

Heaven Glory Revealed—Heavenly Relationships

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Relationships Are God's Idea

- Our relationship with Him and our relationships with one another are extremely important to God.
 - Loving God and loving people fulfills the Law.
 - God is in relationship with Himself in the Trinity—Father, Son and Spirit.
- Relationships started in the Garden of Eden
 - God is in Eden with Adam and it was "good."
 - The only aspect "not good" in The Garden was Adam being alone. Mankind needed a comparable helper so relationship could occur.
 - God made Eve for Adam and things then became "very good."
 - Since heaven is Eden maximized, heavenly relationships will be maximized from the "very good" of Eden.
 - Ephesians 1:0
 - When the *whole* heavenly family is together, heaven is going to go from jaw-dropping incredible to hand-raising and knee-bowing adoration.

Friendship

- Matthew 8:11
 - Luke 12:37
- Maximized heavenly friendship as we sit down together with people whom we never knew on earth.
 - We need to understand what it is to "sit down" in Eastern culture—it is to eat, fellowship, bond, share, laugh, tell stories, ask questions, learn, grow in relationship and develop friendship.
 - We'll be able to "sit down" with the likes of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and whomever else! Imagine the conversations with the saints of old, angels, and with Jesus!
- Our understanding and scope of friends will be maximized in heaven.

Family

- "Heaven won't be without families; it will be one big family, in which all family members are friends and all friends are family members... [in heaven] every time we see someone, it will be a family reunion—without the tension, drama or sinfulness some are used to at family reunions—We'll experience all the best of human relationships with none of the worst."¹ Randy Alcorn
- "No inhabitants of that blessed world will ever be grieved with the thought that they are slighted by those that they love or that their love is not fully and fondly returned. There shall be no such thing as flattery or insincerity

¹ Randy Alcorn, *Heaven* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), eBook edition

in heaven, but there perfect sincerity shall reign through all and in all. Every expression of love shall truly come from the bottom of every heart and all that is professed shall be really and truly felt.” Jonathan Edwards²

Paul and Maximized Heavenly Family

- Ephesians 3:14-15
 - Because all believers are family members, we also have the same name whether we are on earth or in heaven.

Jesus and Maximized Heavenly Family

- Jesus emphasized the maximized spiritual family relationship even over our biological family relationships.
 - Luke 8:19-21
 - Spiritual union surpasses biological ties.
 - When we get to heaven the family relationship we have in Christ will be fully realized, with the blood that binds us, and the shared name that identifies us. Our family will be maximized in size, sincerity and strength.
 - Our earthly family bonds will be known in heaven, but the family bond, in Christ, will be greater.
 - You will not be your only family member in heaven—we are all family.

Marriage

- Matthew 22:23-30
 - We won't become angels, but be as angels in the sense of not begin married.
 - There is no sexual relationship in heaven because there is no earthly marriage and it's only allowed within the earthly marriage covenant. There is also no need to procreate in heaven.

Earthly Marriage

- Ephesians 5:31-32
 - Earthly marriage is a mysterious shadow. It is an illustration of the maximized marriage we will have with Christ, the latter shall eclipse the former.
 - Same-sex marriage is not marriage—it is a perversion of God's original intention that marriage should be between one man and one woman, that the two become one, and that it reflects the holy relationship between Jesus and His bride, the church!
 - The intimacy, love, trust, devotion, commitment, fun, and joy of marriage are all glimmers and shadows of the full expression of those things that will be fully realized with our marriage to Christ, Paul called this a “great mystery”.
 - God never said the depth of relationship between married couples would end only that they wouldn't be married anymore. Because all friendship and family relationship will be maximized in heaven, I believe we will find ourselves closer to one another in heaven than we are to our spouses today, on earth. What we will enjoy with our spouses there, though unmarried, will be something we'll have to wait to see.
 - God smiles when couples dislike the thought of not being married for eternity; that is an earthly marriage that is bringing Him glory on earth and a smile in heaven.

Heavenly Marriage

- Revelation 19:7-9

² Jonathan Edwards, *Jonathan Edwards in the Pulpit*, (Minneapolis, MN: Curiosmith, 2012), eBook edition

- What a day and what a party it will be when the bride of Christ, His people, join Him in marriage—finally united together forever without doubt, sin, or any hindrances separating us! That is a maximized marriage in heaven!

God Honors Relationships

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, 17-18
 - God honors our relationships with those who have gone to heaven before us with beautiful tenderness.
 - God honors our friends and family relationship so much that when He comes back to earth, He doesn't come alone; He comes with those we love, who have gone before us, so that we see them as quickly as we see Him.
 - If we're alive when He comes back... "His triumphant return is our tender reunion."

Discussion Questions

1. Read Genesis 2:18. What was "not good" in the Garden of Eden? How did God solve the "not good" problem? How does His action help you to understand how God feels about relationships?
2. Read Matthew 8:11. The verse reflects the Jewish image of the future banquet in God's kingdom. What is implied by the phrase "sit down"? Why is that phrase important for us to understand about friendship in heaven?
3. Who would you most like to meet in Heaven? Why? What will you ask them?
4. How does Ephesians 3:14-15 show God's fatherhood over everything? How does it show His concern for us?
5. Family was enormously important in Jewish culture, so Jesus' statement in Luke 8:21 would have been shocking. Why do you think Jesus' true family are those who do what God's Word says?
6. How freeing is it to you to know that we are all family in heaven? Describe what that looks like to you with a sanctified imagination that's rooted within biblical boundaries?
7. In Matthew 22:22-30 the Sadducees try to trap Jesus. What was their mistake? How can we avoid making a similar mistake?
8. Read Ephesians 5:31-32. Paul uses words like "leave," "joined," and "two become one flesh." In what ways does marriage on earth represent our marriage to Jesus in heaven?
9. Describe in your own words and from the Scriptures why same-sex marriage is not God's intent for marriage.
10. Read Revelation 19:7-9. Describe what it will be like to be united with Christ without doubt, sin, guilt or hindrances.
11. How does 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, 17-18 give you comfort and peace?