



**21 DAYS OF
BUILDING**

Healthy Relationships



7 - 27 FEB, 2021



**Firm
Foundation**
...the care for desert places

INTRODUCTION

We welcome you to the month of February, the second month of the Gregorian calendar year. This month, we sense God is highlighting to us one of our profound cultures in Firm Foundation, the culture of Family.

ANCHOR SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1:25-26 (NKJV)

²⁶ *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

The purpose of this Manual, is to guide you on a journey towards experiencing the divine purpose of building healthy relationships and family.

For three weeks, we will come together, to worship, share God's word, hear words of encouragement, and pray both corporately and individually.

THE BENEFITS OF THIS MANUAL

- Healing of broken marriages.
- Forgiveness and restoration of relationships.
- Reconciliation and reconnection of families, parents and children.
- Birthing of New Life Groups, and revitalizing Old Life Groups.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES OF THE MONTH

1. The Original Design of a Great Marriage – Benson Akhigbe
2. The Family That Jesus Put down on Earth – Kay Benson Akhigbe
3. 24 Questions to answer before you say I do – Kay Benson Akhigbe
4. Dealing with Insecurity – Tonnies Ekilisi Uzor
5. Parenting As in Heaven – Benson Akhigbe
6. Pursuing Covenantal Relationship – Benson Akhigbe
7. Making Our Relationship Work – Enoma Ekhosuehi
8. The You in Relationship – Anwuli Anwansedo
9. Message series for this month “THE FAMILY OF GOD AND WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER”
By Ben & Kay Akhigbe

BOOK OF THE MONTH

“WHEN THE CHURCH WAS A FAMILY BY JOSEPH
HELLERMAN”

HOW TO USE THE MANUAL

The content of this manual can best be beneficial to you, if you belong to a life group (small group). You can decide to host a life group within these 21 days in your house, office space and/or a place very close to you. You can lead it or have someone lead it.

Each topic has been shared into a space of three days to enable you and other life group members study and meditate on the scriptures, so that experiences can be shared during life group meetings. The prayers and Action points are to guide you into experiencing the divine purpose of a healthy family and relationship.

You can choose to take a Fast for yourself or for someone you are believing to see the hand of God in their relationship, marriage and family.

The bible reading plan will help you discover, how partnering with the person and power of the Holy Spirit, can help you build healthy relationship with people.

We hope to see you become better in your relationship with God and with people.

We look forward to hearing your testimonies!

If you have any question on how to join or host a life group, please reach us at: maturity@ffi.ng or **Call: +2348153333308, +2347088753115.**



JOIN ANY OF OUR SERVICES

Onsite: No.5 Oregbeni Crescent off Aideyan Street, Off Ihama Rd, GRA. **7am – 1pm**, daily breaking of bread at **12-1pm**

Online Visual: Open Heaven's Prayer with Ben & kay: **5:30am daily**

Live -Streaming at Firm Foundation (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube) - 12m – 1pm

Online Audio: Orbitfm.com.ng - **7am – 1pm**, daily breaking of bread at **12-1pm**

Life groups: At your life group or small group meetings.

Mid-Week Service: 4th day (Wed) **12-1pm & 4:30pm**

Weekend Service: 1st day (Sun) **7am, 9am & 11am**

God's Secret Weapon: 7th Day (Sat) **3am**

BIBLE READING PLAN

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GROWING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Matthew 6:9-15 (NIV)

⁹ “This, then, is how you should pray: “¹Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’ ¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Many people pray and ask God for breakthrough in their finances. A lot of others seek for it in their career life and many more go the extra mile to experience it in their



health. Rarely do people hunger for breakthrough in their relationships.

The kind of culture a society live by tells a lot about the core values of the people. The success of any nation depends on the kind of values her people place in high esteem. This is also true for individuals alike.

The secret, is to recognize the right values that can empower and transform us and live by it, and healthy relationship is one of them.

God started with family. In other words, he values relationships. He not only tells us to develop healthy family, he also modeled it for us.

Modeling is the quickest and greatest way to influence and change others. John Maxwell allured to this when he asserted “the greatest motivational principle is modeling what you want others to do.”

God modeled healthy relationship and he expects us to live accordingly.

One of the things that create tension in our relationships is diversity of personalities. But God loves diversity. As a matter of fact, he created us differently. And he commanded us to live at peace with all men.

How boring do you think life would be if everybody that exists is just alike?

It would be absolutely frustrating and lacking flavor.

Just imagine that everyone likes the same thing, have the



same ability, look and walk and talk alike, have similar interest and hobby?

You see, there is beauty in diversity.

