

Mid-Week Bible Study: RELATIONSLIPS

Week 1: Love

Text: John 15:9-14

Introduction:

Relationships are a little like ends of a bread of loaf. Over time, they tend to harden and become stale. But marriages and friendships do not have to follow this downward spiral. Fortunately, the Bible gives us a surefire method to keep our connections with others from going stale. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you have the power to produce incredible freshness in the lives of others. This method for growing great relationships is foolproof, but not free. This deep connection is love. The truth is that many people are disappointed in the way their relationships are turning out. They are tired of watching people walk in and out of their life.

Setting: In the preceding passage, John 15:1-8, Jesus used the word picture of a vine and its branches to teach His followers that the Christian life cannot happen without a continual life-giving connection to Him. Though Jesus' use of that word picture ends at verse 8, the underlying idea continues into verses 9-14—the crucial importance of remaining in Him.

Point: Love needs to permeate every relationship.

JOHN 15:9-10

Q: What do we tend to expect from the people who love us?

Verse 9: Many relationships the fail, fail due to a misunderstanding about what Love is

John in his gospel explains to us the complete understanding of love:

1. Love begins with God - God sent love through Christ to save us.
2. Jesus is the supreme example of love - Jesus revealed they true meaning of love by what he taught and most importantly lived.
3. Disciples are called to love - Christ commands us to love one humanity through the lens of love.

- The word **love** is used twice. Both times it is used to describe an action that has already been completed.
 - Jesus spoke of God's love for him in the past tense. It already happened and has not faded away.
 - As a result, Jesus loves us because of God's love for him.

Remain: the central focus of verse 9 is to remain in Christ love. Just as Jesus instructed his disciples earlier to remain in him.

- The word remain offers a sense of urgency. *"You must remain in my love."*
 - Being in Christ is the only sure-fire way to show our love for others

Verse 10:

Q: How would you describe the connection between love and obedience?

Who we love and how we love are always connected.

- When you love someone, you take seriously what the other person takes seriously and you choose your behavior accordingly.
 - Anything less is simply an empty claim.

Here Jesus makes the connection between love and obedience by using his relationship with his father as a model.

- Jesus' abiding love for his father led him to obey his father's at great cost to himself.
 - **Read Matthew 26:35-46.**

Jesus love for his father caused him to obey his father's commands. The word **commands** here is plural. Meaning more than 1 command.

- Jesus going to the cross was not the only command that God gave his son. Daily Jesus's love caused him to obey his father's call.
- We too are called to follow his commands. By doing so God doesn't love us more, rather we come to know and experience God's love more deeply.
 - **Read John 14:23-24**

Remaining in Jesus' love is the key to having fulfilling relationships.

- *It enables us to follow God's laws, discern the Holy Spirit and keeps off a selfish path where our disobedience sabotages our destiny and relationship with others.*

JOHN 15:11-12

Verse 11: Here Jesus states that we have been called to a loving obedience so we can experience authentic joy.

- Jesus states here that commitment to him leads to genuine joy.
 - Which is opposite of what the culture says. Culture teaches us that happiness = rejecting commitment and being fancy free.
 - Jesus here corrects this misunderstanding by stating that **deep joy = deep commitment.**
- By calling this joy "*my joy*" Jesus is inferring that his joy is that he feed us from eternal death due by providing our salvation.
 - **Read John 10:10**
 - Old saint sang "this joy that I have".

Prior to verse 12, the Greek word for "joy" (**chara**) only appeared twice in John's gospel. After this verse Jesus used it 7x before his arrest and crucifixion.

- *The closer Jesus got to the cross the more he talked about joy.*
 - He was called to the cross and as a result his obedience to God caused him to experience joy/fulfillment.
- The more we follow God the more joy & fulfillment we will personally have.
 - **Read Psalm 37:4 & Romans 15:13**
- Therefore, we **are not looking for others to fill this void in our lives.** Because we have filled the void through obedience and abiding/remaining in Christ.

Q: How does our relationship with God impact our relationship with others?

Verse 12: Here the word command(s) appears again. Yet this time it is not plural but singular. ***Which suggest that this command is the springboard for all other commands.***

- This commandment Jesus embodied through his teaching and living.
 - Jesus does not ask us to do anything he himself has not already done.
 - **Read John 13:34**

Jesus reminded us that we/the church cannot opt-out of this command and fulfill the mission of the church.

- If we came to have love, then must show love to the world and each other.
 - **Read John 13:35 & John 4:20.**
 - The results of our love prove our love for God.

We are also called to love each other as Jesus loves them.

- Love both the lovable and the unlovable; those who deserve it and don't.
 - You cannot pick and choose who to love and say you love and serve God.
- **This is called perfect love.**
 - **Read Matthew 5:43-48.**
 - Even our enemies deserve love because they are still our neighbor.

God calls us to obey the greatest commandment - Mark 12:28-34/Luke 10:25-28 or/ Matthew 22:37-40.

- Living out this command is not simple.
 - As a matter of fact, in order to **AGAPE** (love) people we must abide in Christ and dwell in God's presence to get strength to do as commandment.

JOHN 15:13-14

Q: How much are you willing to endure for another person?

Verse 13: Jesus connected sacrificial love with the costly love we must have for each other.

- Jesus provides the optimal definition for love. Love = self-sacrifice.
- While Jesus voluntarily laid down his life for us, we often are called to offer small sacrifices during on countless moments.
 - Laying down a position & Serving others in the spirit.
 - **Read John 13:12-17**
- We are called to lay down life by giving it away, one moment at a time (listening, teaching, coaching, helping, witnessing) serving the needs of others in Christ's name.
 - One's willingness to submit and sacrifice for the other is critical to a loving relationship. It's what we call mutual submission.

- **Read Ephesians 5:21-28.**

Verse 14: Jesus calling us his friends is a powerful declaration of our relationship.

- Don't confuse friendship with irreverently familiarity.
 - As an adult my parents are my friends, but they are still my parents.
- John first used this word "friend" in John 3:29. He stated that the best man of the bride groom is a friend who was given a special honor to share in the joy of the wedding.
 - They support and ensure the wedding is a success, but do not marry the bride.
- John the Baptist saw his ministry in the same vein; He was there to Support to Jesus, yet he knew his place and role.
 - **Read Matthew 3:13-17**

True friendship with Jesus leads to action.

- **Read Matthew 7:24-27**
- Calling Jesus "Lord" requires is to submit to his will as he is our sovereign ruler.

In that same manner we must look at our relationships not from the vantage point of "what we get", but instead "we should look to act and serve others".

"You can always give without loving but you can never love without giving."

– Amy Carmichael

CONCLUSION:

In order to avoid **RELATIONSLIPS** we must be willing to love God enough to love others beyond their flaws and failures, which happens when we realize that is what Jesus does for us every day.

As a result, we have no problem serving and sharing what we have for one we call friends, because we believe we are called to them!

Like the heels of the loaf of bread, our relationships can become stale, hard, and flat. Love requires continual refreshment to remain healthy.