diligent, organised, punctual and generous to name a few good character traits. If they are not, then there is a very good chance that they either have no fruit, they are yet to produce fruit or they have bad fruit.

4. CHARACTER TRAITS ARE THE FRUIT OF THE INNER MAN.

YOUR FEELINGS ARE NOT FOR CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Please don't mistake how a person makes you feel emotionally with their character. Love, Joy and Peace above are not referring to feelings but the fruit and state of the person's inner being.

Emotional feelings must not be part of character assessment. You must remember that emotional feelings are temporary and that they can change very quickly from one extreme to another. Character on the other hand, while it can be changed, it can't be changed quickly.

5. HOW A PERSON MAKES YOU FEEL EMOTIONALLY MUST NOT FORM PART OF HOW YOU ASSESS THE FRUITS OF THEIR CHARACTER.

2 Peter 1:8 (NIV)

⁸ For if you possess these qualities (the qualities of a good character) in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective (barren) and unproductive (unfruitful) in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

6. EVERYONE WHO DEVELOPS A GOOD CHARACTER WILL BE FRUITFUL.

CHARACTER & PROMOTION



7. ALWAYS HIRE GOOD CHARACTER AND THEN TRAIN FOR SKILLS.

God wants His sons to rule, to have dominion and to have good success. But to rule God's way you have to become like Him in your character. God does not promote individuals quickly purely because they're gifted or educated - but men do. ***God prefers to develop His sons into men with strong uncompromisable character*** like Jesus, Joseph and Daniel ***before He promotes them*** to the top of the mountains (in other words to the top levels of leadership).

8. YOUR PERSONALITY, EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, GIFTS, SKILLS AND TALENTS MAY GIVE YOU ACCESS TO THE TOP OF A MOUNTAIN - BUT IT WILL BE YOUR GOOD CHARACTER THAT WILL KEEP YOU THERE.

WHY IS JESUS FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITIES & POWERS? (Ephesians 1:21-23)

Because Jesus developed a perfect character (**Luke 2:52**) to the point that He not only had man's favour but God's as well. We call it Christ-likeness. This is why Jesus was able to state the following:

John 14:30 (AMP)

³⁰ ***And he (Satan) has no claim on Me [no power over Me nor anything that he can use against Me].***

What Jesus was saying is that the devil did not have any hooks in Him to bring Him down because Jesus did not have a bad or weak character.

HOOKS IN YOUR CHARACTER

Why is having a bad or weak character a serious matter?

1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV)

⁸ ***because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.***

This verse clearly shows that Satan can't devour everyone but that he seeks for whom he may devour. Yet even though God said that Jesus was His beloved Son in Whom He was well pleased (**Matthew 3:17**), Satan still tempted and tested the Lord in the wilderness to see if he could bring Him down - but Satan failed successfully (**Matthew 4:1-11**).

Hooks can be placed in us when we align ourselves with the Adversary and his kingdom. These hooks can come in many forms like believing lies, disobedience, giving into temptation, unconfessed sins, staying ignorant or complacent.

Furthermore, people with bad character in leadership are not only a danger to themselves but to those above, around and below them. Bad character is what brings very gifted men down and when they come down they can bring a lot of people down with them.

9. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU EXAMINE YOURSELF CONSISTENTLY AND WORK HARD TO DEVELOP A GOOD CHARACTER ASAP. PULL OUT ANY HOOKS REVEALED THROUGH YOUR BAD OR WEAK CHARACTER - BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY IS GOING TO TEST YOU TO SEE IF HE CAN BRING YOU DOWN.

CHARACTER CAN BE IMPROVED

The good news is that bad and weak character can be changed into good and strong character over time if:

1. We are willing to improve and persevere in developing our character;
2. We partner with the Holy Spirit in developing our Christ-likeness;
3. We are willing to be accountable to God and others;
4. We choose to live a repentant lifestyle until we develop a perfect character; and
5. We remain patient so our character can bear good fruit.

CHARACTER IS NOT JUST TALKING - BUT WALKING

Be wary of people who like to tell you what they are if there is no fruit on their tree. This should raise a red flag in character assessment.