So, we should do everything as much as possible to grow, develop and sustain healthy relationships.

PRAYER POINT

- Pray and ask God for breakthrough in your relationship with others.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you do relationship better Jn 14:26
- Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to displace those lies you believe about others, restricting you from doing relationship with them.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you who you need to forgive. Ask for forgiveness and release forgiveness to others who have hurt you. Matt 6:12

ACTION POINT

- What will you do differently this year to build quality relationships with others?



EXPERIENCING BREAKTHROUGH IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS

Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV)

²³ *“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you,*
²⁴ *leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.*

Good relationships with others are vital to maintaining a good relationship with God. This means we must always do the right things toward others no matter how much it hurts us (Psalm 15:4) or how they might react (Matthew 5:44-45).

To succeed in life, relationships are vital. No wonder Simon Sinek affirmed “success is a team sport. Failure we can do alone but success takes the help of others.”

We need others to accomplish our purposes in life. There is nothing of significance that can be accomplished alone.



HOW DO WE EXPERIENCE BREAKTHROUGH IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS?

1. Love yourself

The foundation for cultivating and developing healthy relationships is loving yourself. If you want to build relationships and experience breakthroughs in it, you have to understand that nothing can be substituted for or take the place of self-love. Talents, giftedness, good jobs and salaries, education, beauty, wealth, all this is good but none can take the place of self-love.

They are too many people in our society who lack self-love. They are trying to perform on the outside what they are not on the inside.

The first place we experience breakthrough is within. Our lack of or poor love for ourself, limits our ability to relate with others.

Loving and accepting yourself unconditionally doesn't mean you are perfect. It is recognizing your strengths and putting yourself on a growth plan to develop your weaknesses. This is the heart of self-love.

Self-loving people don't compare themselves with others. They have unique and rock-solid identity that is rooted in who they are. Identity is the first choice you have to make. Refuse to let others define who you are. Rather, insist on who God has created you to be. Setting your identity make you resistant to disapproval.



When you really come to terms with who you really are, your fear level and what other people think of you will go down. Likewise, living a lie and relying on other people's opinion of you escalate your fears.

The truth that God loves you is the truth that other truths will grow on.

We can't gain God's love by performance. We gain it by encounter.

The value of a thing is dependent upon what we are willing to pay for it.

You are a valuable. Matthew 6:26 (NIV) ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

If your desire is to breakthrough in relationships, then your first breakthrough is to love yourself.

PRAYER POINT

- Father help me to love me. Grant me a deeper revelation of your love for me. (Eph 3:17)

ACTION POINT

- Identify ten (10) things you love and would start valuing about yourself.





2. Develop healthy people's skills

Luke 2:52 (MSG)

And Jesus matured, growing up in both body and spirit, blessed by both God and people.

No matter how terrible you are when it comes to relating with others, you can always learn and improve. Irrespective of whether you've had a bad experience with people or not, you need people in your life.

Jesus, though He had the commendation of His Father saying “this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased” (Luke 3:22), He needed people in His life including the one who was to betray Him, to advance the redemptive course of the Father on earth.

There are some people skills you need to be committed to cultivating. These skills work anywhere, anytime and



with anyone.

It doesn't matter whether you are an introvert or an extrovert, when you cultivate these relational skills and become committed to practicing them, they literally take your relationships to a whole new level. Be it with your spouse, children, colleagues at work or even your church family.

Luke, a doctor and a disciple of Jesus has this to say about Jesus during his walk on earth. "And he grew in his capacity to develop quality relationships and he found favour with men." (Luke 2:52 paraphrased)

If Jesus who was God in form of man could develop his relational and people's skills, then there's nothing stopping us from developing ourselves also.

Jesus is the perfect master whom we pattern our lives after.

Here are few skills we can develop

A. Love people unconditionally

The first step to developing quality relationship is unconditional love for self. However, we must extend the



love we have for ourselves to others. The character of love is of no significance if we cannot extend it to others.

If you say you love yourself but don't love your neighbor, you don't really love yourself and you don't love God. Your love for God and yourself is expressed by your love for people. (1John 4:20-21 paraphrased).

The proof of your love for yourself is measured in your love for others.

There are two things that will last forever; the word of God and people. Loving people without reservation is loving yourself unconditionally.

B. Encourage people continually

Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV)

²¹ *Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.*

Do you know that encouragement is a life saver? It can literally transform a person.

Encouragement is a spirit lifter. What oxygen is to the soul is what encouragement is to the human spirit.

Words are powerful. Our words can either lift someone



up or bring them down.

