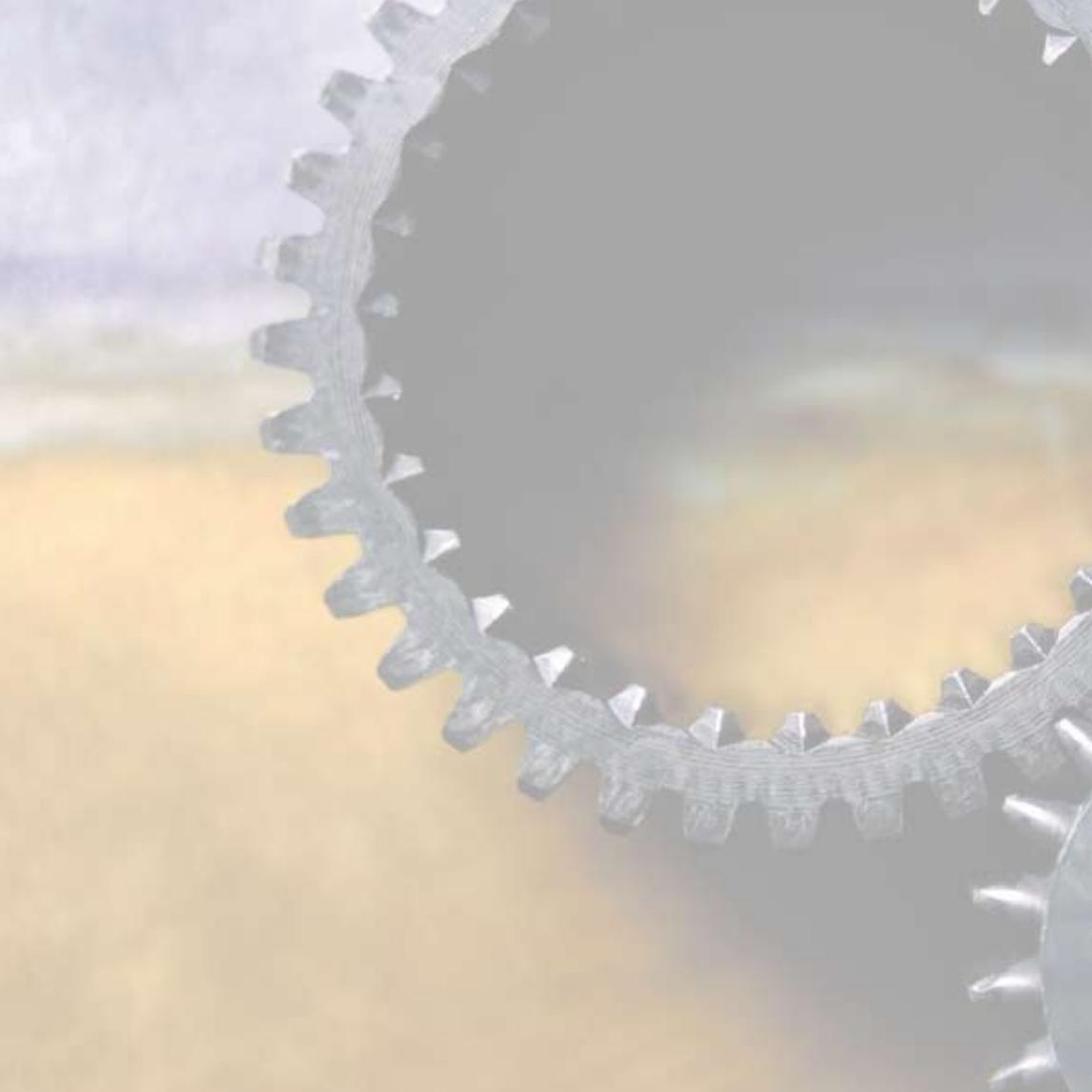


FROM JESUS WITH LOVE



*Success
with People*



The background features a close-up of several interlocking metal gears on the left side, with a blurred globe of the Earth visible behind them. The overall color palette is muted, with greys, blues, and earthy tones.

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INTRODUCTION

One of Jesus' critics once asked a question to test Him: "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:36–40).

Another time, Jesus put it in a slightly different perspective when He told His disciples, "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matthew 7:12). This saying is now commonly referred to as the Golden Rule, and it is, as you might have guessed, the secret of success with people and the focus of this book. This is a Golden Rule book for successful relationships with others.

Life can be tough at times, and often one of the toughest parts is getting along with people. But how you succeed with people has a major bearing on how you succeed in life. You may have made millions, you may be tops in your field, but if you haven't been an instrument of God's love to help better the lives of those around you and let Him better you in the process, you've been missing one of the best things in life!

The following messages from Jesus don't contain everything there is to know about developing successful relations with others, of course, but enough to get you well on your way. And there's lots more where this came from! Jesus wants to open a personal hotline between you and Him so He can give you the perfect, personalized answer to each question and problem you face. You, too, can hear directly from Jesus. He will speak to anyone who believes in Him, sincerely asks Him to speak, and then accepts by faith that what they "hear" in their heart or mind is truly Him speaking.

Open your heart to Jesus and receive His words of love and life, and you will be more successful in your relations with others and happier than ever.



THE SCHOOL OF LIFE



THE FOUR MEASURES

It's a quirk of human nature that those who generally have a positive effect on those around them often worry about their "people skills," whereas those who have more of a negative impact on others often aren't aware of how they come across, or may even think they do well in that area. As a result, many of those who could stand to improve the most keep repeating mistakes they probably would try harder to correct if they recognized the problem. To keep from falling into this trap, it's wise to assess your people skills from time to time.

Don't rely solely on your own assessment, either. Measure your interactions with others by My teachings in the Bible. Learning to apply the counsel you read there to yourself is always one of the smartest things you can do, and it has *lots* to say about human relations. And when I say apply, I mean *not* only acknowledge your weaknesses when My Word reveals them to you, but work at making the needed changes.

Next, ask Me what I think. Because I love you and want to see you succeed in your relationships with others, I will shoot straight with you regarding any social tendencies or habits you should change.

It's also wise to ask those you respect and trust how *they* see you. That takes humility, but you may gain invaluable insight.

To get the complete picture, it takes all four—your own assessment, My assessment, counsel from My Word, and the evaluation of others. Be encouraged by the positive and go to work on the negative. This isn't a once-and-for-all process, of course, but as you remain open to constructive criticism from these four sources, your people skills will blossom.

EMBRACE CHANGE

Are you set in your ways, or do you embrace new ideas? Do you welcome suggestions from others? Are you open to learning and trying new things? Are you willing to change things if someone else finds a better way?

It's often easier to keep doing things the old way than it is to change, or at least it can seem so at first. Change takes time and effort, but good changes are worth it in the long run. You shouldn't resist change, but you shouldn't go to the other extreme either of changing things just for the sake of change.

Some things never change—My love for you and My basic commandments and promises in the Bible—but in other areas I delight in change. Situations change. People change. You change! I don't like things to stagnate. I like innovation and progress, and I want you to as well. Be flexible. Flow with the new and move with Me, and you'll be much easier for Me and others to work with.

How do you know whether or not a certain change would be beneficial? The surest way is to ask Me. Get My stamp of approval. I can help you recognize opportunities for positive change and spare you from missteps. If a new idea has My blessing, your efforts will be rewarded as you act on it.





BE A STUDENT OF PEOPLE

Everyone has at least one good quality or skill to pass on, and a wise person will look for that something. What some people have to offer is obvious, but with others it is hidden and must be drawn out. The Bible says: “Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out” (Proverbs 20:5).

Sometimes the learning experience doesn't center on some special skill or knowledge the other person has, but from simply being around that person and partaking of his or her good qualities, such as faith, patience, optimism, or outgoing love and concern for others.

You can also learn from children. The Bible says of children “of such is the kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 19:14), and, “out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise” (Matthew 21:16). Little children, with their innocence and simple faith, can sometimes be the most profound teachers.

You can even learn from some people about how *not* to behave, what *not* to do, and why *not* to follow in their footsteps. It's been said that a wise man learns from his mistakes, but a wiser man learns from the mistakes of others.

If you can learn to see people from the angle of “this person has something to offer that can help make me a better person,” you'll not only learn something, but will also be more likely to focus on things you respect in them and thereby build stronger and more meaningful relationships.

LEARNING TO RELATE

A key to understanding others and therefore treating them right is to put yourself in their place. When I came to earth, I put Myself in your place and made Myself like you so I could better understand you. I experienced firsthand the difficulties of life. I got tired, hungry, sick, lonely, discouraged, and went through everything else you experience. And having done that, I can now truly feel for you, and help and comfort you the way you need Me to.

That's also the key to relating well to others—put yourself in their place. You can't totally change your circumstances like I did, and you don't need to. Just project yourself mentally into their circumstances.

For example, before you ask someone to do something that may seem simple and straightforward to you, consider first whether that person will feel the same. Or if someone is out of sorts or isn't being as productive as usual, think about what might be causing that person to act that way. This is a much safer way to operate than assuming the next person sees and feels the same way about things as you.

Walk a mile in another's shoes, as the saying goes, and you will be much more inclined to be understanding and supportive when the situation calls for that. Then adjust your expectations or presentation accordingly. Others will sense that you've anticipated their needs or concerns and taken their limitations into account, and this will help you live and work together better. Empathy helps create unity of spirit, and that's a wonderful thing!