For example if you hear someone say things like:

1. **"I'm an apostle"** but you don't see any fruit like fathering, raising other apostles or leading/managing with excellence. Instead you see chaos, dysfunction, strife, no vision, no increase (growth in quantity or quality), no progress (advancement), no

influence (impact) etc. Then there's a good chance that they're all talk but there's no character behind what they're saying.

2. **"I'm wealthy"** but they mismanage or abuse their finances, they're constantly broke or lacking for long periods of time, then there's a good chance that their wishful thinking is in great misalignment with the character that is required for becoming wealthy.
3. **"I'm discipline"** but they're always late, disorganised, reactive (instead of proactive), procrastinating, making excuses, inconsistent, easily distracted, non-committal, then there's a good chance that they're not only lying to you but they've probably already lied to themselves.

10. A PERSON OF GOOD CHARACTER DOESN'T JUST TALK THE TALK - THEY WALK THEIR TALK.

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT (GIFTS/SKILLS/TALENTS)

When you're assessing personality traits you're assessing the outer (superficial) man and the areas that a person is happy for you to see. For example is someone:

Funny, charming, charismatic, easygoing, friendly, non-dramatic, ambitious, presentable, creative, persuasive, skilful, talented, gifted, educated and experienced to list a few traits.

While these traits are desirable in all people they do not qualify someone to become part of your inner circle such as a Kingdom Spouse, Friend or Partner.

11. PERSONALITY TRAITS ARE THE FRUIT OF THE OUTER MAN.

WHY DOES DISCERNING MATURITY MATTER GREATLY IN RELATIONSHIPS?

Assessing a prospect's maturity is important because all relationships cost a certain amount of time, effort and resources before any mutual benefits can be expected. The different levels of maturity between the parties may reveal the purpose for the relationship and determine how much it's going to cost the parties once they are involved. According to Stephen Covey author of the book titled **7 Habits of Highly Effective People** there are 3 levels of maturity that people can grow to. They are Dependents, Independents and Inter-Dependents.

DEPENDENTS

Dependents are people that don't have enough maturity to take care of themselves. They are high maintenance because they need to be cared for, carried and pushed. They are people that take more from you than they can give back. Their main focus is to feed on what others have and get it for free. They love freebies. They are known for how much they consume rather than how much they produce.

INDEPENDENTS

Independents are people that have reached a level of maturity to take care of themselves but not necessarily anybody else and even if they could they usually don't want to. In relationships they are less maintenance than a 'Dependent' because they don't need to be constantly taken care of, carried or pushed. However, you have to be very careful about how much trust, responsibility or expectation you place on them, because their priorities are closely connected with their freedom and comfort zone. While they realise that they can't get everything for free they are not keen on investing too much into other people.

INTER-DEPENDENTS

Inter-dependents are people that have reached a level of maturity where they not only know how to take care of themselves but others as well. These are low maintenance people when compared with the two previous levels. These people understand that relationships work on **reciprocity**. **Reciprocity is the practice of exchanging valuable things with others for mutual benefit.** They don't waste time on counting pennies but they do check the balance sheet in their relationships.

12. WISE KINGDOM LEADERS NEVER VIOLATE THE PRINCIPLE OF 'RECIPROCITY' OR THE CYCLE OF GIVING AND RECEIVING IN RELATIONSHIPS.

LOVE VS TRUST

In relationships don't confuse loving people with trusting people. God commands all of us to love (**agape**) one another as He has loved us because He will give you the grace to do it. The agape kind of love is not something you can do but rather it's God given ability so you can what He has commanded you to do. This is why He can even command us to love our enemies (**Matthew 5:43-48**).

13. THROUGH GOD'S GRACE LOVE (AGAPE) ALL PEOPLE – EVEN YOUR ENEMIES.

However, God has never commanded us to just **trust** those who haven't earned our **trust**.

Jeremiah 17:5

⁵ **Thus says the Lord: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man.**

The only one that God is happy for us to trust unequivocally is He.

Proverbs 3:5

⁵ **Trust in the Lord with all your heart,**

Jeremiah 17:7

⁷ **"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord.**

14. YOU CAN ALWAYS TRUST GOD, BUT IF YOU ARE GOING TO TRUST PEOPLE THEN THEY MUST EARN YOUR TRUST.

God uses this same principle with all of us. While He loves the world (**John 3:16**) He doesn't trust everybody (**Matthew 25:14-30**). **He watches to see how well you manage what you've been given, how good of a character you have developed and how trustworthy you are.** A good example of this is shown in **1 Timothy 3:1-13 & Titus 1:5-16** when Paul writes to them to say that they should only promote men, whom have shown that they can manage well, have a good character and are trustworthy.