Understand that there is life and death in our tongue. The kind of words you choose to alter determines what you get.

Nobody wants to be around those who bring them down continually. If you want to develop quality relationships, train yourself to be positive at all times. There's something about positive people; they are life givers.

The positive and pleasant words of wise people bring life to those who hear them.

C. Honour people always

2 Pet 2:17NKJV

17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

We tend to honour those who are far from us and dishonor those who are close to us. You don't honour people because they are honourable. You honour them because you are an honourable person.

If you want to experience breakthrough in relationships,



you must honour people.

It is both vertical and horizontal at the same time. In others words, you honour those who are ahead of you, at the same level with you and those who are below you.

Four (4) things to note about Honour

1. Honour recognizes a person's worth or value.
2. Honour begins from the heart
3. Honour is not possible without love
4. It has a transforming power that brings life. it sees the good and the gold in people.

A lot of us focus on the dirt in people. However, to develop quality relationships, you must focus on the gold in others.

PRAYER POINT

- Lord help me to love and honour all people, especially those who are honourable. (1Pet 2:17)

ACTION POINT

- What will you start doing honour people, especially those who are not honourable?





DEVELOPING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP TOOLS

Proverbs 18:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ *A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*

The basis of life is people and how they relate with each other. Our success, fulfillment, and happiness depend upon our ability to relate effectively. The best way to become a person that others are drawn to is to develop qualities that will attract them.

When special people touch our lives then suddenly, we see how beautiful and wonderful our world can really be. They show us that our special hopes and dreams can take us far by helping us look inward and believe in who we are. They bless us with their love and joy through everything they give. When special people touch our lives, they teach us how to live.



Does that reflect the kind of person you are to others?

Amos 3:3 (NIV)

³ *Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?*

The question isn't whether you will participate in relationship or not. It is, how will you participate?

Will your participation enhance the relationship or cause others to feel pain?

"Our basic genetic structure within the brain is hardwired to form emotionally based connected relationships right from birth." -Dr. Allan Schore of the UCLA Medical School.

Loneliness and isolation increase the likelihood of disease and premature death. If you stay all by yourself and think you don't need anyone in your life, you're increasing the likelihood of contacting diseases and premature death by 200%.

Another research says, anything that promotes a sense of isolation often leads to sickness and suffering. Similarly, anything that promotes a sense of love and intimacy, connection and community brings healing.

Some vital relationship questions for the unmarried in a relationship.

1. What things am I willing to give up for this relationship to work?
2. Are you ready for marriage spiritually, emotionally



and physically?

3. Do we have a mutual understanding of our visions?
4. What are the reactions of your family, friends and mentors to this relationship?
5. Am I willing to celebrate the strength of my spouse and pray for his/her weaknesses?
6. Is my future spouse willing to respect and keep to our agreed issues?
7. Do I have any evidence that my future spouse is willing to be the priest, protector and provider of our home?
8. What point of view does my future spouse have about marriage?
9. What level of commitment does my future spouse concerning our marriage?
10. Does my future spouse respond to correction with ease?

PRAYER POINT

- Ask God to help you become a better person, to love and value yourself, and build healthy relationships with others.

ACTION POINT

- Identify ten things you love and would start valuing about your spouse or other people.





BUILDING FUNCTIONAL FAMILIES

The family unit is the most integral part of society. Some people say all there is that matters, is to be in a relationship or get married to someone you love. Forgetting that the issue is not about being in a relationship, or being in love but the issue is about having families that are functional who will transform society.

Every person, whether an artisan, a politician, a pastor or an entertainer, our priority is to build functional families where every individual thrives, and the society is transformed.

Some entertainment today, contributes to building dysfunctional families.

As kingdom citizens, we have no business with some of the movies we watch and songs we listen to as



entertainment. As they contribute to creating fragmented individuals in us.

Like the saying goes, a fragmented man, who becomes president, will automatically be a fragmented president and produce a fragmented country.

When two fragmented people who are supposed to be fathers and mothers get into a relationship and eventually become someone's parents, that child is an endangered species.

When you grow up in a family that functions dangerously, it will take the grace of God for you not to function dangerously. Your mental development, emotional health and development will be affected.

Genesis 3:6-9

The woman was convinced, she saw that the tree was beautiful; she wanted the wisdom it will give her. She plucked some and ate and gave some to her husband who was with her. Then their eyes were opened and suddenly felt shame and their nakedness. They sewed fig trees together and covered themselves. When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard God and hid themselves. Then God asked where are you?

When Eve looked at this tree, some things crossed her mind;

- (1.) It's beautiful
- (2.) It's sweet
- (3.) It will give her the wisdom she has always wanted.



