

Our Proper Relationship with God

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For the past several weeks, my columns have dealt with business applications of “transactional analysis”. Eric Berne and Thomas Harris developed and shared this simple model in separate best-selling books in the 1960s.

I’ve used these concepts in training leaders over the past thirty years. The model suggests that within each of us resides three “ego states”, the Parent, the Adult, and the Child. In any situation, any of the three states in one person may interact with any of the three in another person.

For several years, I became enthralled with the huge potential available in collaborative **Adult-Adult** working relationships. I looked to apply them everywhere in my life. I learned, however, that the concept breaks down if we try to apply it in our relationship with our heavenly Father!

No matter how great our power and wisdom, we are insignificant compared to God. In Romans 11:33, the apostle Paul (author of about 1/3 of the New Testament) writes, “Oh, the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?”

In Isaiah 1:18, God says, “Come, let us reason together,” which might lead us to believe that **Adult-Adult** is possible with God. However, He continues in the next two verses to describe clearly what outcome He provides to our behaviors. If we obey Him, we’ll be blessed; but if we defy, resist, or rebel, we are doomed! He and His ways are in control! We are not!

Jesus said, as recorded in Matthew 18:3, “Unless you become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” We are to obey the direction of our heavenly Father and not seek independence or prideful self-will. Proverbs 3:5-7 states, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

In Matthew 7:11, one of my favorite scriptures, Jesus says, “If you [imperfect parents on earth] know how to give good things to your children, how much more will your [perfect] Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?” God is a loving, nurturing, omniscient Parent directing, protecting, loving, and forgiving His wayward Children!

Tragically, many humans have suffered at the hands of their earthly fathers or mothers—through either ignorance or intentional abuse. A childhood of unhealthy experiences with natural parents makes it hard for many people to conceptualize a healthy image of our heavenly Father.

Still, if we can accept and build a brotherly relationship with Jesus, the Christ, then through His eyes, we can replace the tarnished actions of our worldly parents with the perfect glory of God’s love. Through that awareness and His grace-filled acceptance, we can then find the strength to forgive our earthly parents and begin to grow in the wholeness that God intends for each of us.

Jesus said the greatest of all the laws was, “Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” We are to love our heavenly Father in a reverential **Child-Parent** way, respectfully obeying His guidance, and pursuing with all diligence His plan for our lives.

With His overwhelming love and grace available to us through the Holy Spirit, we have been empowered to build healthy **Adult-Adult** relationships with our family members, friends, and coworkers. We practice “Love your neighbor as yourself” by collaborating, sharing our gifts and talents, and offering our neighbors the opportunity to contribute as well.