15. GOD ONLY PROMOTES MEN THAT MANAGE WELL, DEVELOP GOOD CHARACTER AND THAT SHOW THEY CAN BE TRUSTED.

EXPECTATION

Wise Apostles and Leaders **do not** place their *expectations* on people (in relationship with them) who cannot or are not willing to meet them.

16. DON'T PLACE EXPECTATIONS ON A RELATIONSHIP IT WAS NOT DESIGNED TO GIVE; OTHERWISE YOU ARE GOING TO GET HURT.

CATEGORISE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Apostles and Leaders know how important it is to discern and *categorise* their relationships so that they know how to set the parameters (boundaries) and the expectations (hopes) on their relationships. As has been said before, every relationship should have a Purpose in regards to how it fits into your Kingdom walk towards your destiny. ***The category of the relationship will give you an indication of how long the relationship may last and what it is set to accomplish.*** Let's look at some categories of relationships that you will encounter in your Kingdom walk.

SHORT-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

Short-term relationships are the kind of relationships God wants you to have for a season. They are temporary. They are with people who come to help you accomplish a short-term goal in your Kingdom walk towards your destiny. An example of a short-term relationship accomplishing a short-term goal is the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist who baptised Him.

ACQUAINTANCE

An **Acquaintance** is a person you know slightly, but who is not a close friend. It is someone that you've interacted with and you have found some good personality traits but you haven't assessed their character or purpose.

17. YOUR ACQUAINTANCES SHOULD HAVE GOOD PERSONALITY TRAITS. HOWEVER, IF YOU WANT TO MAKE THEM PART OF YOUR INNER CIRCLE, YOU BETTER CHECK THEIR PURPOSE AND THEIR CHARACTER - AND MAKE SURE THAT THEY QUALIFY.

COMRADES

A **Comrade** is usually a fellow soldier or member of the armed forces. However, in a Kingdom context this is a person that comes across your path for a season *that is not for you and they are not for what you are for, BUT THEY ARE FOR WHAT YOU ARE AGAINST. IN OTHER WORDS THEY ARE IN LOVE WITH WHAT YOU ARE AGAINST.* This person comes into your life **TO HELP YOU FIGHT A COMMON ENEMY. COMRADES ONLY STAY WITH YOU UNTIL THE VICTORY IS ACHIEVED** and then they leave or you must leave. They may be against things like slavery, poverty, homelessness, human trafficking and prostitution. An example of **Comrades** coming together to fight a common enemy is when the Pharisees and the Sadducees teamed up against Jesus. Other examples are when the Labour Party and the Greens team up against the Liberals or when the United States and Russia team up against ISIS.

18. COMRADES ARE IN LOVE WITH FIGHTING YOUR ENEMIES. THEY ONLY COME TO HELP YOU GET THE VICTORY AND THEN THEY LEAVE OR YOU MUST LEAVE.

CONSTITUENTS

A **Constituent** is normally a person that is part of a group represented by an official. However, in a Kingdom context this is a person that comes across your path for a season *that is not for you and they are not for what you are against, BUT THEY ARE FOR WHAT YOU ARE FOR. IN OTHER WORDS THEY ARE IN LOVE WITH YOUR CAUSE. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE THAT COME TO HELP YOU ON A COMMON CAUSE, ACCOMPLISHMENT OR ASSIGNMENT.*

For example your company decides to bring people with different skills together who don't necessarily know each other from various sections/departments to produce a new product or service. The main purpose is the product or the service and not whether people like each other.

19. CONSTITUENTS ARE IN LOVE WITH YOUR CAUSE. THEY ONLY COME TO HELP YOU ACCOMPLISH IT AND THEN THEY LEAVE OR YOU MUST LEAVE.

LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

Long-term relationships are the kind of relationships God wants you to have for a lifetime or numerous seasons. They can be permanent. They are with people who come to help you reach your long-term goals such as your purpose and destiny for your Kingdom life. This could be a spouse. Another example of a long-term relationship accomplishing a long-term goal is the relationship between Jesus and John the apostle who was trusted to write the mysteries that make up the book of Revelation.