What made her eat it? She concluded that it would give her the wisdom she has always wanted.

There are things you must never sacrifice for personal gains. It goes a long way to affect you, your children and even unborn generations who would come through you.

PRAYER POINT

- Ask the Lord for mercy where you have allowed person gains to override your decisions to follow His will. (Lam 3:22)
- Pray and ask the Lord for grace and wisdom to be role models, fathers and mothers to this generation.

ACTION POINT

- Take time to apologize to your child, your spouse, your friend or colleague etc., who might have been fragmented as a result of your words, actions or behaviour towards them.



TEACHING YOUR CHILD ABOUT SEX

Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)

⁶ Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it.

Have you noticed sometimes that when people hear the word “sex, it's like a taboo to mention, and it feels like the ground should open so you can hide inside because you probably feel ashamed to talk about it? Yet you don't have the same experience when we are talking about business or any other word.

The question now becomes;

- How do we talk to our children about sex?
- What has prevented parents from talking about sex with their children?
- Does it make you uncomfortable when you start talking to your children about sex?
- Some parents get embarrassed when they want to talk to their children about sex and most don't



know how to go about it.- So they ask where do I start from?

These are some of the reason parents have difficulty talking to their children about sex.

Well, the fact is that if you don't talk to your children about sex, some else will do it. It is better you be the one who to first talk to them about it so that someone else will not give them the wrong information.

In the 60s, a boy is exposed to porn between age 11 to 13. Today, it has gone down to age 5. Children are exposed to the internet, so don't wait for pornography to teach your children about sex. Take the initiative and tell them by yourself.

What kind of images are our children watching? the earlier we start talking to our children about sex the better for us. Don't let them be exposed to images that will disturb them for life.

A young man who was at 25 years old said, all through his life he has been exposed to porn. Taking him through the ministry of Inner Healing, the addiction broke. He remembered for the first time how it all started. He said, when he was 7, while staying at his uncle's house, he stumbled into all his brothers watching pornography. When he saw it he was dazed and wanted to run away, but they said, sit down you are not a small boy. That was how he became addicted to it.

Now whether we like it or not, porn is everywhere. Even



businesses and night clubs use naked pictures to express their businesses and your children are seeing it, they aren't blind.

PRAYER POINT

- Ask the Lord to break away every fear, guilt and shame you feel when you hear the word “sex” or talk about it, in Jesus name! Isa 53:5

ACTION POINT

- Take time to engage with your child or spouse in an activity they love, to initiate a discussion on sex, so you can guide appropriately.



Genesis 3:7-10 (NKJV)

⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

⁹ Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

What has prevented us from talking about sex?

1. Original sin.

When man sinned, shame came. So, we became ashamed of our bodies. Nobody gets uncomfortable when you say eye, nose, hand, mouth. How is it that



when you talk about the body parts that are private, everybody begins to get uncomfortable? This is because at the fall of man, everything fell including sex and sexuality. Sex is crying out to be redeemed. How come the body parts we are supposed to talk about freely and openly becomes secret? The moment man fell, he started hiding because he felt shame. We need to know that there is nothing wrong with your body parts. So that when you are talking about sex with your children, don't use code names. Rather, use the right words so they would know nothing is wrong with it.

2. The importance of discussing sexual issues with our spouses.

Where did you learn about sex first as a parent?

If you are going to talk to your children about sex, you must first understand your own story.

Have you and your spouse ever discussed your own sexuality? Because that discussion is what will form a game plan on how you will talk to your children about it. Even in sex, couples should be able to talk freely on how you want your husband's touch (what works for you and what doesn't work for you).

Most of us have been broken in this area, such that it becomes a taboo to talk about it. It is very important to talk to your children about what they shouldn't do. But it is more important to talk to them about the things they



should do. (Pro 22:6). What both of you have discussed becomes the subject matter for discussion. Talk about it together- it is not a taboo and there is nothing wrong with it.

Where did you learn about sex, from the media? The pictures our children are getting from the media is that everybody is having sex and if you are not having sex there is something wrong with you.

What are the myths you grew up with when it comes to sex? There are things we learn about sex from our environment that is not true and we need to delete them. Anything you believe, you will transfer to your children.

3. Learning the basic and fundamental principles on how to talk to your children about the gift of sex.

There is a way to talk about sex to your child at every age category.

When it comes with your children, don't just teach them what not to do, also teach them what to do.

The basic principle of talking to children about sex.