FAILURE IS OPPORTUNITY

History is full of stories of people who were either blind to their faults and mistakes or refused to acknowledge them, and their pride was their downfall. How different things could have turned out if they would have been humble enough to admit when they were wrong.

What about you? Do you hide your mistakes? Or do you take the courageous path of owning up to them? Believe Me, most people will respect you more if you do. Sure, some people may rub it in or try to use your humbling for their own advantage, but that's their problem and does not indicate a weakness in your own character.

In the long run, character determines your worth. It's not the easy successes that prove your mettle, but how you pick yourself up after a fall and try again. By acknowledging and going on in spite of your failures, you'll also inspire others to not give up.

Failure is a step forward when you learn from it. Failure prepares the way for success by causing you to look hard at your plans and methods. If all those who eventually succeeded at what they set out to do had stopped at the first failure, you'd still be back in the Stone Age! Aren't you glad others took advantage of their failures? Won't you do the same?





IT STARTS WITH YOU

YOUR BILLBOARD

Your face is your billboard by the highway of life. It's your means of unspoken communication, your first and most powerful "advertisement."

Many people don't put enough emphasis on making sure their billboard is displaying the right message. They walk around with their worries or woes or whatever else is on their mind written all over their face. Their introspection and stress can't help but show and are bound to affect others negatively. That sort of message is enough to repel all but their most understanding and loyal friends. But other people have a knack for staying cheerful no matter what they are going through. They have a bright countenance that attracts others.

So if you want to make and keep friends, let your face send a positive message that will lift others' hearts. Concentrate on having a pleasant facial expression that conveys faith, optimism, kindness, approachability, concern for others, and a joy for living—not one that changes with circumstances or how you happen to feel at the moment.

That's easier said than done, you say, especially when troubles loom large. This is one more good reason to bring your problems to Me in prayer—so I can help you see things from My perspective, give you solutions, and replace your fears with faith and your laments with praises. Then your face will reflect those positive inner feelings.



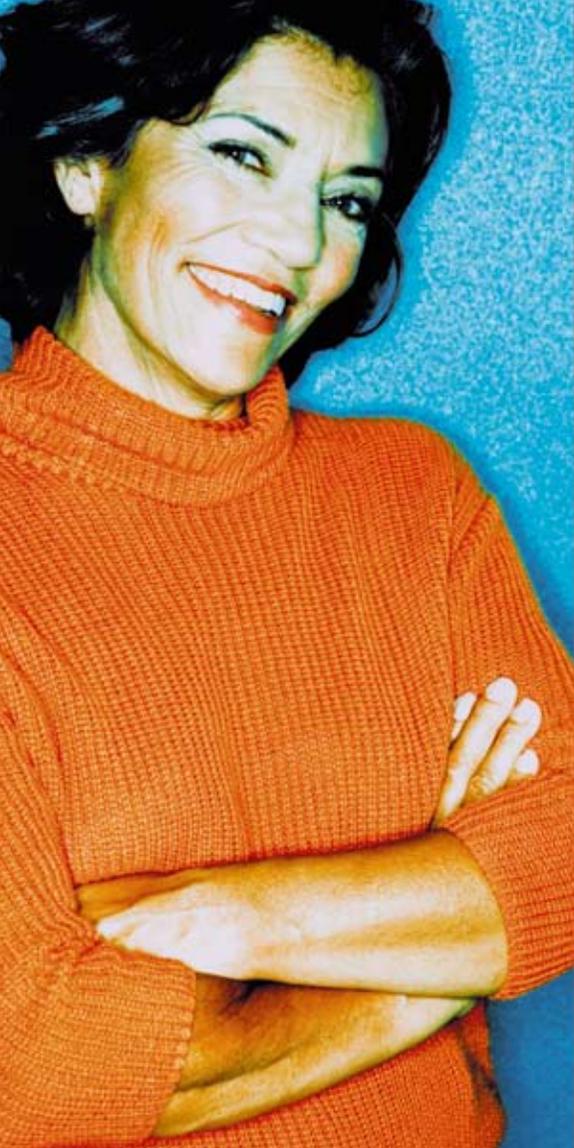
RIGHT TURN

Want every day to turn out well, no matter what the circumstances? Here is the secret: Look for the good in every situation. I know that's asking a lot, but I can always show you something good. For example, when you come home from work dog tired and still have to make dinner for your family or take care of the kids while your wife does, stop and thank Me that you *have* a family to come home to. There is a positive way to look at any difficulty or disappointment.

If you are inclined to dwell on the negative, stop! Getting critical or depressed never makes things better. You might feel that you deserve a little self-pity, but you will only drag others down and feel the worse for it. Whereas if you ask Me to help you look at even the "bad" things in a positive way, I will help you pull out of the doldrums.

There is more than enough negativity and cynicism in the world today. You can't counter the global problem, but you can control your own outlook and keep from falling prey to it yourself. Determine to make the best of bad situations, and you'll make your own world a happier place. You'll also attract more friends, because people are naturally attracted to positive people. And because you have an effect on others, you will end up changing more of the world than you may have thought possible!





THE EYES HAVE IT

Eyes are both receivers and transmitters—powerful communicators of the heart and spirit. People read your eyes even before they hear what you're saying. The eyes tell all in that magic moment when your eyes make contact with another's. When eyes connect, spirits connect. In that moment of intimacy and vulnerability, each party makes a conscious or unconscious judgment of the other, based on what has been revealed through that initial spiritual exchange.

Eyes can convey understanding, sympathy, approval or disapproval, encouragement or discouragement, support or doubt, challenge or submission, and a thousand other things. A look can blast like a cannon or gently caress. Eyes can penetrate the soul and unearth deepest secrets, or brush others aside as though they didn't exist.

When others want your opinion, they look in your eyes. When they want to know if you're telling the truth, they look to see if your eyes are saying the same thing as your lips. Eyes are prime communicators between people of different languages, because they speak the universal language of the human spirit.

I am the Light of the World. Let My light shine through your eyes.

START A POSITIVE CYCLE

There's nothing wrong with talking about people behind their backs—as long as you say only *nice* things.

Chances are, what you say about others will get back to them, so use that as your gauge: Don't say anything about others in their absence that you wouldn't say to their face. This isn't being hypocritical; it's treating others in their errors or weaknesses the way you would want to be treated.

Sometimes you may need to discuss someone's problems with others, especially if you are a supervisor, but you can always say it in a way that is respectful and won't lower others' opinion of the one you are discussing. When you must say something negative, try to balance it with something positive. (Everyone has some good traits.) Also, if you remind yourself that the reason you're discussing the person's problems is so you can help that person make changes for the better, your discussion will take on a more positive tone and you'll be more likely to achieve your goal—positive change.

And do you know what? Sooner or later the kindness and consideration you show others will come back to you. That's a spiritual principle, as sure as the laws of nature: You reap what you sow. Treat all people with respect, and you will earn the respect of others.

Not only that, but your example will also rub off on others. You might not see huge results immediately, but if you keep at it, you can create a little bit of heaven in your corner of the world. It *is* possible—and it can start with you.



FORGIVENESS IS DIVINE

The power to forgive is one of the greatest powers given to man. It's part of the nature and essence of God, and when you exercise it you assume godlike stature. You have the power to forgive and thus rise above the pettiness of mortals.

Choosing to forgive another is one of the hardest things most people ever do, especially if it's undeserved. It's hard because it's not human nature. Human nature cries out for revenge and retribution. But why get stuck in human nature?

I came to bring forgiveness and salvation from sin, but I also came to save you from human nature. When you received Me as your Savior, you received a measure of My superhuman nature. Once you've received Me, how much that superhuman nature rules in your life is up to you, and that is reflected in your choices. Since one of the most outstanding traits of My nature is a readiness to forgive, how quick you are to forgive others is a pretty good indication of whether or not you're letting My superhuman nature take charge.

Whether that person who wronged you deserves forgiveness or not is not the central issue. The central issue is *you* doing the right thing. No one really deserves forgiveness. If others have done wrong, they deserve justice. But forgiveness is greater than justice. Justice is human; forgiveness is divine.

Forgive others who have wronged you, even as your heavenly Father forgives you.





A FORCE FOR GOOD



BEING YOUR BROTHER'S KEEPER MEANS ...

- › Putting his happiness before your own;
- › Being supportive;
- › Always having a good word to say behind his back;
- › Never gossiping or spreading untruths about him;
- › Helping him make the right choices, being a positive influence, and helping him stand up for the right and resist temptation;
- › Wanting only the best for him, and doing what you can to make it happen;
- › Always being willing to hear him out;
- › Speaking the truth in love, even when you know it will hurt;
- › Not criticizing or labeling him;
- › Building him up;
- › Helping him reach his goals and be all he can be;
- › Lending prayerful words of advice;
- › Never giving up on him;
- › Pointing him to My Word for answers to his questions and problems;
- › Treating him the way you would want to be treated;
- › Not jumping to conclusions, but taking time to understand him and communicate on a deep level;
- › Sticking up for him when others turn against him.
- › Picking him up when he falls;
- › Striving to be the good example he needs to see;
- › Allowing yourself to be an instrument of My love.

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

When someone does something special for you, doesn't it make you feel loved?

