**From Proverbs and Paul: Maintaining good relationships**

**1. The commendation of Phoebe – 16:1-2**

* **Phoebe was a “servant” or “Deaconess”. Could also mean an agent or even a “courier”.**
* **At the very least, she was an example of servanthood at Cencrea**
* **She likely also brought Paul’s letters as the context supports.**
* **They were to house her, feed her, and show hospitality to help her on her way, much as John instructed in 3 John 6-8**
* **She deserved such treatment, as she had helped so many (16:2)**

**2. Greeting the Roman Christians – 16:3-16**

* **Paul’s greetings were extended to the “House Churches” in Rome 16:3-5a**
* **Likely, there were about 15 of them, based on the structure here. And they were small gatherings, probably friends, families and neighbors.**
* **It is thought that they were about 20 or more members. Recent discoveries indicate quite a number of them in Rome, likely totally around 1,000 people.**
* **There is no evidence of the “mega-churches” so popular today**
* **While larger churches have benefits, something is often lost when churches grow larger.**
* **Paul was very good at a principle John articulates in 3 John to “greet the saints by name” 3 Jn. 13**
* **Good relationships are critical to ministry**
* **Paul knew people and knew about them; he was an encourager**

**Romans 16: Principles from Paul…**

* **encouraged support for travelers 2 and**
* **knew their names,**
* **knew their service 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 13 and**
* **built bridges between people,**
* **commended and encouraged,**
* **appropriate physical displays of love 16**
* **cautioned them about the danger of those who caused divisions with false teaching (if you love someone, you want to protect them). This is a “right now” command 17020**
* **Divisive people use smooth talk and flattery to deceive others 18**

**Proverbs: Principles for Healthy Relationships**

* **Principles of healthy relationships**
  + **Prov. 14:7 – Run away, run away!**
  + **1 Cor. 15:33 – Not everyone is good for you**
  + **Prov. 12:26 – Choose wisely! (Pr. 9:12 – It’s your life!)**
  + **Prov. 17:9 – Let it go!**
  + **Prov. 16:28 – Gossip ruins relationships**
  + **Prov. 22:24-25 – This makes me angry!**
  + **Prov. 27:14 – Sensitivity training**
  + **Prov. 27:17 – Good friends are good for you**
  + **Prov. 18:24 – Intentionality is key!**
  + **Proverbs 1:10-19 – The “bad guys” - Your life may depend on your discernment and courage!**
    - **They try to draw you in – 10-11 “We” or “us” 6Xs in 3 verses**
    - **Intrigue/secrecy – 11**
    - **Power – 11-12**
    - **“Free stuff” – 13**
    - **Partnership/friendship/belonging – 14**
  + **Advice**
    - **Stay away from them! 15**
    - **They’re trouble – 16**
    - **They’re foolish – 17**
    - **They cut their own throats – 18**
    - **Consequences are in their future – 19**
    - **Wrath is coming – Rom. 3:16; Pr. 1:22-33**

**Other key principles**

**1. Forgiveness – Mt. 6:12, 14-15; Mt. 18:21-35; Eph. 4:32**

**If I am dead and raised with Christ, I’m seated with Christ in the heavenly places and there is no barrier between God and me. But this is positional truth; this is what we have by virtue of being baptized into the body of Christ.**

**On earth, we experience forgiveness as we commit our sins. When I get saved all of my past sins are forgiven. That’s experiential forgiveness. But do I ever need forgiveness again? Yes, every day. In fact, Jesus taught his disciples to pray, forgive us as we forgive others. And it is daily because we ask Him to provide our daily bread in that prayer.**

**We cannot get experiential forgiveness for sins we have not yet committed.**

**2. Genuine love and spirituality – 1 Cor. 13:6; 15:33-34**

