**Clarion Review**

Self-Help

**Building Blocks for Relationships**
Gaspar Garcia
iUniverse
978-0-595-49156-8
Four Stars (out of Five)

Reverend Gaspar Garcia pastor of the Church of Divine Grace in Davie Florida has been involved in Christian ministry and church leadership for twenty-two years. Here he offers sound Biblical principles for building lasting fulfilling and happy relationships that honor God and edify the church and society.

Garcia suggests that Christians who seek to build sound relationships must follow the example of Jesus the only perfect role model and the Apostle Paul who taught how to put the teachings of the Master into practice in all relationships.

"We cannot simply be Christian on Sunday mornings and something else the remainder of the week" Garcia writes. "Our lifestyles in their totality must conform to the lifestyle of the Gospel even if it requires radical change." And since the Gospel's take on relationships is so different from that of the secular world radical change is often required. Garcia does not shy away from difficult topics and he has no fear of words like "sacrifice" and "self-control." He suggests that whether or not one believes the Bible to be God's word revealed to humanity the effects of the spiritual laws it teaches are beneficial to everyone who applies them correctly.

Citing truth honesty integrity and sincerity as the building blocks of a healthy relationship Garcia goes further than most in defining them and explaining how when even one of them is missing the resulting fault in the structure of the relationship inevitably leads to its collapse. Along with naming some hard truths such as the need for discipline and self-knowledge and doing the "right thing" even if it is not in one's favor Rev. Garcia shows that Biblical teaching on relationships is also compassionate. Forgiveness is for the other but also for oneself; the boundaries of others should be respected but so also should one's own; there is protection for the other but also for oneself. He also gives examples of how living by the precepts of the Bible can keep one from falling into the hands of secular authorities clarifying

how to be “in the world but not of it.”

The building blocks of human relationships are the same as those that must be used in building the most important relationship of all: one’s relationship with God. Once based in truth honesty integrity and sincerity the next steps in a Godly life—sanctification (setting apart) sacrifice (giving up one’s preference) substitution (putting oneself in the place of the other) submission (giving in to another’s point of view) and survival (persevering in the relationship) —become easier to take. According to Garcia “As you open your heart to God and the spiritual principles for relationships you will also open your heart to your friends. When your relationships with God and the Lord are working well your relationships with others will work well also. This will bring peace and rest into your life.”