You can do the same for others—and I'm not just talking about giving a gift on a special occasion to a special someone, although that can be wonderful too. I'm referring to the little things that you can do for anyone, anytime, for no other reason than because you care—things that may cost you little or nothing but could mean the world to those on the receiving end. Thoughtful gestures, especially when they are least expected, have a wonderful way of brightening people's days. They convey, "You are special."

Charity begins at home, but it shouldn't stop there. Try extending to others the kind of love and thoughtfulness you show your loved ones, and watch what a difference that can make. Take a

personal interest in those you see regularly but don't really know—the checkout clerk, the waiter, the repairman, the receptionist. Ask about their health, their families, or their day, and then *act* on what they tell you. Offer to pray for their sore back or sick child, and remember to ask for an update the next time your paths cross. Remember birthdays with a note or special greeting. Offer to stand in for a workmate so he can leave a little early on his anniversary—and that will make his wife happy too!

I can show you countless little things you can do for others to show them they count. What are we waiting for?





MAKE SOMEONE'S DAY

Have you ever had a bad day just because you crossed paths with someone who was in a foul mood? Maybe it was someone on the bus or another customer in a store—someone who you normally wouldn't have even noticed—but that one grumpy or inconsiderate person cast a pall on your whole day.

On the other hand, have you ever had a day that went great and realized later that it all started when you met someone who was especially nice to you? Maybe it was the way she smiled at you, or the way he picked up and handed you something you had dropped, or held a door open for you—only a little gesture, but one that had a positive impact on your day.

Everyone has influence. Moment by moment your attitude and level of happiness are reflected in the little things you say and do, and those are bound to affect others. What kind of impact do you usually have?

Think of the things people have done that made your day, and make a point of doing those same things for others. Not only will you brighten someone else's day, but you will also find that you are happier and see life more positively.

BUILD BRIDGES, NOT WALLS

It's been said that people are lonely because they build walls instead of bridges. How true!

Most people tend to be a little selfish. It's human nature to "look out for number one," to put your own needs and desires before the needs of others. It's easy enough to get caught up in your own life and problems, but when you do that, you're creating a bigger problem by closing yourself off to many wonderful things in life, and many wonderful people.

When you build bridges by reaching out to and connecting with others, it may add a few problems and complications, but it's worth the trouble because it also brings warmth, friendship, love, and other blessings into your life. It is a matter of give and take, and it does require some effort, patience, and perseverance. The bridge doesn't build itself, and sometimes others aren't at first so keen to see you building in their direction. But if everyone got stuck in the me-first mentality and built nothing but walls, the world would be a terribly lonely place.

Building a bridge begins with a prayer for love and understanding and for Me to help you change in other areas as needed. When you begin to think in terms of what others want and need, the framework is in place. Then that bridge grows a little stronger each time you give of yourself to that hard-to-reach person. It might take a little courage to cross that bridge the first time, when you're not sure how well it's going to hold or how you'll be received on the other side, but you'll be glad you did. I will bless every unselfish act, and honor every step you take to reach out to another.



MAKE SOME NICE WEATHER

You can't make the sun come out on a rainy day, but you *can* change the mood around you.

Most people feel happier and are more upbeat on a warm, sunny day than on a stormy one. You can warm and encourage the people around you by the sunny “rays” or good vibes you send their way. But if you're carrying around a cloud of problems and woes, you're likely to create a “pressure system” that will dump rain and dampen and darken the day for everyone around you.

So carry a warm, sunny atmosphere with you wherever you go. Let the sun of your happy countenance shine on others and cheer them up. And in times when you don't *feel* happy—when you're under pressure or having problems, when you feel like you're under a big cloud yourself—call on Me to drive away the clouds that loom over you and shine the light of My love on you instead.

The sun is *always* shining where I am. I always have plenty of warm rays to send your way, and I want you to soak them up and reflect them to others. Let's make some nice weather!





AT HOME

HOME OF HEARTS

Love has creative power, and in the home love does its magic by engendering unselfish acts and helping each family member see the others in a positive light. Everyone wants to be understood, accepted, and loved for who he or she is, and the home is a God-created environment where these things can thrive.

There are also things that work against love in the home—enemies of love, if you will. Disagreements between children and parents and sibling rivalries are a couple of the obvious ones, but there are other problems that are more subtle and therefore even more dangerous—selfishness, laziness, indifference, criticalness, nagging, taking each other for granted, and thinking and talking negatively about one another, to name a few. These usually begin with small, seemingly innocent incidents—finding excuses to not help out, squabbles over petty issues, little putdowns and sarcastic remarks—but unless you recognize these as attacks on your family's love and unity, they will develop into bad habits that will take a terrible toll on your family.

It's not enough to simply save the moment by sending the feuding parties to their separate corners, silencing the sarcastic, or pressing the shirker into service. That's dealing with the symptoms, not the root problem, which is a lack of love. The only thing that will cure a lack of love is love itself, so ask Me to bring more love into your home, and then work with Me on it. If you ask Me to give each of you genuine respect and appreciation for the others, I will put that kind of love in your hearts, but then it's up to you to cultivate that love through loving thoughts, words, and actions.



THE MARRIAGE TRIANGLE

Marriage is the joining of hearts, that two may become one. It's a wonderful thing with wonderful rewards for those who are willing to make the necessary sacrifices—and there *are* some sacrifices involved. To become one, each partner must be willing to give and change. The man must give of himself to become all that his wife needs him to be, and the woman must give of herself to become everything that her husband needs her to be. That's the kind of self-sacrificial love that the strongest, happiest marriages are built on. Where do you get such love? Only from Me.

Picture your marriage as a triangle, with the two of you at the bottom two corners and Me at the top. As you both climb the sides of the triangle to come closer to Me, the source of love, you are also drawn closer together. The way to greater love and greater closeness with each other is to climb closer to Me.

The closer you both come to Me, the more love you will have to share with others. And the more love you share, the closer others will be drawn to both you and Me. It will start with those nearest and dearest to you—your children and other family members—and grow from there. As I said, marriage is a wonderful thing with wonderful rewards—so wonderful, in fact, that the sacrifices cease to be sacrifices.



PARENTING BY EXAMPLE

Parenting has never been easy, but all parents have one great thing going for them from day one: Their children love and look up to them more than anyone else in the world. This is an important part of the grand scheme of things, because while your children are a gift from Heaven, they are a work in progress. It's your job to help them grow into loving, responsible adults.

The love and respect your children feel for you are inborn, but they aren't static. They increase or diminish day by day according to how you interact with your child, so don't betray their trust. Set the kind of example they will be proud to follow.

If you want your children to be outgoing and genuinely concerned about others, be that way yourself. If you want them to be unselfish, be unselfish. If you want them to be honest, be honest. If you want them to be optimistic and solution-oriented, let them see you approach life's challenges and disappointments positively. If you want them to love, respect, and have a genuine

connection with Me, keep your own connection strong through spending time with Me and reading My Word and putting what it says into practice. If you want them to have thankful hearts, thank and praise Me for My goodness at every turn.

If you set the right example for your children during their formative years, those bonds of love and respect will be unbreakable, no matter what may befall you or them. They will also grow into adults that both you and I can be proud of. Then when you come home to Me, you'll hear Me say, "Well done, good and faithful parent!" (Matthew 25:21, paraphrased).



JUMP-START

The surest way to help your loved ones get off to a great start each day is by starting the day with love. Easier said than done, you might say, when you're just waking up yourself! But if you pray for that extra oomph you need and give it a try, I think you'll be pleasantly surprised. If you give love, you'll get love!

Don't just eat breakfast together in silence, staring at your plate, the newspaper, or the back of the cereal box. Count your blessings together. Thank Me for the wonderful things you're sure I'm going to do for you that day in answer to prayer and because I love you. Read a short passage from the Bible. Pray for each other and the different things you expect to face that day, and claim a promise from My Word for each victory you need.

Tank up on Me! I am love and light, My strength is unfailing, and all things are possible for Me. Fill up on Me first thing, and you and your loved ones will be ready for any challenge the day may bring your way.

Those few minutes you have together in the morning are also a great time to give encouragement. Tell her how nice she looks. Tell him you're sure he's going to do great in school. Give a parting hug or kiss that conveys "I can't wait to be with you again!"

Start the day with love, and love will carry you through the day.



INCLUDE ME

If you want a happier family and a happier family life, here's how: Include Me in everything you do. I'm not talking about dry, formal, somber religiosity—anything but! You just might be surprised at how much fun I can be. The benefits of including Me are too numerous to list here, but I'll give you three.

One: I'm full of ideas. My Father and I created this world together, and you've got to admit, we came up with some pretty good stuff. Don't you think I can show you fun and enjoyable activities to do together?

Two: I can relate. There's no situation you face that I haven't helped others deal with before, so consult with Me the moment you begin to have problems.

Three: More love. Isn't that what you want most for your marriage—love? I am love, so where I am, love is. The Bible says that in My presence is fullness of joy, and at My right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11).

I have so much love to give you and yours—more than you could possibly imagine and much more than you can contain. It's here for you any time, all the time, just ask. I'm at your beck and call. Just say, "Jesus, thank You for being the head of our family. Be with us now in what we're about to do."





