

INGREDIENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIP¹

The fruit of the Spirit and the love of Christ are the core strength of Christian relationships between singles, friends, “neighbors”, family members, spouses, etc. Use the following material to evaluate your relationships.

Every relationship needs continual refreshment through frequent reaffirmations of these biblical truths. With that, good relationships will become better and weak relationships can gain strength.

The Fruit of the Spirit

What kind of relationship results between two people who are totally yielded to the Spirit of God in living out the will of God? It is a God-honoring relationship characterized by the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). The following describe varying aspects of that fruit:

<i>Love</i>	A sacrificial commitment to the welfare of another person regardless of that person’s response or what he or she might give to me in return.
<i>Joy</i>	A deep, abiding inner thankfulness to God for His goodness that is uninterrupted when less desirable circumstances of life intrude.
<i>Peace</i>	During the storms of life, heartfelt tranquility and trust anchored in the overwhelming consciousness that I am in the hand of God.
<i>Patience</i>	A quality of self-restraint that does not retaliate in the face of provoking situations.
<i>Kindness</i>	A sensitive awareness and willingness to seek out ways in which to serve others.
<i>Goodness</i>	An unswerving capacity to deal with people rightly in the best interest of God even when they need correction.
<i>Faithfulness</i>	An inner loyalty that results in remaining true to my spiritual convictions and commitments.
<i>Gentleness</i>	Controlled strength dispensed from a humble heart.
<i>Self-control</i>	An inward personal mastery that submits my desires to the greater cause of God’s will.

¹ Adapted from Mayhue, Richard L., “The Pastor’s Home” from *Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1995, pp. 160-162.

The Love of Christ

If we add the love of Christ to the fruit of the Spirit, we have a relationship that will not fail (1 Cor. 13:8). How does your love for others match up with Christ's love as outlined in 1 Cor. 13:4-7?

<i>Love is patient.</i>	Therefore, I will bear with others' worst behavior, without retaliation, regardless of the circumstances.
<i>Love is kind.</i>	Therefore, I will diligently seek ways to be actively useful in others' lives.
<i>Love is not jealous.</i>	Therefore, I will delight in the esteem and honor given to others.
<i>Love does not brag.</i>	Therefore, I will not draw attention to myself so as to exclude others.
<i>Love is not arrogant.</i>	Therefore, I know I am not more important than others.
<i>Love does not act unbecomingly.</i>	Therefore, I will not engage others in ungodly activity.
<i>Love does not seek its own.</i>	Therefore, I will be other-oriented.
<i>Love is not provoked.</i>	Therefore, I will not resort to anger as a solution to difficulties between myself and others.
<i>Love does not take into account a wrong suffered.</i>	Therefore, I will never keep an account due on others.
<i>Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness.</i>	Therefore, I will never delight in others' unrighteous behavior, nor will I join in its expression.
<i>Love rejoices with the truth.</i>	Therefore, I will find great joy when truth prevails in others' lives
<i>Love bears all things.</i>	Therefore, I will be <i>publicly</i> silent about others' faults.
<i>Love believes all things.</i>	Therefore, I will express unshakable confidence and trust in others.
<i>Love hopes all things.</i>	Therefore, I will confidently expect future obedience in others' lives, regardless of present imperfections.
<i>Love endures all things.</i>	Therefore, I will outlast every assault of Satan to break up my relationship with others.