Faith Aflame: 360 Degrees

Living as God's Child: Relationships

In his book, *The Christian Faith*, Robert Kolb, writes, "We presume human life is lived in two kinds of relationships." (page 18)

"Luther," he writes, "emphasized that what makes life right—or whole or good—in relationship with God is not the same as what makes life right, whole, and good in relationship to other people." (Page 18)

Stewardship Prayer

I am so thankful, Lord, that my standing before You depends solely on what You have done for me by Your perfect life, Your innocent suffering and death, and Your resurrection from the dead.

Guide and direct my life as Your steward so that as I serve those around me I will be serving You.

Amen.

Vertical Relationship

"Our relationship to God is a relationship that originates in his love for us, his children. In this 'vertical' relationship we remain his children, always dependent on him, always recipients of his love, always reacting to his love with the love for him that his love generates in us (1 John 4:7-12). God is the subject of our descriptions of this vertical relationship,
even when we are active. Our actions toward him are always a response to his love, which elicits our trust and love toward him. For sinners, our being right with God consists in what Christ has done for us. He is our righteousness…" (1 Corinthians 1:30) (page 18)

- What has God done on our behalf according to 1 Peter 1:3-5?
- What has God done on our behalf according to 2 Peter 1:1-4?

Horizontal Relationship

Kolb writes, "In the 'horizontal' relationship with other creatures of God, especially his human creatures, we adults function as adults, with responsibilities God has designed for us as those who represent him in meeting the needs of others, in showing his love to those around him. Here our righteousness consists in what we do for the neighbor, according to God's design for human living." (Page 18)

We do not do these works on our own. We do them because of and on the basis of the righteousness God gives to us.

What do the following passages say about this horizontal relationship?

- 1 Peter 1:13-17
- 2 Peter 1:5-8
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24
- Philippians 2:12-13

As we live out our lives as stewards, understanding these relationships becomes vitally important. Why?

- What can happen if we confuse these relationships?
- What can you do in your own life to keep these relationships straight?
- What are some ways you can grow in the vertical relationship?
- What are some ways you can grow in the horizontal relationship?

Closing: Close with a prayer thanking God for all He does, especially for sending His Son to live the perfect life—for us, for dying on the cross—for us, for the gift of salvation—for us, full and free.