IN THE WORKPLACE

BE A WINNING TEAM

What if everyone on a sports team always wanted to be the one to shoot and score, and no one wanted to pass the ball to others? The team would be a flop. Winning teams are made up of team players, not glory-seeking hotshots. Team players respect their coach and teammates, and realize that all are needed. They work to keep their teammates' morale high by expressing confidence in each other and their team as a whole.

And like the head coach of a winning sports team, a good boss is able to take a group of individuals with different skills and personalities and form them into a cohesive, effective unit. He knows how to develop his employees' talents, and how to inspire them to give their best day after day. He understands each employee's abilities and limitations, and uses each at the position where he or she can best excel. He knows how to motivate and build morale. He earns his players' respect by respecting every player on his team, not just the stars. He inspires team spirit and confidence. When they succeed as a team, he makes sure all share in the limelight and rewards.

There is a lot of competition out there. If you don't work as a team, the competition will win, but if you can learn to work together, you'll win together and be able to enjoy the rewards of victory together.



SECONDHAND STRESS

Some people can operate well under pressure for a while. Others are just the opposite—pressure fritzes them out immediately. And while some people thrive on the adrenaline rush of a pressure-cooker environment, most don't.

If you're a high-powered person, you need to realize that others are greatly affected by your pace and push. This is especially true when you are in a managerial or leadership position. Stress can be debilitating—even secondhand stress. Better results are usually reached when the environment is calm and steady.

Have you ever watched a flock of birds or sheep or a herd of horses or cows and noticed that when one gets jumpy or upset, that spirit quickly spreads to the others and the flock or herd scatters? Something similar takes place in any work environment. People affect each other. Ask yourself how you're affecting those around you. Or better yet, ask Me. I will not only show you the problem, if there is one, but also help you radiate a calm, positive spirit.



CHANGE OF HEART

People can sense if you like them or not, and if you don't, even if you say and do all the "right" things, there will most likely be tension between you. You should try to get along with everyone, of course, but especially in cases where you have to work around people you don't particularly like, building a more positive relationship is a must.

You probably feel that the only way the situation can change is if others change whatever it is that irritates you, but that's not likely to happen unless you first change your attitude about them. That may sound practically impossible, as you no doubt think you have good reason for

feeling about them as you do—but that's where *I* come in.

If you sincerely want to improve relations, I will go to work the minute you ask for My help. I'll help you see each "problem person" as I do, with love and understanding. Change *will* come, and it will begin with a change of heart—*your* heart. I will give you a genuine appreciation for that person that will change your whole relationship. When they sense your positive attitude, their feelings toward you will also change for the better. If you don't believe Me, just try it!



JUDGE RIGHT

Life is a series of judgment calls, big and small. “Is my colleague telling me the truth?” “Can I believe this advertiser’s claims?” Nearly every day you have to pass judgment on some situation, and your opinions and decisions often have consequences for the other people involved. The stakes may not be as high or the judgment as final, but like a magistrate in the judicial system, your judgment matters.

I once told My critics, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment” (John 7:24). What is righteous judgment? It is judging fairly and honestly, applying the right rule to that particular situation and sometimes looking beyond the “facts” to see the hearts and true intentions of those involved.

Before passing judgment it’s important to remain impartial and get all sides of the story. The better informed you are, the better chance you will have of judging correctly.

And of course it’s always wise, even in seemingly small matters, to talk it over with Me before passing judgment. Remember, I am the great all-seeing, all-knowing Judge who will judge the world at the end of days, so I know quite a bit about making righteous judgment.



SPIRITUAL CORRECTNESS

Life can seem unfair. You look around and wonder why others you feel are less deserving have it better. This thinking is especially common in the workplace. Some workmates get the plum assignments. Some get promoted faster. Some have better workstations. Some are smarter or faster at their work. Some have better relationships with the boss. There is always someone to envy about something.

If that sounds like you, what's the *real* score? That depends on what you consider success. If you understood and truly believed that you weren't put in the world to claw your way to the top but to love Me and love your neighbor, you wouldn't become so envious or frustrated when others seem to have it better or get ahead quicker.

As you go about whatever it is you do at work, the question to keep in mind is, "How can I love God and others today?" Then put the answers I give you into effect, and you will be succeeding in the greatest way. You will be earning eternal rewards, and the pettiness of this world will fade away. You will be motivated by "spiritual correctness."

There is much emphasis these days on political correctness—on acting and speaking in such a way as to avoid offending others—but spiritual correctness goes a step further. Spiritual correctness does the caring, considerate, or sacrificial thing not because social convention requires it, but because love inspires it.



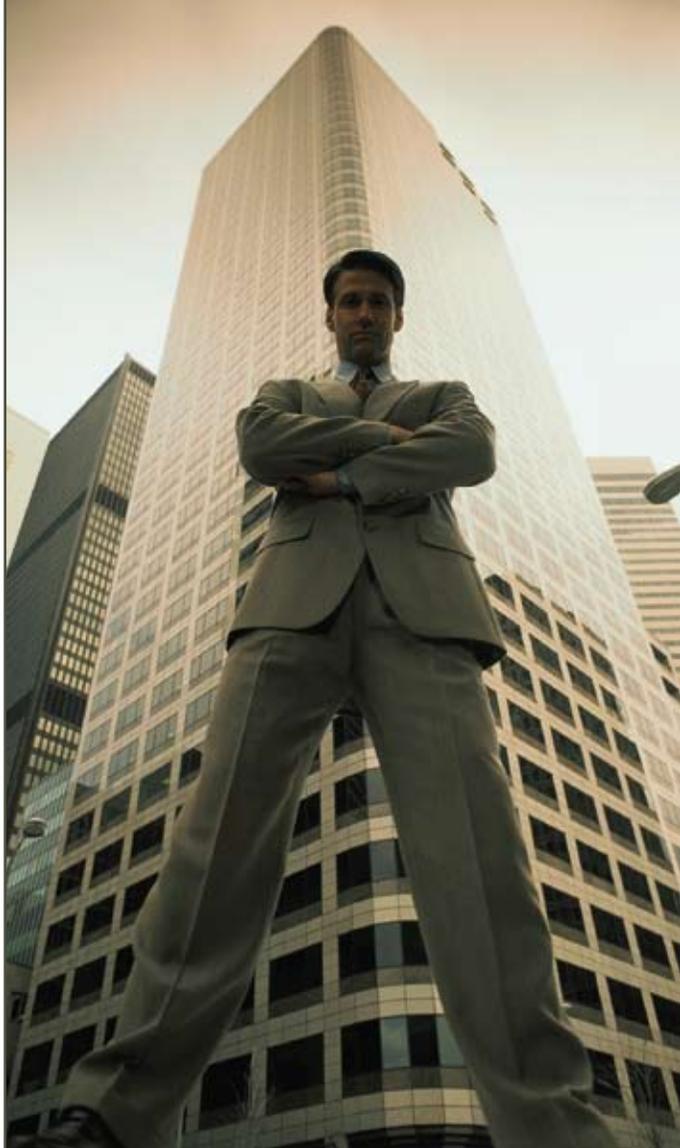
TAKE A LOAD OFF

It takes a big man to let go of his ego.

Many people carry around “loads” of ego. They want to be well thought of, and sometimes they think this has to come at the cost of putting others down. This is sad and not the way it should be, especially if you’re in a position of seniority.

When people look up to you, you have a great opportunity to help unlock their potential. But you can’t make others feel important, capable, or respected if you insist on calling all the shots and being right all the time. Sure, you want to make right decisions and be successful, but it doesn’t need to come at the expense of others. If you consistently dominate company meetings and push your own ideas, you’re going to find that it will discourage creativity and effort in your colleagues, as well as make them unenthusiastic about seeing your ideas through.

Take a load off of everyone. Lay down your ego.



CORRECTING OTHERS IN LOVE

At some time or another, nearly everyone is in a position to have to correct someone else for a mistake. Whether it was a big mistake or not, it's often an awkward and uncomfortable moment for both the one giving the correction and the one receiving it. The person giving it worries that the other will be defensive, resentful, or consider it out of place, and the person receiving it may very well feel embarrassed.

Receiving correction is humbling. Most people try hard not to make mistakes, so when they do—especially if it's a serious one that affects others or that others will hear about—it wounds their pride. If you remind yourself of that and pray before correcting someone, I can show you how to help the other person take it better.

Put yourself in the other person's shoes. How would you like to be corrected if the situation

were reversed? If there were any possibility of a misunderstanding, or if there were extenuating circumstances, wouldn't you want to be given the benefit of the doubt or a chance to explain? Wouldn't you appreciate not being put in the embarrassing position of being confronted in front of others?

Ask Me to give you the right words and help you give the correction in a loving, considerate manner, and I will. The person who needs the correction will then be more likely to learn from what you have to say and will therefore be less likely to make the same mistake again, and that's the whole point.





THE WISE LEADER

CREATIVE THINKING

If you're an executive, manager, or a team leader, you should encourage the rest of your team to think about how things could be done better. Hearing others' ideas before expressing your own not only encourages others to think for themselves, but it also pays off in a happier, more unified team and more forward progress.

Not every new idea is a good one, of course, but some of the best ideas hatch from lesser ones. Nothing squelches creativity worse than a quick rejection, so treat each idea with respect, even if

it's not exactly what's needed at the time.

Your greatest asset is your people, and their greatest potential is in their collective thinking, so encourage more of that.

