



Do you enjoy your relationships with other people
or do you find them difficult?

What about your relationship with God?

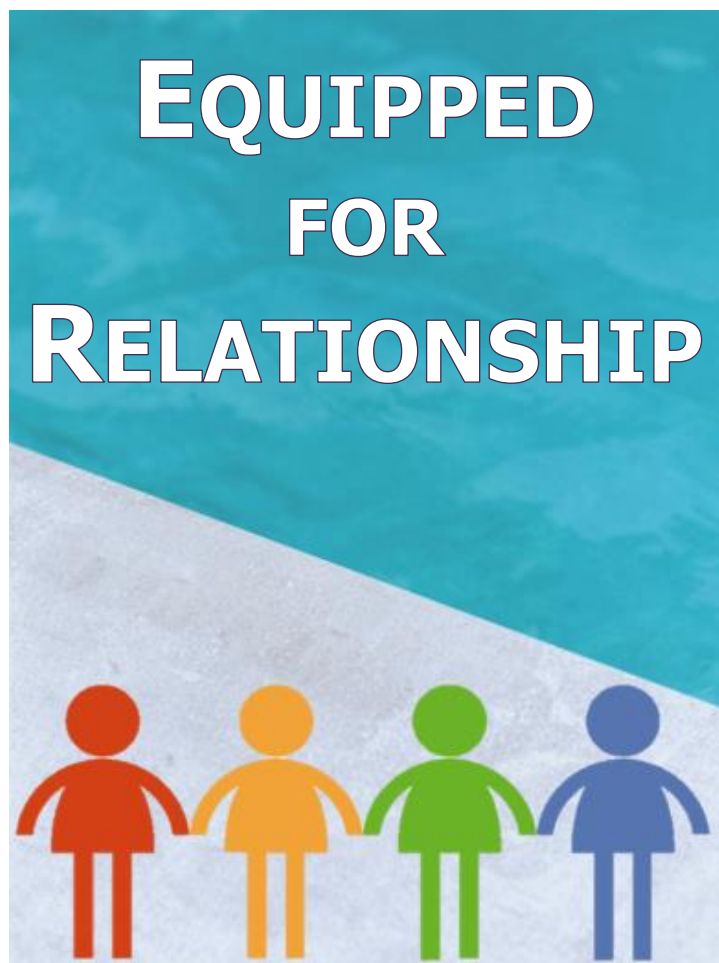
God is all about relationships
and He has made it possible for you to have
good, healthy relationships with others and with Him
by putting His own character within you –
the fruit of the Holy Spirit.



Katherine Hilditch has been teaching in local churches for many years. In 2013 she wrote her first booklet and since then has written many more. She created her website to make all the booklets freely available to everyone. They can be read online or printed out. Katherine's threefold purpose is to help people understand more about Jesus and all He has done and won for them, to encourage them to go deeper in their relationship with God and to provide material to help them share their faith with others. To read her story and find all the booklets go to –

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'Equipped for Relationship'
by
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Unless otherwise indicated
all Scripture quotations are taken from
the World English Bible British Edition (WEBBE)
(Any words in brackets are not in the original text
but are included to help understanding)

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Being Born-Again

When you acknowledge Jesus as God and decide to follow Him, you make Him your Lord. When you accept His sacrifice on the Cross for yourself personally, you make Him your Saviour. You are then born-again and have a new perfect spirit. God becomes your Father and you His child, and you can start to enjoy your personal love relationship with Him.

Romans 10:9 says – *‘If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.’* Tell God you are sorry for the wrong things you do, say and think. Choose to believe that Jesus is Lord, that He died for you and is now alive. Accept Him as your Lord and Saviour. Say it with your voice and believe it in your heart.

If you’ve done that sincerely, you are now born-again and Jesus has come to live in you. Everything you’ve ever done wrong or ever will do wrong is forgiven, and after this life is over, you’ll live in peace and joy with your loving Father God for ever.

As a child of God, you now have a whole new family of brothers and sisters. Tell a trusted Christian that you are now born-again so they can help you in your new life in Jesus. And you have the Bible to help you understand and experience more of God’s love for you and all Jesus has done and won for you. It will help you to live your life in the best possible way – His way.

