Proverbs 11:29 He who troubles his own house will inherit the wind.

God is love; therefore relationships are His top priority. Even God’s image is relational.

“*Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us*.” Genesis 1:26

Existing in relationship with Himself wasn’t enough…

You were formed for God’s family. God has always wanted a family and He created you to be a part of it.

*“God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.”* Eph. 1:5

Many people believe that God only cares for crowds, but from the beginning we see God’s concern that the individual not be overlooked within a larger community (Lady with issue of blood).

* Tribes Genesis 49:28
* Exodus 18: 17-23(Governing)
* Four of the Ten Commandments deal with our relationships to God, while the remaining six deal with relationships with people.
* Jesus’ Ministry
* 70 Luke 10:1
* 12 Disciples Mark 3:14
* 3 Inner Circle Matthew 17
* New Testament Church
* Prayer meetings (Acts 12:12)
* Evening of Christian fellowship (Acts 21:7)
* Common meals, possibly Communion services (Acts 2:46)
* A night of prayer, worship, and instruction (Acts 20:7)
* Impromptu evangelistic gatherings (Acts 16:32)
* Planned meetings to present the gospel (Acts 10:22)
* Following up confirmation training meets (Acts 18:26)
* Evangelistic meetings (Acts 20:20)

**Culture’s Lack of Community**

 “Americans are among the loneliest people in the world.” Gallup Organization

Most architects currently design homes intentionally to promote privacy and seclusion, not connection. Front porches used to be capitalized upon.

Researchers have found that isolated people are 3 times more likely to die than those who have strong relationships. People with bad health habits (smoking, poor eating, obesity, alcohol, or drug use) but strong social ties lived significantly longer than people who had great health habits but were isolated.

Starbucks sees itself in the business of doing more than selling coffee. Starbucks believes part of its corporate appeal is to create environments that connect people and enhances their quality of life.

Clinical Psychologist Dr. Henry Cloud states, “The soul cannot prosper without being connected to others.”

**(This section is for those who don’t value relationships)**

**Why People Need Relationships**

1. We get STRENGTH for life’s struggles

*“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. 10 If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.”* Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

A friend will keep you from going places that your mind and emotions will not.

1. We receive WISDOM for making important decisions

*“Plans go wrong for lack of advice; many advisers bring success.”* Proverbs 15:22

(Very beneficial for young couples to be with older couples)

1. We experience ACCOUNTABILITY, which is vital to personal growth

*“As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.”* Proverbs 27:17

1. We find ACCEPTANCE that helps us heal our brokenness

*“This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. 13 There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”* John 15:12-13

Most suicide victims say, “no one cared.”

**Relationships also provide support and care, functioning much like a hospital**. They provide emergency care, rehabilitative care and long-term care.

**\_\_\_Emergency\_\_\_ \_\_Room\_\_\_ Care: Responding to a Crisis**

**Paul lost job**

Accidents happen, illnesses attack, jobs are lost, friends and family members die and emotional trauma strikes at any given time. But your relationships can commit to providing emergency care.

You may be the first person contacted in a crisis situation. Galatians 6: 2 states *“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”*  Relationships provide the necessary community so that we can lighten the burden of one another.

**\_\_Rehabilitative\_\_ \_\_\_Care\_\_\_\_: Helping With Recovery**

**Stacy lost baby**

Relationships are also suited to provide follow up care after a crisis has ended.

Example: Someone loses a loved one. Everybody comes to the funeral and maybe several people check on them for a couple of weeks. This is usually where the care stops. Life Group members can provide consistent care for the entire grief process. By holding one another up in prayer and asking heartfelt questions about how to help during the loss, we can simply be there for one another.

**\_\_\_Long\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_Term\_\_\_ Care: A Lifetime of Support**

No one person has the resources to single-handedly provide long term care to another person. But with the help of Life Group leaders, friends, and family we have the ability and resources to provide long term care.

In the Jerusalem church, a group of Greek-speaking Jewish widows were missing out on the daily food distribution. Truly these women required extra care and support. The twelve formed a ministry team of Greek men “full of the Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6: 3) to meet the widow’s short and long term needs. Their support freed the apostles to concentrate on preaching and prayer.

**(For all of us to improve our relationships)**

Being relational is the only path to full spiritual maturity. Because every trait God wants us to attain is learned through interaction with others.

**Having successful relationships takes honesty (authenticity)**

Churches are often the worst at this…

*“When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters, I didn’t use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you God’s secret plan. 2 For I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling.”*1 Corinthians 2:1-3

Many relationships fail because they remain superficial. You must give and receive honesty.

There are two people in every relationship you must be honest with: your friend and yourself.

With others we must be honest…

Proverbs 24:26 *An honest answer is a sign of true friendship.*

**Having successful relationships takes humility**

Philippians 2:3-4

*“Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. 4 Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.”*

Pride builds walls, humility builds bridges.

Pride says “me first.”