“Thinking outside the box” is really just a new term for being creative. Even the coining of that term was an act of creativity, and it's a good word picture. Team up with Me and I can help all of you to not only think outside the box—but out of this world!



NEGATIVE COMPARISONS

Few things undermine a person's morale more quickly or completely than being compared negatively to someone else. When someone says, "Why can't you be more like Jane?" or "John always did it this way," all the other person hears is that he or she isn't good enough.

You may have good intentions in making the comparison, such as trying to motivate people to do better, but it usually has the opposite effect, leaving them discouraged. They may also begin to resent the ones they are being compared with, or may dig in their heels and refuse to change out of pride or to maintain their individuality.

You need to remember that no two people are the same. Even if people have similar backgrounds, training, and experience, they are different people and are therefore likely to handle things differently.

A good rule of thumb is to not mention others when offering suggestions. Instead try: "You do that well, but I wonder if you've considered doing it this way?" Or, "I know that's the way you normally do it, but should we try something new?"



HEARING OTHERS OUT

It's natural to want to have a say in things, and that's the way it should be. I like to hear from you about what you would like done, and many times I do what you suggest. That's a big part of prayer—you bring your need or wish to Me, and if I agree it is a good idea, I do it. Think about that the next time someone wants to be heard out.

For example, take that disgruntled coworker who always seems to be complaining about something. He just might have something worthwhile to contribute if anyone took him seriously. Complaining never accomplishes anything positive, so obviously he's not going about it right, but maybe that's because he thinks no one is listening. As long as he's unhappy, he'll spread those feelings to others, but if you take the time to hear him out, you just might help him get on a more positive, constructive channel. You and the others he works with also might be pleasantly surprised to find that he has some ideas that could benefit everyone.

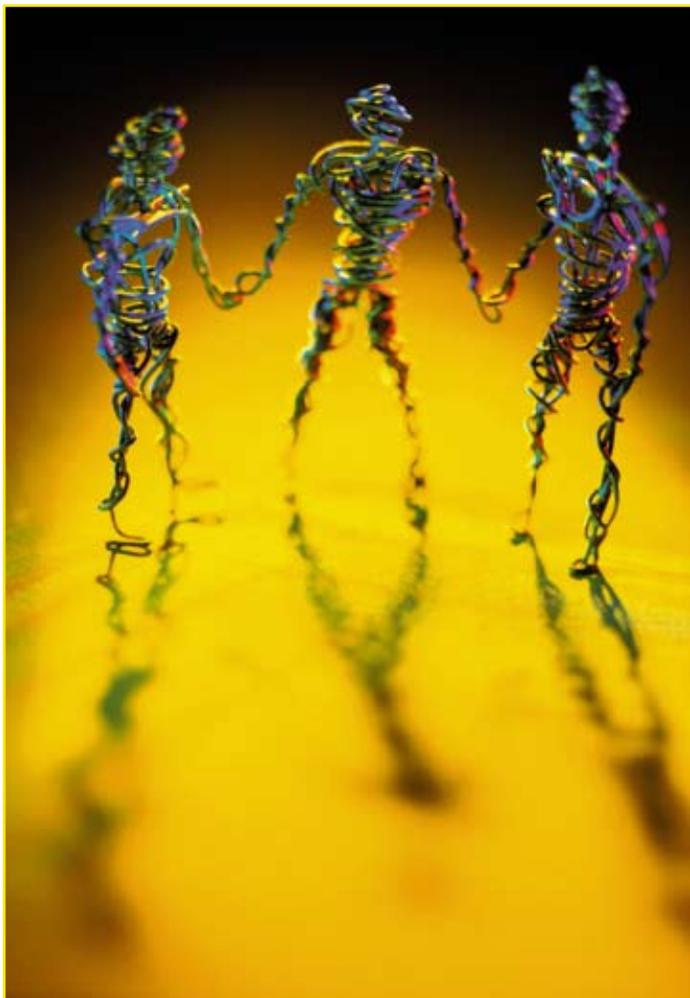


ROOM TO GROW

Nearly everyone appreciates a challenge, and most people enjoy finding better ways to do things. At the same time, hardly anyone likes to always be told what to do and how to do it. One of the quickest and best ways to get people's cooperation is to involve them in the decision-making process.

When people feel a part of something, they will generally work harder and be happier and more productive. Every organization needs a boss at the top that makes or approves the final decisions, but a good boss is not a dictator; a good boss consults with others and respects their ideas and opinions. The boss may not agree and decide to veto, but at least the others involved have had their say.

When people know their ideas will be given respectful consideration and they are given a voice in the decision-making process, they will be happier to take orders when it comes down to that.



PRAISE PUBLICLY, REPROVE PRIVATELY

When a mistake is made publicly or affects others, it may warrant a public acknowledgment or apology, but that doesn't mean that correction should be given or an apology should be made on the spot. It's usually best to wait and correct the person in private, after you've had a chance to ask Me for My perspective.

Remember, the goal is to fix the problem, not the blame, and to help the person not repeat the same mistake. People naturally fear the consequences of their mistakes, but they shouldn't fear correction. "Reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Proverbs 6:23). Correction is how people learn and grow. So in giving correction, if it's justified and done right, you are doing the person a service.

For correction to have the desired effect, it's also important to express faith in those who err—to assure them that you still respect them and know they can do better in the future. End the correction on a positive, hopeful note. Of course, such encouragement will be easier for others to believe if you've already expressed faith in them in the past, so as a foundation for any correction you may have to give, make a habit of finding the best in people and letting them and others know you admire them for their strong points. And who knows? That public praise may be just what is needed to keep them from making so many mistakes!



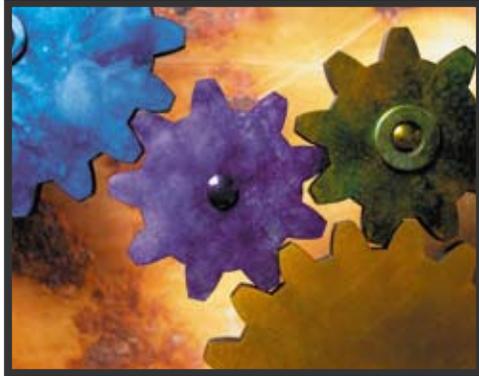
SECOND CHANCES

Mistakes are humbling and discouraging, especially when others feel the repercussions. When people see how their mistakes have hurt others, they are usually sorry. They want to make amends, to do better. More than ever, this is when they need to feel trusted—that someone has faith in them. Remember that the next time someone around you makes a mistake. If it's within your power, look for ways to give the person a second chance.

It's difficult not to react negatively and make others feel bad for their mistakes, but if you stop and ask Me, I will help you take a charitable approach. It is strength, not weakness, to give people a second chance when they are truly sorry for their mistakes and want to do better.

Often people will succeed or fail according to the amount of faith others express in them. If people feel that others expect them to fail, they often quit short of their potential. They think, *What's the use? Everyone already thinks I'm a failure!* But if others express faith in them, even when it involves overlooking their weak points and forgiving them for their mistakes, this encourages them to stretch themselves and do better. They will want to live up to the faith you have placed in them.

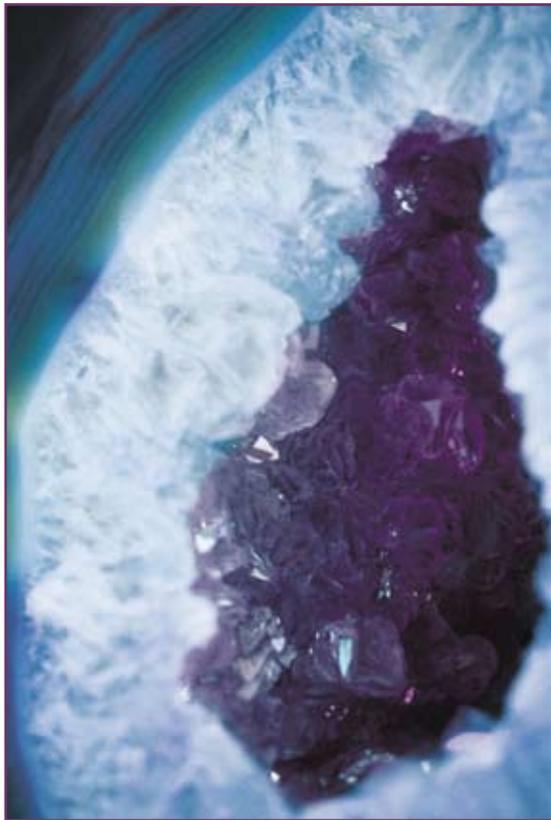




BRINGING OUT THE BEST

HIDDEN TREASURES

Every person has an inner beauty, a touch of the divine. Just because you don't see it at first glance doesn't mean it isn't there. Wherever you are and whoever you are, there are treasures right in front of you. Don't be fooled by appearances.



Consider the geode. Outwardly a geode is just a rock—sometimes a big rock, but a rock nonetheless—and is usually found lying around with other rocks in some desert place. In fact, its name derives from the Greek word *geoides*, which means earthy. It looks just like the rest of the earth that surrounds it, but to the trained eye, it is no ordinary rock. The gem hunter or geologist knows that inside that rock is a wonder of nature that, when the rock is carefully split open, will take your breath away.