EQUIPPED FOR RELATIONSHIP

Relationships are the most important things in life. Without them you are totally alone. There is no-one to encourage you, to help you, to support you, to give you advice or listen to your problems and help you find a way through them. There is no-one to guide you when you go wrong. There is no-one to laugh with you or cry with you and share experiences with.

Unconditional Love

You probably read that paragraph thinking of your relationships with family and friends. They are so important, but even more important is your relationship with God. And it’s based solely on love – totally unconditional love. There is no earthly relationship which can be completely like that. Every single one has some element of condition, even the best of them. But God’s love isn’t based on how you act or perform or measure up. He doesn’t love you because you’re worthy of His love or because you’ve somehow earned it, but because He is love.

The Choice is Yours

God loves you so much that He sent His only Son to die in your place. No-one is perfect and Jesus took the punishment for all sin – everything everyone thinks, speaks or does which is wrong, past, present and future. He did it so that you could come into relationship with Him completely forgiven. But He’ll never force you – that wouldn’t be a good relationship. No, He makes it possible and invites you in, drawing you with His love and leaves you the choice whether to come or refuse it.

Do you have good relationships with other people or do you find it hard? You may be thinking – if I can't make good relationships with other people how can I possibly manage one with God? The amazing answer is that God has made it easy for you! When you become a Christian and are born-again, God's Holy Spirit comes to live within you and when He comes, He brings His fruit – all you need to help you in all your relationships. (To read about being born-again go to the end of the booklet.)

The Fruit of the Spirit

If you want to know what type a tree is, you have to look at its fruit. If it produces apples, you know it is an apple tree; if it produces acorns, then it's an oak tree. It's the fruit that tells you what kind of tree it is. In Matthew 7:16 Jesus said it works the same with people – *“By their fruits you will know them. Do you gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?”* You find out what someone is like by how they talk and act, be it good or bad.

In the same way, the fruit of the Holy Spirit shows you what God is like. It is His very essence and character. When you have the fruit of the Spirit within you, you have the character of God Himself. It doesn't mean God is going to take you over and you have to act like Him. No, He has given you free will and you can totally ignore what He has put within you if you want. But the fruit is there and you can choose to draw on it and let it influence you in the way you think, speak and act.

The Fruit is Ripe

So often Christians think that they have to wait for the fruit of the Spirit to mature in them just as you have to wait for fruit to ripen on a tree. But the Holy Spirit doesn't come incomplete –

God to change you or for the fruit to grow so you can start to live this way. God has made it possible for you to do it now, but you have to take responsibility. God isn't going to force you, but He will help you when you ask Him. It isn't always easy and you will spend the rest of your life practising it, but the more you choose it, the easier it becomes and the more it starts to become your default attitude. No matter what circumstances you find yourself in, it is always possible to choose the way of the fruit.

You can't Lose the Fruit

Do you feel you're not a 'patient person' – yet patience is in you. In your spirit you are perfectly patient. A Christian may feel they have lost an aspect of the fruit. They may say, “I've lost my joy.” But they can't lose it – it's there inside them. What they've lost is the experience of it. They still have it inside, so they don't have to look outside themselves to get it back. They need to believe it's in them and allow it to flow. Don't beat yourself up about it, just recognise the parts of the fruit which you find difficult and believe they're already in you. Think, speak and act on that truth and they will start to flow.

Equipped for Relationship

God has made it possible for you to have a wonderful love relationship with Him through Jesus and has given you His very own character so you can relate to Him at the deepest level. Choose to believe it and start to experience it as you find your relationship with Him growing and deepening and your relationships with others improving. Enjoy the fruit and enjoy all your relationships, but especially your relationship with God – the One who made it all possible through His Holy Spirit.

but God has given you faith, so you can believe in Him and all He has done and won for you through Jesus. Put your faith in Him and you will please Him and be able to enjoy your relationship with Him more and more. And faithfulness is so important in human relationships too. Sometimes it's wise to stop a relationship with someone who lets you down all the time, but don't presume the worst. Choose to put your faith in the people you are friends with and give them the benefit of the doubt whenever possible.