1. Don't assume they just don't want to talk just because they feel uncomfortable talking to them. Remember, it's not a one time talk. Make it a normal and natural and everyday talk. And don't

assume because they are quiet they aren't listening. They are listening. Sometimes, you have to watch the cartoons with them so you can teach them from their own world.

2. When you want to talk about sex with your children, husband and wife should do it together. Please don't talk about sex when you are angry with them. There is a way to talk to children because they can be broken through how we talk to them.

PRAYER POINT

- Ask the Lord for grace to help you steward well the destiny and sexuality of the children (spiritual/biological), He has entrusted to your care. (Pro 22:6)

ACTION POINTS

How to talk to your children about sex? The Different Age Categories.

At age 0 to 3 years.

- Teach them about the different parts of their body and their names. This is the time to teach them about self –control (their body parts) and toilet training and tell them the distinctions between the males and the females.
- Teach them also about roles at this age.

At age 4 to 9 years.

- Teach them the basic mechanics about sexuality. Tell them what the different body parts are used for.
- When children have appropriate information, they are less likely to be involved in inappropriate behavior. Modeling healthy sexual behavior helps children e.g. like being sacrificial. You must model what you want to teach the children.

At age 10 to 13 years.

- At this time puberty is happening and the guys will start having some growth on his breast even to the girls too. You must teach them the things they are likely to face and how to go about it. Teach them what the word of God says about abstinence. Teach them why they should stay



away.

- **Teach your children about masturbation. Tell them that it is simply “thinking about sex” from inner healing perspective; it is simply caused by an unmet need in the area of comfort.**
- **For teenagers, teach them about their own uniqueness and development. This is where you get to talk about identity and who they are.**
- **Teach them who they are in Christ apart from their parents. Help them develop safe friendship; if your children want to date, tell them they are free but, on the condition that they will allow you counsel them. Teach them the protocols and the ethics involve in dating. Don't leave them to date carelessly.**
- **You must learn how to teach your children to steward the changes they experience in their bodies.**
- **Help them develop relationship with God.**

PRAYERS FOR FAMILY SPHERE

1. We stand in the gap for families in our nation and we repent in areas we have gone wrong. We as fathers, mothers, children, have sinned against you and we ask for mercy (Ps. 28:2).
2. (Ps. 128, Deut. 12:1-14, Gen. 1:27-28, Eph. 5:22, Heb.



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13:7) We pray for families in our nation that fathers, mothers and children will take their positions as God originally designed it to be; that there will be no role reversals (Col. 3:21, Deut. 21:18-21, Prov. 22:6, Ps. 127:3).

3. We pray that families will begin to live in conformity to God's will, instilling kingdom values and walking in the cultures of heaven (Isa. 54:13, 2 Tim. 1:5)
4. We pray that parents will learn how to hear from God and teach their children how to do the same, how to communicate with God and put him first in everything; that parents will mirror the righteousness, justice, mercy and love of God in discipline, training and nurturing their children (1 Sam. 12:24, Prov. 22:6).
5. We pray that families will begin to honor the sanctity of sexual relationships as God intended it to be (Heb 13:4).
6. We pray for protection over families in our nation, state, cities and communities.
7. We pray for the salvation of all families in our city and community that God's light will shine forth and the Holy Spirit will dwell in these homes.
8. We pray for families who have lost a loved one in any way that God's comfort will rest upon them. We pray that they be strengthened and



encouraged.

9. We pray for peace in homes where there is estrangement between parents and children, husbands and wives etc. We pray for a heart of understanding; we ask for the spirit of forgiveness to be present and that hearts will be turned towards each other again.
10. We pray for families where there is a battle against addictions - pornography, masturbation, drugs, gambling etc. We ask the mighty hand of God to rest upon their homes, we ask for freedom for individuals going through such bondage. We boldly declare deliverance to those who have been held captive in the cycle of abuse and domestic violence and the peace of God will rule and reign in their hearts.
11. We pray for healthy communication between husbands and wives, parents and children. We pray for an atmosphere that encourages openness and heart to heart conversations.
12. We declare that the solitary will be placed in families. The Lord gives the desolate a home in which to dwell.
13. We pray for families who have a loved one with sickness/disease of any kind. We ask for healing over them.
14. We declare that our children will be as the dust of



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the earth; we will spread out to the north, to the west and to east and all the people of the earth will call us blessed. We are blessed all the days of our lives because we walk in your ways. We will eat the fruit of our labor, we are prosperous. Our children are like olive trees around us, our women are a fruitful vine and our men will be taught by you.

15. We pray that leaders in our government understand that the strength of the nation depends on the health of the nation's families and consider carefully the impact of such proposed decisions on marriage and family.