The expert will carefully saw the rock in two to reveal dazzling crystals inside, such as the purple amethyst. He is often not quite sure what he will find, but with eager anticipation he skillfully goes about his job and is rewarded by being the first to see the wonder that lies within.

Will you look for beauty in others today? It might take some careful work to get through the stony surface, but there's no telling what beauty you will uncover!

THE WONDER OF PRAISE

Praise is an actual spiritual power that uplifts and strengthens. When you praise Me, you empower Me to work on your behalf. And when you praise others, you encourage and strengthen them in spirit. Praise does wonders!

When you praise Me, it draws us closer together, and when you praise and appreciate those around you, it draws you closer to each other. It helps the other person feel loved and needed and noticed.

When you see something good about someone, it's probably Me putting that thought in your mind because I want you to *say* it! Give that compliment or praise that good job. Even if you've said it lots of times before, say it again. Don't worry that others will get tired of hearing it—hardly anyone ever does.

It doesn't have to be big things that you praise or appreciate people for, either. In fact, it's good to concentrate on the little things because those are what often go unnoticed. If you feel you're not observant enough to notice or know what to say, just ask Me. And then when I show you something, say it. Don't be shy or too proud.

There's not one person on earth who doesn't need to feel appreciated. When you give appreciation freely, you become a channel for My love to flow through to that person. Pray for the gift of appreciation and then put feet to your prayers by getting in the habit of showing sincere appreciation at every opportunity.

Another wonderful thing about showing appreciation is that the more you do it, the happier it makes you, because part of being appreciative is recognizing your blessings. The more you do that, the more thankful and happier you'll be. Praise starts a positive cycle that will amaze you!



LOOK FOR THE GOOD

It takes faith and optimism to be able to look past others' shortcomings and see what they could become. This is a gift, and one that a lot more people could have if they would only ask Me for it.

The more you look for the good in people, the more you will find. It's like the saying, "Tell him he's wonderful and he will be wonderful. Tell her she's beautiful and she will be beautiful." If you have a positive attitude that shows you have faith in someone, that person will probably try to live up to your expectations.

If you focus on a person's bad habit or trait, it gradually takes on such importance that it eventually eclipses anything good about that person in your mind. But it also works the other way: If you can focus on even one good quality, you will discover other good things.

A person may have twenty faults for every good quality, but everyone has *some* good qualities. If you can't think of one right off, keep at it. Find something praiseworthy, no matter how small or inconsequential it may seem compared to the person's faults. Or if you really can't, ask Me or someone else to help you find something. Determine to appreciate that person for that one good quality, and you will bring out his or her other good qualities. Before long, the good will outweigh the bad and your relationship with that person will be more positive and fruitful.

Once you look for the good in one person, you will more easily find the good in others. And it's catching. Pretty soon others will view you as a happy, positive person who is nice to be around.



THE HEALTHY STRETCH

To make progress or grow in any area, people have to have a challenge, something to strive for, a goal. They need to be stretched beyond what they've done before—and you can help with this.

Many people become so discouraged by their mistakes and failures that they lower their sights or stop trying altogether. When they do that, it's almost certain they won't go as far as they could. But when someone comes along and expresses faith in them and tells them they shouldn't be bound by yesterday's failures, it can inspire them to try again.

It's like helping a baby take his first steps. You know he will fall many times as he learns to walk, but you know he will walk sooner or later and you want to see him succeed, so you encourage him. You make positive comments to boost his confidence so he will keep trying. When it seems too difficult to him, you help him, and you're there to catch him when he falls.

Once more, it comes down to love. If you love others, you'll want to give them all the help and encouragement they need to succeed.



BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Everyone needs to feel confident and secure in the knowledge that he or she has something to offer others. You can help Me help others gain that confidence, and here's how:

Building confidence is like building a large structure. It takes time, patience, and a lot of the right kind of building blocks. A solid foundation needs to be laid brick by brick before the structure can climb upward. The blocks for building confidence come in various forms—recognition, encouragement, appreciation, acceptance, admiration, trust, prayer, and above all, love.

Keep plenty of these building blocks on hand and use them at every opportunity. When you see something that is commendable, say so. When someone does a good job, say so. When someone does you a service, be appreciative. When you see someone struggling with a new or difficult task, express faith. When you notice someone hiding on the sidelines, involve that person in a positive way.

Build with care, because while nothing builds confidence like success, nothing damages it as quickly or surely as failure. Tailor your expectations to individuals' needs and abilities, and then praise them when they do well. Don't push them or expect too much too soon. Ask Me to show you what they need next from you, and ask Me to continue to work in their lives as only I can.





GOING THE EXTRA MILE

LIVE THE GOLDEN RULE

I once told My followers, “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12, paraphrased). So many problems would be solved if people would live by that simple rule. Not only is it the right thing to do, but it is the smart thing to do. When you do it—even when it’s to your own hurt at first—it eventually comes back to you in the form of more love and other good things in your own life. When you build your life and character on treating people the way you want to be treated, it’s inevitable that they will return the favor by treating you with respect and kindness. But it starts with you.

You have opportunities every day to spread goodwill. You face choices every day in which you can either do what is best for yourself or best for someone else. Sometimes it can be difficult to do the right thing, especially when the person you’re dealing with hasn’t done right to you. You may not feel others deserve to be treated with love and kindness or that they are worth the sacrifice, but I didn’t say, “Do to others as they do to you.” My code for living is far above that normal perception of fairness. I want you to live on a higher plane. Anyone can be nice to those who are nice, but the person who can be nice to those who *aren’t* is the bigger person and more blessed by Me.



THE GOOD LISTENER

One of the most important communication and conversation skills is listening. People appreciate those who they feel like and respect them enough to listen attentively to whatever they have to say—their ups and downs, joys and troubles. Often, people aren't even looking for answers or advice. They just want to be able to express their feelings and to have the satisfaction of knowing someone else understands and empathizes. You pay people a high compliment simply by hearing them out.

Some specific tips on how to be a good listener:

- Give the person speaking your full attention. Make eye contact and avoid doing or looking at other things while the person is speaking to you.
- Listen to the words being said, but look deeper. Take note of expressions and body language.
- Make little acknowledgments or signs to show your attentiveness—nodding or saying things like “That’s interesting,” or “I see.”
- Ask questions that will draw the person out more.

—Ask for clarifications when needed.

—Don't interrupt. Be sure that the person has finished before you interject your comments or views. If you aren't sure whether the person is finished, ask.

—Avoid comments such as “What you should do is ...” or “If I were you ...” unless the person specifically asked you for advice.

If you prove yourself to be a good listener, then it's more likely that others will return the favor when you need a listening ear.



GIVE OF YOURSELF, AS I GAVE OF MYSELF

I said long ago, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13). You probably think of this in terms of the ultimate sacrifice—actually dying to save another—and that truly is the ultimate act of love. But other opportunities come along almost daily for you to “lay down your life” in the sense of giving up personal desires or happiness for someone else’s sake.

Give of yourself at every opportunity, in every way, wherever and whenever possible. Give a reassuring look and a warm smile. Provide a listening ear. Lend a helping hand. Do a kind deed. Say a silent prayer. Speak an encouraging word. Go out of your way to help another. Stoop to lift a brother when he falls. Give My love.

Give when it’s difficult. Give till it hurts. Give of your time. Give freely, expecting nothing in return. Show patience to those who feel frustrated, compassion to those who are in need of understanding. Give a hug to those who need comfort. Be My arms, be My hands, be My mouth, that I may love another through you.

Love without partiality. Love the unlovely. Let your love for others override their faults and shortcomings, always believe the best about them, and never lose hope for them. Love always and in all ways, that others may also come to know My great love for them.

“Give, and it will be given to you: For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:38).



MIRACLE OF LOVE

What I ask of My children—those who have received Me into their hearts—is a miracle. I ask for outgoing, sacrificial love. It’s human nature to be self-preserving, self-seeking, self-satisfying. It’s human nature to put one’s own needs above the needs of others. But when it comes to loving, My children have a great advantage because I’ve broken those natural circuits. I’ve rewired their minds and hearts to do My bidding, which is to love others.

I told some of My first followers, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). In that day, the love My followers had for one another caused the world to sit up and take notice. Such love is even more remarkable in this day and age when people are so consumed with themselves. Most people have closed themselves off from loving sacrificially. But this lack of love only serves to make the love of My children shine more brightly! Every time you put My love into action, you also become a little more like Me, so people will see more of Me and less of you. People cannot deny that such love is out of this world. They ask, “Where do you get such love—and how can *I* get it?”

I know this kind of love is far above your natural ability. If you try to do this in your own strength, you’ll wear out and become discouraged and frustrated. But I am the source of love. *I am* love, and you can have more of Me than you’ve ever had before! “Ask and you will receive” (Matthew 7:7). If you pray for the love you need and are then willing to put it into action, I will give you My love in such tremendous volume and power that you will know you are part of a miracle!