Gentleness

Philippians 4:5 says – *'Let your gentleness be known to all men.'* Gentleness is a lovely quality, perhaps not thought so highly of today. It's not weakness, but strength. Don't get cross with God – He's done nothing to deserve it. And treat others gently. Proverbs 15:1 says – *'A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.'* Speak gently and others are less likely to be angry with you. Use the gentleness God has given you to help you in all your relationships.

Self-Control

Some people find self-control easier than others, but you have it within you and you can choose to use it. It's hard to remain friends with someone who is out of control – you can't trust them in any way. When you're tempted to let rip, remember God has given you self-control to help you. Choose to use it.

You've Got Them All

If you are born-again you don't need to ask God for any of these parts of the fruit. Instead, thank Him that you have them and start to allow them to flow and influence the way you think, speak and act in all your relationships. You don't have to wait for

He is fully mature and comes with fully ripe fruit. Remember the fruit is the character of God – that is never immature – it is always completely ripe.

But you have to learn to let it flow and practise living by it. That's what takes time. But the more you do it, the easier it is and the more quickly it will become natural to you.

What is the Fruit for?

You might think that God would put in you things which would make you able to work for Him better, such as determination, drive, cleverness or concentration. But that's not what God chose. He chose to put in you things to help you in relationships. Because although He wants you to do stuff for Him, much more important to Him is that you have a relationship with Him, which is fulfilling and enjoyable for you as well as for Him.

God Created You for Relationship

You will have your best relationships with people who are like you and think like you and act like you. It's difficult to have a good relationship with someone who has a completely different approach to life from your own. God has made you for relationship with Him, so He has made you to be like Him and put His fruit in you to help you have a deep, satisfying and fulfilling relationship with Him and good relationships with others. 1 John 4:17 says – *'As he is, even so we are in this world.'*

So what is the Fruit made up of?

When you shine light through a prism it is broken into different colours – the colours of the rainbow. The colours are separate

but together they make light. In the same way the fruit of the Spirit is one but can be looked at as being made up of nine different parts. You can find them listed in Galatians 5:22-23 – *‘The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith,²³gentleness, and self-control.’* The fruit is the very essence of God, covering the many aspects of His character.

One Fruit – Nine Parts

Love

First and foremost, God has put love in you. He is love and He wants love to be at the very centre of your relationship with Him. And he wants you to be able love others too in a good, healthy way. It doesn’t mean automatically agreeing with everything they do and say but making sure your heart attitude towards them is one of love. Don’t put yourself in or continue in dangerous or unwholesome relationships, but allow God’s love for the person to flow in your heart. Jesus said in Matthew 5:44 – *“Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you.”*

Joy

God has put joy in you to help you to be joyful in your relationship with Him and with others. He doesn’t want you to be down and depressed, He wants you to be joyful even when things are difficult. That might sound heartless, but it’s the opposite. God has made it possible for you to know real lasting joy whatever’s going on in your life. It might not be that you are singing and dancing, but you can know that you have that bedrock of joy underneath which will break through again. God wants you to enjoy being with Him and also with others and help them to find their joy too.

Peace

No relationship can survive for very long when there is no peace in it. Through Jesus, God has made peace between Himself and you and then put His peace in you so you can know true peace as you relate to Him and others, whatever the circumstances.

Patience

Relationships don’t always work out exactly as we want them to, but God’s love for you is always perfect. He loves you totally unconditionally and is on your side. You never need patience with Him – He is always there and always wants to bless you. But things can get in the way and sometimes it takes time to receive all that He has for you. And patience is something that is often needed in relationships with other people. God’s put it in you to help you to keep your relationships as healthy as you can from your side while you wait for things to work out.

Kindness

You’re not going to want to stay in a relationship where the other person is unkind to you. Kindness is so important and God has put it in you. It helps you to have the right attitude towards God and not to blame Him for things that go wrong – He’s not the cause. And it will also help you to keep your other relationships healthy as far as is possible from your side.

Goodness

Isn’t it lovely when people are good to you. It makes everything feel better. God has put goodness in you to help you to be good to them in your relationship with them and also to relate to Him in a right way based on His goodness and love.

Faith

The Bible says in Hebrews 11:6 – *‘Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to him (God).’* That might sound daunting,