CONFIDANTS

A **Confidant** is a person with whom you share your private matters or secrets, trusting them not to repeat them to other people. These are the very few people that come into your life *that are not for what you are for and they are not for what you are against, BUT WHO ARE FOR YOU.* It's not about what you have, it's not about what you bring to the table, it's not about what you can do for them and it's not about your gifts or talents. **IN OTHER WORDS THEY ARE IN LOVE WITH YOU.** These are the people you have found good character in. **THESE ARE THE PEOPLE THAT COME TO HELP YOU ACCOMPLISHMENT YOUR PURPOSE AND/OR REACH YOUR DESTINY.** This is the kind of relationship David had with Jonathan (**1 Samuel 18:1**).

Not having a **Confidant** will leave you empty, isolated, broken, dysfunctional, depressed and void. How do you know you have one? Because they stay with you when everybody else has left. They stay with you when you're up or down, in trouble or not, with money or broke. **They love you and care about God's destiny for your life.** If you have two (2) of these people in your life you are a very blessed human being. For some people a **Confidant** can take as long as 55 years to find.

20. CONFIDANTS ARE IN LOVE WITH YOU. THEY ARE RARE AND THEY COME TO ENCOURAGE AND HELP YOU ACCOMPLISH YOUR PURPOSE AND REACH YOUR DESTINY.

21. A WORD OF CAUTION: NEVER EVER MAKE YOUR COMRADES OR YOUR CONSTITUENTS YOUR CONFIDANTS – UNLESS THEY QUALIFY – OTHERWISE YOU'RE GOING TO GET HURT.

21 KINGDOM PRINCIPLES (KEYS) FOR MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

1. **ASSESS A PERSON'S CHARACTER, NOT JUST THEIR PERSONALITY.**
2. **DON'T DECEIVE YOURSELF BY GOING AND LOOKING FOR GOOD RELATIONSHIPS FROM PEOPLE WITH BAD CHARACTER.**
3. **REMEMBER ALL FRUIT (GOOD OR BAD) COMES FROM WITHIN.**
4. **CHARACTER TRAITS ARE THE FRUIT OF THE INNER MAN.**
5. **HOW A PERSON MAKES YOU FEEL EMOTIONALLY MUST NOT FORM PART OF HOW YOU ASSESS THE FRUITS OF THEIR CHARACTER.**
6. **EVERYONE WHO DEVELOPS A GOOD CHARACTER WILL BE FRUITFUL.**
7. **ALWAYS HIRE GOOD CHARACTER AND THEN TRAIN FOR SKILLS.**
8. **YOUR PERSONALITY, EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, GIFTS, SKILLS AND TALENTS MAY GIVE YOU ACCESS TO THE TOP OF A MOUNTAIN - BUT IT WILL BE YOUR GOOD CHARACTER THAT WILL KEEP YOU THERE.**
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18. **COMRADES ARE IN LOVE WITH FIGHTING YOUR ENEMIES. THEY ONLY COME TO HELP YOU GET THE VICTORY AND THEN THEY LEAVE OR YOU MUST LEAVE.**
19. **CONSTITUENTS ARE IN LOVE WITH YOUR CAUSE. THEY ONLY COME TO HELP YOU ACCOMPLISH IT AND THEN THEY LEAVE OR YOU MUST LEAVE.**
20. **CONFIDANTS ARE IN LOVE WITH YOU. THEY ARE RARE AND THEY COME TO ENCOURAGE AND HELP YOU ACCOMPLISH YOUR PURPOSE AND REACH YOUR DESTINY.**
21. **A WORD OF CAUTION: NEVER EVER MAKE YOUR COMRADES OR YOUR CONSTITUENTS YOUR CONFIDANTS – UNLESS THEY QUALIFY – OTHERWISE YOU'RE GOING TO GET HURT.**

RESOURCES

The above teaching has been prepared from Apostle Ron Carpenter's Teaching Series called "***Shipwrecked - Part 1***" – YouTube.

'I've always believed you hire character & train skill' quote by Lori Greiner.

Stephen R. Covey 2015 ***'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People'***.