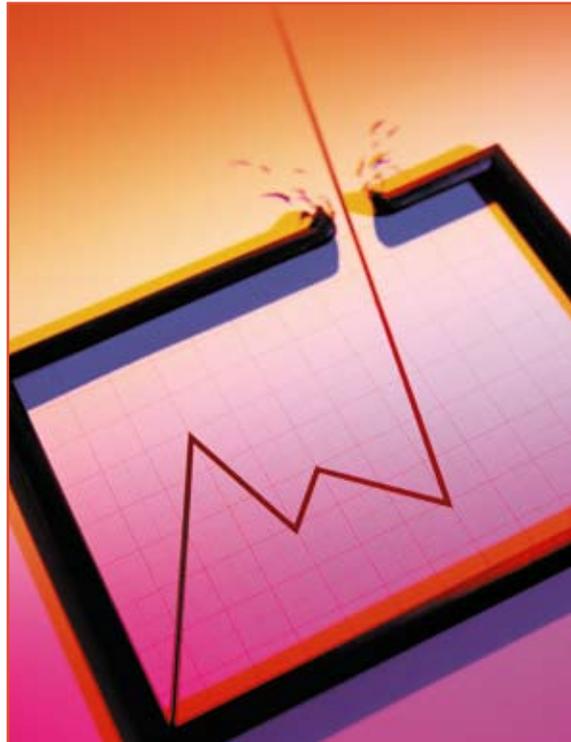
INVEST IN THE BEST

Some of you kindhearted souls are quick to jump in and help whenever you see someone in need. Being caring and compassionate are wonderful qualities, but it's also important to be realistic. Don't overextend yourself to the neglect of your primary responsibilities or to the point of feeling overwhelmed and giving up. You can avoid this pitfall by being careful and prayerful about what you commit to do for others.

Your time and resources are limited, so you need to invest them wisely. When you see a needy situation that could turn out to be a costly or long-term project, consult with Me and get My perspective before you commit yourself to helping. You need My help to see things in the proper perspective, because if you don't, you won't be as effective as you could be. You might get deeply immersed in one project, only to find that there is a needier situation just around the corner. Or if you try to "run on empty," you won't get far or be much help to anyone.

Keep in mind, too, that sometimes when someone is struggling, while there may be something you could do to help, I might know that it's actually better for the person to work through the problem with only *Me* to lean on. Or I may know that someone else is in a better position to help that person than you. This is sometimes hard to accept, but in some situations the best thing to do is step back—to pray for the one who is struggling but not to get involved beyond that.

Recognizing a need is only an indication of what I *might* want you to do. Check with Me before getting involved, because I may have a better plan.





AVOIDING COMMON MISTAKES

MAGIC WORDS

“I’m sorry” can put an end to almost any argument or other problem between people. You may still feel somewhat justified in your position, but if you can at least say you’re sorry for having gotten into an argument and having let whatever it was come between you, you’ll be on the path to reconciliation. Being quick to apologize is one of the smartest things you can do.

Saying you are sorry isn’t always easy. It takes a strong, concerned person to be able to admit being wrong, yet many people consider this a sign of weakness. I’m not talking about having an excuse-me-for-living attitude, where you apologize for everything you do. That *is* a sign of weak character. But when you get into an argument or make a mistake and have the sense to recognize and admit that you were wrong and apologize, that’s a sign of strength in My book.

There is, however, one word that takes the healing magic out of “I’m sorry.” When you add “but,” it means you’re intent on pressing your point until the other person sees things your way. That’s *not* the way to overcome differences! Saying “I’m sorry” requires humility, but if you can say it and mean it, it works magic!



THREE LEAGUES IN LIFE

Sarcasm, cynicism, and the cruel putdown seem to be a global sport these days. Somehow it has become acceptable to be mean. But those who do this, in My estimation, play in the “league of the lowest.” They usually think they will win the admiration of others through their witticisms or make themselves look better by making others look worse, but the pain they cause others will return to haunt them one day.

Close to that league is the “league of the loose-lipped”—those who love to gossip and “tell it like it is.” Those who play in this league often try to hide their mischief behind the guise of “being honest.” There is a lot to be said for being honest, of course, but when it’s done as a ruse to the hurt of others, it’s being *dishonest*. Again, those who play in this league think they are advancing themselves, but the long-term effect will be just the opposite.

If either of those sound like you, don’t despair—ask Me to help you change. Play “big league” life by joining ranks with those who are too big to stoop to petty putdowns and gossip. Then start winning today by following this simple rule: If nothing *positive* comes to mind, don’t say anything. You may find yourself talking less for a while, but when you do have something to say, it will be the stuff of winners!



ANGER—JUST SHORT OF “DANGER”

My apostle Paul quoted from the Psalms when he wrote, “Be angry, and do not sin” (Psalm 4:4; Ephesians 4:26a). Then he immediately followed that with the admonition, “Do not let the sun go down on your wrath” (Ephesians 4:26b). He understood that anger was a part of human nature, and that even though it was possible to be angry *without* sinning, it was a very fine line to walk and better avoided. Anger is just one letter—one little *d*—short of danger. Anger is an extremely dangerous emotion.

You can be righteously angry at such things as injustice and evil, and it is no sin. But in most cases, anger doesn't stem from such noble and selfless intentions. Most anger, if not quickly curbed, will lead you to sin, and the result of sin is spiritual death (Romans 6:20–21). It robs you of My life-giving Spirit, it kills your happiness and peace of mind, and it poisons friendships. No good thing comes from ungodly anger.

Don't let the sun go down on your anger. At the end of every day, pause and take stock. If anger or any other negative emotion is in your heart, let it go. Give it up! Say a prayer asking Me to take it away, and I will. Then apologize and make amends with those who were on the receiving end of your anger.



TALK IT OUT

If you think someone might have gotten the wrong impression or have questions about something you said or did, talk with that person about it. Clear up misunderstandings before they have a chance to grow into something worse—a rift or smoldering resentment. If there was indeed a misunderstanding, you'll both be glad to have it cleared up; and if there wasn't, the other person will feel it was thoughtful of you to ask.

Getting things out in the open, if done in a humble spirit, will nearly always bring people together. It may not solve the immediate problem, but it will foster mutual respect and better understanding that will lead to future solutions and successes.

Of course, for this to have the desired effect, you need to be willing to hear the other person out, no matter how painful it may be or how much you may disagree. If the other person sees you're willing to listen, be reasonable, and apologize for whatever fault you may have in the matter, chances are they will do the same.



DROP THE GRUDGE

Holding a grudge does no one any good. A grudge affects everyone involved negatively, and the longer it's held the more damage it causes. The good news, however, is that it's never too late to set things straight.

It may not seem so at times, but most people don't want to go through life hurting others. Grudges are often the results of misunderstandings. It's such a waste when people are alienated from each other for months or years, all over some misunderstanding that could have been sorted out much quicker if even one of the parties had shown a bit more love and understanding.

It takes a big person to be humble enough to be the first to let go of a grudge. Humble yourself before Me, first of all, and ask Me to remove the cancer by bringing you to the point of truly forgiving the other person in your heart. Do this and I will not only answer your prayer, but also give you the grace needed to humble yourself and ask that person to forgive you for harboring animosity.



A WORD ON INTERRUPTIONS

Too many people always think they have something better to say than the person they are talking with—or should I say, talking *at*.

Interrupting others is a symptom of the growing discourtesy in today's world. People are becoming increasingly self-centered, and interrupting is one of the most common manifestations. Nearly everyone thinks what he or she has to say is all-important and all-wise. If people could only hear themselves sometimes, I think most of them would be ashamed!

But you can be an agent of change. You can be a “non-interrupter.” You will win the admiration and appreciation of just about everyone you talk with if you can manage to go through the conversation without interrupting. You will also be more likely to learn something and avoid misunderstandings.

“He who answers before listening—that is his folly and shame” (Proverbs 18:13 NIV). This is often the fate of those who constantly interrupt—they jump to the wrong conclusions and thereby show themselves foolish, rather than wise. The wise show their wisdom by listening before speaking.





LEARNING FROM THE MASTER

MY SECRET OF SUCCESS

When I took on human form, My flesh was as limited as your flesh. I could only be in one place at a time, usually ministering to only a few at a time. I only had the same twenty-four hours each day, some of which I had to spend sleeping and eating and doing all the other things you have to do to take care of yourself. I had a message to preach and disciples to train in only a short time, yet My physical strength was as limited as yours.

In the flesh I could only do so much, but I knew that by spending time in prayer with My Father I could set things in motion in the spirit world, where the *real* work is done by *Him*, and thus accomplish much more. My Father had to engineer things. He had to set up the miracles, and then He had to *do* the miracles. And because I connected with My Father in prayer, I was able to unload My concerns and pressures on Him, and He was able to show Me what He wanted done and how to use My limited time and strength to the best advantage. This is what I now want to do for you.

The secret to success in life, including successful relations with others, is learning to stay in touch and in tune with Me and filled with My Spirit, and the way to do that is by spending time in prayer. It's as simple as that!



MAKE TIME FOR PEOPLE

It's easy to be a good person, but still be wrapped up in your own little world. After all, you already have more work and other responsibilities than you feel you can keep up with. It's no surprise that there's so little time for reaching out to others.

When I was on earth, I was also a busy man, especially during My public ministry. I had only about three and a half years to accomplish My mission, but I still took time for people—even some who others thought weren't worth My time. I let the children come to Me. I talked with the Samaritan woman at the well. I noticed Zacchaeus up in the tree and asked to spend the evening with him in his house. I also took time to personally encourage a thousand others—conversations so numerous and seemingly everyday that they didn't make it into the Gospels, yet each had a big impact on someone's life. If I could take the time to stop and show a little love and kindness and understanding to those around Me, you can too.

