

Relational Intelligence 2.0: Developing Healthy Biblical Relationships Enablers & Fundamentals of Relationships – Part 1

April 24, 2022

Dr. Rev. Tony Soldano

SERMON DESCRIPTION

God is a subject matter expert when it comes to relationships and there are certain enablers and fundamentals of the Kingdom culture that lead to healthy and positive inter-relationships. In fact, Christian relationships cannot be defined without the following elements.

SERMON QUESTIONS

1. What do they need to know?
 - God is a subject matter expert on relationships and there is no substitute for Kingdom culture and principles as they relate to the subject.
2. Why do they need to know it?
 - In order to experience biblical and healthy relationships, we must employ these enablers within our interpersonal interactions.
3. How should we apply it?
 - Through wisdom, knowledge, understanding and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we must allow Him to work within our hearts.

As a follow-up to the survey we conducted, the feedback we received revealed that people are unsatisfied with their ongoing relationships.

SERMON INTRODUCTION

- In our recent congregational study, one of the lowest scores involved relationships
- People indicated that they were not satisfied with their relationships and that they were not as enriching as they would prefer
- As followers of Christ, we serve a highly relational God. In fact, even between the Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit - God is highly relational.
- We see this throughout the Bible, including the Old and the New Testaments, how God interrelates with the nation of Israel, His people, and the body of Christ.
- When you boil it down, the Kingdom of God comes down to two things:
 - Relationship with God
 - Relationship with others.

CENTRAL TRUTH

Christianity is a highly relational faith that is based on community, fellowship and relationships.

MAIN PASSAGE

Proverbs 18:24

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

The Way of Love

1Corinthians13:1-8

¹ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. ⁴ Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

STATEMENT

Much of what we know and celebrate about relationships today comes from the Bible and from a Kingdom culture. Even secular relationships operate according to biblical principles unknowingly. Because of this they reap the benefits and the blessings of following God's ways.

MAIN POINTS

You cannot define a relationship as "Christian" without the following enablers:

- Love – "agape" love
- Honour
- Forgiveness
- Loyalty (covenant)
- Truth and trust.

1. Love - Agape love, there is no substitute

- a. The Apostle Paul writes to the church in Corinth to describe the agape love of God. In reality, this is who God is, He is love! This portion of scripture is the description of the great I Am, His character, His nature, His attributes. Paul indicated to them that this is how they are to love one another.
- a. One of the greatest things that love produces is UNITY!
 - Where there is unity God commands a blessing (Psalms 133)
 - **Fulfilling the Law Through Love:** Owe nothing to anyone except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law. (Romans 13:8)
 - We are not commanded to like everyone, but we are commanded to love everyone
 - And this is His commandment: We must believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. (1John 3:23)

2. Honour

- a. 1Thessalonians 5:12: And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.
 - HONOUR:
 - To highly esteem
 - To prefer one another highly
 - To take advantage of rare opportunities
 - Privilege and great respect
 - To value and apply worth.
- b. In honour there is something called a covenant relationship
 - What is covenant? An agreement, agree by lease or another legal contract
 - Agreement
 - The prophet Amos said, "How can two walk together unless they agree" - this brings the idea and concept of unity
 - Double honour – Paul clearly communicates that there are certain individuals and even officers that are deserving of double honour from God's people
 - **"Just because you respect someone does not mean that you have honour for them, furthermore, just because you do not disrespect someone does not mean you have honour for them":**
 - **Honour – proceeds from the heart**
 - **Respect – can be just an act or lip service**
 - **You can respect someone, and not have honour for them but you cannot honour someone and have no respect for them.**

3. Forgiveness: To err is human, to forgive is divine

- a. Matthew 6:12: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
- b. "There is no such thing as an apology in the Bible" ~Terry Appel
- c. "You cannot be offended; you can only take offense"
- d. Forgiveness is a command not a suggestion
- e. It is a fundamental operational system of the Christian faith
- f. The concept of an **apology** is simply to say that you are sorry for something that you may have done or said, it does not mean that you are repentant or even sorrowful
 - Why do people apologize?
 - They were caught
 - They were under pressure to say something
 - They are trying to save face.
- g. The concept of forgiveness really means that you are going to deal with hurt and offences the way God deals with them. You will:
 - Truly let them go
 - Truly release them from your court of judgement
 - Not take punitive action against them
 - Trust God to take vengeance.

- h. Illustration: Unforgiveness is like a file on your computer - just because you have deleted it, it does not mean it is not still somewhere on your hard drive
- i. You cannot have a Kingdom relationship without forgiveness.

4. **Truth and Trust**

- Truth and love must never be divorced from each other when it comes to interpersonal relationships. The truth can be very devastating and crushing unless it is softened by the agape love of God. Paul instructed the church in Ephesus that they needed to speak the truth to one another but that it required love to be ministered with it. However, love, by itself without the truth, can be lacking as people will never be challenged to grow or to go further in their emotional intelligence.
- Relationships that are based in truth have a greater opportunity to flourish because when truth is present trust will increase. Trust is the bedrock of any and all relationships, starting with our relationship with God. Most people will not remain in any kind of a relationship unless they trust the individual interacting with them
- Ephesians 4:15: ...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—...
- Ephesians 5:19: ...speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.
- Trust is the bedrock of every and all relationships
 - When you tear at the fibres of trust you will destroy any and all relationships
- Truth that must be spoken in love, in other words, it includes:
 - Openness and transparency
 - Honesty and integrity
 - Genuine care, love and affection
- James 1:19: Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.
 - It is almost impossible to have any sort of interaction with human beings and not become angry at times. Anger, in and of itself, is not an evil emotion, after all, God equipped us with this emotion and He Himself becomes angry at times. However, there are times when our emotions can become rage, or even violent, and then we act sinfully. This is where James tells us that we must draw the line and have our emotions and our anger under control and under the power of the Holy Spirit.

Biblical Principles of Relationship

- You will reap what you sow
- God will forgive you only as much as you will forgive others
- How can two walk together unless they agree? (Amos 3:3)
- Owe no man anything but love.

QUOTES

- God is a subject matter expert on relationships
- God expects us to live in community, displaying the culture of the Kingdom
- The Kingdom boils down to this: relationship with God and relationship with people
- Apologies can be made without change of heart or forgiveness
- You were not offended, you took offense
- For a relationship to be "Christian" it must include love, honour, forgiveness, loyalty, truth and trust
- Relationships become healthier when you focus on what you can give and not what you can take
- Do not manage relationships with a consumer mindset
- Our job is to ask for forgiveness—we cannot control or be responsible if they do not forgive
- Most people forgive the same way they delete files on the computer. They move it to the trash bin, but they do not empty its contents just in case they need it in the future
- Respect does not always mean there is honor in the heart. But when there is honor in the heart, respect will always follow
- God forgives you at the same pace as you forgive others.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How is it possible to be angry and sin not? What does the scripture actually mean?
2. What does the Bible say about not letting the sun go down on your wrath? Is this actually practical or does it need something else?
3. Describe the various uses of the term love within the New Testament. Define how agape love is different than all of them.
4. How is Jesus agape love? What does this describe and say about the fact that He is the great I Am?
5. How is it possible to have respect and yet lack honour within your heart? Discuss.
6. Why did Paul tell the church in Ephesus to speak the truth in love? What does this mean? What does it look like, and how is it possible?
7. Why did Paul address the church that they should not lie to one another? Was he not speaking to Christians?
8. How is God a subject matter expert at relationships?
9. How does the Trinity interact with one another? What are some of their core values?