

Relationships 101 Friends, Family and Foes

Introduction

- Story of when I was 7-8 years old - Friends with Seth, persecuted by peers, Dad held me steady
- Blessed to bless
- Blessed in our relationship with God.. that relationship now leads to the blessing of others we are in relationship with
- We are all born with a need for connection, for relationship
- In differing ways and various degrees we have relationships with friends, family and foes (people we maybe at odds with)
- The way we navigate our friendships really determines the quality of our lives
- The way we relate to our friends, family and even our foes determines where we end up in life
- Learning yourself and learning others is essential to growing and becoming
- We are created for relationship. We don't work well in isolation
- It's a picture of the Godhead
- We are transformed to reach our full potential through
 1. The Bible, 2. Prayer, 3. Community our relationships
- God uses friendship to give you courage
- It is our relationships that carry us through our difficult trials in life

- Everything God gets to us he does so through relationship
- Weakness in relationship leads to a diminished life
- Weakness in relationship makes you more susceptible to deception

Three phases of relationship (vener, disillusion and genuine commitment)

Vener	Everything looks great, polished and perfect
Disillusion	We see past the veneer and see a person's humanity People disappoint us Unfulfilled expectations
Commitment	If we can work through the disappointment we can deepen the friendship This really is where the rub is Can i get over the disillusion? Will i self protect? Pull away? Mistrust? Remember friendship isn't instant

The Context

Primary strategy of heaven is relationship

Nature of God – love (gospel is about reconciliation with God and all humanity)

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. [8] Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. [9] This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. **1 John 4:7-9**

- The cross is about reconciliation and a restored relationship
- It was Jesus purpose in coming to this earth
- Connect us to God and connect us to each other

The Great Commandment -

Jesus said, "'Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.' This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: 'Love others as well as you love yourself.' These two commands are pegs; everything in God's Law and the Prophets hangs from them." **Mathew 22.37-40**

- Love God, Love people

Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. **John 17:3**

Jesus is praying for us

'Jesus is at the right hand of the father interceding for us' **Romans 8.34**

- One of Interceding - Standing in the gap and praying

Primary strategy of the Enemy is division

The primary strategy of the enemy is cause division on every possible level of relationship— churches with each other, congregations with their pastors, husbands and wives, children and parents, and even children with each other

- Through misunderstandings
- Through offence
- Isolation, accusation

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. [9] Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. **1 Peter 5:8-9**

The enemy is an accuser

'...For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night..!'

Revelation 12.10

- One of accusing - Pointing out people's differences or weakness

The Cost

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. [14] You are my friends if you do what I command. **John 15:13-14**

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. [9] Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. [10] Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. **1 Peter 4:8-10**

- There is pain
- There is a cost in being misunderstood
- There is pain in knowing which relationships to nurture and which may need walking away from
- There is pain in working through issues
- People are always the problem and people are always the solution

The Closeness

As you come to him, the living Stone---rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him--- [5] you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. **1 Peter 2:4-5**

- As a Church family to be built up into Christ
- Cemented to Together - Living Stones built into a living house

Friends come and friends go, but a true friend sticks by you like family. **Proverbs 18.24**

- Huge reward if you can build a few great friends
- People who stick by you like family

Application - Key Take Away

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, [5] so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. **Romans 12:4-5**

1. Doing life together with other Christians builds church & equips us

In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we're talking about is Christ's body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body. But as a chopped-off

finger or cut-off toe we wouldn't amount to much, would we? So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvellously functioning parts in Christ's body, let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't. **Romans 12:4-5 MSG**

- Do life in community
- Open up to others
- Allow others to open up to you
- We call that Life Group - We want you to join one

Take your stand with God's loyal community and live, or chase after phantoms of evil and die.
Proverbs 11:19 MSG

2. Doing life together with those outside church allows us to influence others.

"Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavours of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

"Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven. **Matthew 5.13-16**

3. Be Faithful in relationships

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- We will look more at this in coming weeks
- How do we handle conflict
- How do we deal with disappointment
- How do we strengthen our relationships
- You don't want to miss the next few weeks