As you show love in the little things, I will pour more of My love into you, so you will have more to give and more to enjoy. You'll find this “extra” giving of yourself is really no sacrifice at all. I will more than make it up to you in added inspiration and other blessings, and so will those you make time for.



CONVEY FAITH, NOT OVERLOAD

Many responsibilities and a heavy workload can seem overwhelming. The natural tendency is to work harder and faster to try to keep up, but when that happens, your busy spirit comes to the fore and blocks My Spirit of love, peace, and faith from coming through. That overburdened spirit is wearing on you, and wearing on those around you.

This is what happened to Martha—the sister of Mary and Lazarus—during My earthly ministry. Martha tried to be the perfect hostess to Me and nearly folded under the self-imposed pressure. Meanwhile, Mary just enjoyed being around Me, listening to and learning from Me. I appreciated Martha's love and concern, but Mary was actually easier to be around. Martha was always so concerned with making everything perfect that she would get frustrated with others when it seemed they weren't showing the same concern (Luke 10:38–42).

When you fret and worry and show yourself to be under pressure, you don't convey faith and trust to others; you convey pressure and concern and overload. No one needs that!

Others may appreciate all you're trying to do—often things that will benefit them—but usually they would rather see you happy and relaxed, trusting that everything is under My perfect control. So would I!



LOVE OR HYPOCRISY?

When you show love and consideration to people you don't feel particularly drawn to or think deserve it, you're giving them *My* love, which goes beyond human love. In fact, this is an even greater manifestation of *My* love than when you show love to someone you feel close to. This is not being hypocritical or false. To the contrary, it's fulfilling *My* commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. You're acting on *My* Word, and you're letting *My* love move you to do something good.

Even though you may not particularly *like* someone, that shouldn't hold you back from *loving* that person with *My* love. No one is too bad for *Me* or beyond the reach of *My* love, and I want you to help convey that to others. Even though you may not feel that way about them, I do. By showing them love and understanding, you're giving them *My* true love.

When you can show loving kindness without partiality, you become a better channel for *My* love to flow through.

Not only will I bless the ones you show love and consideration to, but I will also bless you. As you continue to give *My* love, no matter how you feel, love will come back to you. You'll also have a feeling of fulfillment in being *My* messenger of love and in doing *My* will. By giving love freely, you'll reap more of *My* love and the fruits of love.



HUMBLE PEOPLE ARE MY FRIENDS

The humble person may not end up on the top of the social ladder, but he is more likely to have a truly successful life because he is more likely to succeed in the things that matter most. He is a quiet force for good, and I always reward that. He also wins the love and respect of others because his humble spirit conveys his love and respect for them. They see him putting their happiness before his own, and that makes them want to do the same.

Humility runs contrary to human nature. It is the nature of man to try to appear to be more than he really is by boasting of his personal attributes, abilities, and achievements. He hopes to make himself feel better about himself and to win the respect of others, but it seldom turns out that way. He may feel better about himself for the moment, but pride drives others away.

As a proverb states, “Pride comes before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). The proud live in fear of falling, of being exposed and humiliated. But the humble have nothing to fear because they have nowhere to fall—they are already lowly in their own eyes.

The humble are always welcome with Me. They are My companions and friends. And when they join Me in Heaven, they will feel right at home and fit right in. Heaven was made for people like them!



JOINT ACCOUNT

What if someone told you, “You just won a million dollars! It’s being deposited in your bank account today!” You would be elated! You’d be so happy, you’d run around telling everyone, and then you’d plan how to spend the money. You’d think of all the comfort and enjoyment this money would bring you, and how you could use some of it to help others.

Well, did you know that you have much more than that at your disposal? When you received Me as your Savior, I added your name to My own account with the Bank of Heaven. Now what’s Mine is yours! You have unlimited spiritual resources that could make your life better in every way—more than enough for you and others, no matter how much you give away—and that’s the point. “Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8).

How do you get these blessings?—By withdrawing from our account in the Bank of Heaven. Just come to Me in prayer. Draw on My love, peace, solutions, supply, satisfaction, and much, much more. Then pass the blessings on to others. This is the surest way to make and keep friends—by giving them the true riches, heavenly gifts that will never pass away.

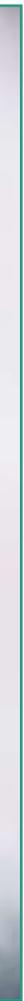


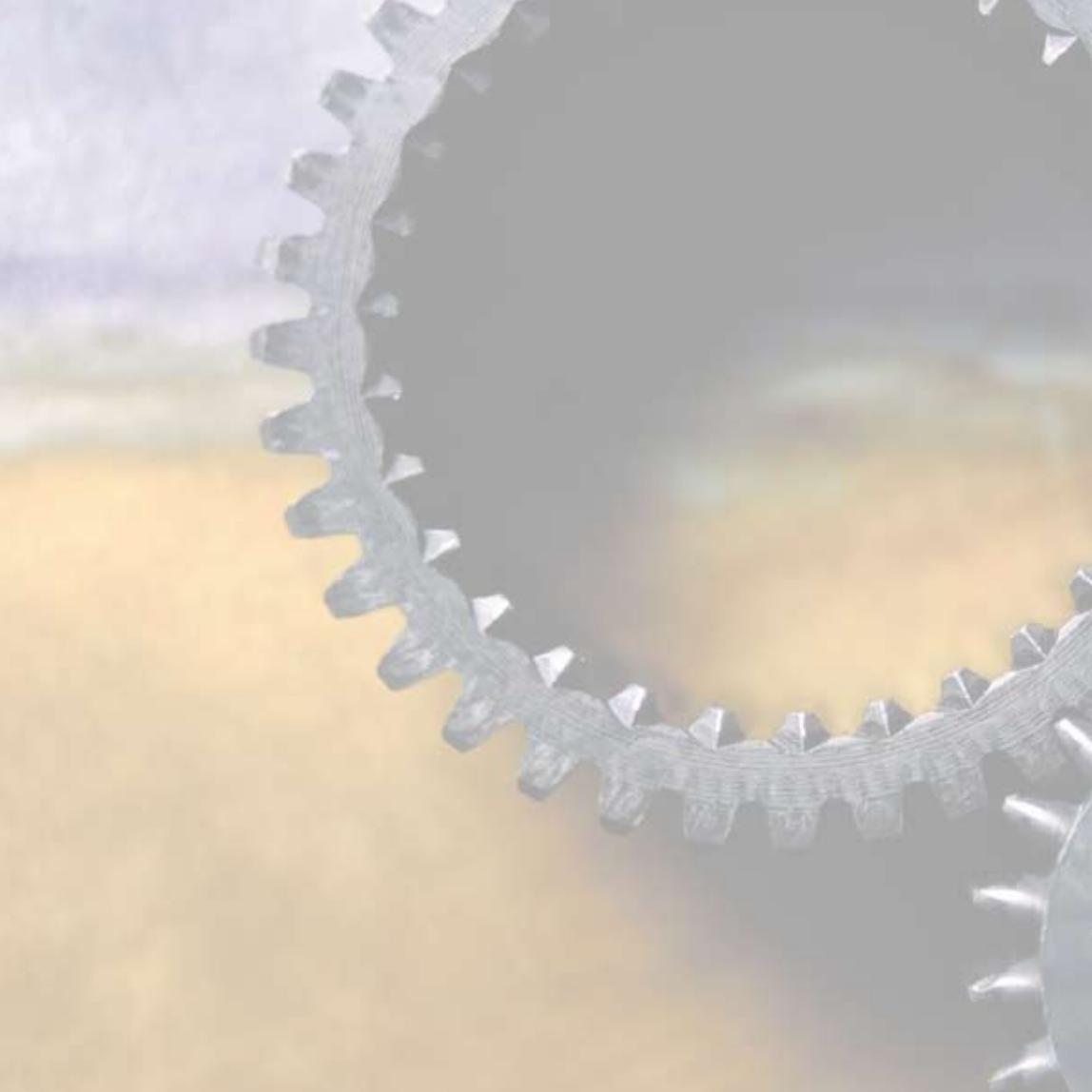
AFTERWORD

If you haven't yet experienced the kind of love expressed in these messages from Jesus, it may be that you haven't yet received His gifts of eternal love and life by accepting Him as your Savior. Jesus waits humbly for you to invite Him into your life. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door [of your heart] and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in" (Revelation 3:20). You can receive Him right now by sincerely praying the following:

Dear Jesus, thank You for dying for me so I can have eternal life. Please forgive me now for every wrong and unloving thing I have ever done. Wash away all that, and help me to do better. I need Your love to fill and satisfy my heart. I want the life of heavenly happiness You have for me—here and now, and in Heaven hereafter. I open the door of my heart and ask You, Jesus, to come in. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer, and thank You for helping me share Your love and be a force for good in the lives of others. Amen.









Where would we be without people? They're interesting, intriguing, and lovable. Relating to and getting along with some of them may not always be easy, however, and how well you do in your interactions with others has a major bearing on your happiness and theirs.

No one understands people better than Jesus, and no one can help you build successful relationships with others like He can. He holds the key to every heart, and wants to share it with you. Here's your chance to learn from the Master!

The 55 short messages from Jesus in this book will leave you with a fresh perspective on people and doable, sure-fire ideas for happier and more rewarding relationships.



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