“God gives grace to the humble” pride blocks God’s grace from our relationships.

We have to have grace to grow, change, and pour into others…

That is why forvginess had to be obtained before sacrafices could be offered.

**Having successful relationships takes courtesy**

Ephesians 4:32

*“Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.”*

“People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” – John Maxwell

Always consider where people come from, it will help to build relationships with difficult people. God intentionally gives us difficult people to grow us.

Community does not require compatibility.

Only being in relationships that are easy is lazy and doesn’t portray Christ.

**Having successful relationships takes frequency**

*“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”* Hebrews 10:25

Relationships will never fit into your schedule. Busyness is one of the greatest enemies of relationships.

**Having successful relationships takes intentionality**

Relationships can’t be convenient they must be a conviction.

Relationships are an investment not an expense.

“Want a friend be a friend” – John Maxwell

**Community requires commitment**

Over 50 times in the New Testament the phrase “one another” or “each other” are used.

* **Serve** one another
* **Pray** for each other
* **Love** one another
* **Encourage** one another
* **Greet** each other
* **Forgive** one another
* **Honor** each other
* **Submit** to one another

**God created relationship to teach us how to love, and when we love we are most like God.**

**4 Relationships Every Person Should Have**

**There are specific relationships that you should have.**

Anyone who doesn’t need company is either greater than a man, and is a God, or lesser than a man, and is a beast. – Aristotle

**You have to be intentional and make time for these relationships.**

 “Until you value yourself you wont value your time.” – M. Scott Peck

**Who is your Paul? You need a Yoda.**

“Always two there are, no more, no less: a master and an apprentice.” - Yoda

*“I, Paul, am on special assignment for Christ, carrying out God's plan laid out in the Message of Life by Jesus. I write this to you, Timothy, the son I love so much. All the best from our God and Christ be yours! To Be Bold with God's Gifts*

*3-4Every time I say your name in prayer—which is practically all the time—I thank God for you, the God I worship with my whole life in the tradition of my ancestors. I miss you a lot, especially when I remember that last tearful good-bye, and I look forward to a joy-packed reunion.*

*5-7That precious memory triggers another: your honest faith—and what a rich faith it is, handed down from your grandmother Lois to your mother Eunice, and now to you! And the special gift of ministry you received when I laid hands on you and prayed—keep that ablaze! God doesn't want us to be shy with his gifts, but bold and loving and sensible.*

*8-10So don't be embarrassed to speak up for our Master or for me, his prisoner. Take your share of suffering for the Message along with the rest of us.”* 2 Timothy 1:1-10

**A Paul…**

* Who do you look up too?
* Who do you see and say, “I want to be like them someday?”
* Who sets standards to which you aspire?
* Whose blessing do you seek?

**Principles of a mentorship…**

* Don’t base your mentors on politics.

Strive for the top of your game not the top of your organization. – John Maxwell

**Mentors are about building traits not career tracks.**

* You will study with several in a lifetime and every relationship will be different.
* You may need to serve your way into a mentoring relationship

**Give to get**

There are no traffic jams on the extra mile. – Zig Ziglar

* Each one is not equally accomplished.
* Your relationship will deepen and change the longer you are together.
* You will never cease apprentice work.

The higher you go in leadership the more difficult finding a mentor becomes.

**Three things to look for…**

**Humility…**

“I am just a simple monk.” Dalai Lama (The title means “Ocean of Wisdom”)

*“The one who knows much says little; an understanding person remains calm.”* Proverbs 17:27

**Honesty… (Don’t let them give you the show room version)**

**Honoring…** **“You become what you honor.”**

**Types of mentors**

* Relational
* Intentional
* Unintentional
* Seasonal

**Who is your Timothy? You need a protégé.**

“We are all treading in someone else’s footsteps.” – Leonard Sweet

**Every great leader was someone’s Timothy. Jesus to John the Baptist, Paul to Gamaliel, Elijah to Elisha, Joshua to Moses, Joshua to no one… Then the period of the Judges.**

*“You've been a good apprentice to me, a part of my teaching, my manner of life, direction, faith, steadiness, love, patience, troubles, sufferings—suffering along with me in all the grief I had to put up with…”* 2 Tim. 3:10-11

* Your Sistine Chapel may not be a place but a person…
* A lifetime’s successes are in its heirs…

**The measure of a great teacher isn’t what he or she knows; its what the student knows.**

**This can be difficult because you have to want your protégé to go farther.**

**Building others, builds us.**

“The person who keeps busy helping the one below him wont have time to envy the person above him.” Henretta Mears

**Reproduction is not cloning.** (Scotty and Randy B.)

Having a protégé is reproducing the best of your self in an individual person.

**Who is your Jonathan? You need a True Friend.**

“There are only 2 people who can tell you the truth about yourself; an enemy who has lost his temper and friend who loves you dearly.” - Antisthenes the Cynic

*“After David had finished talking with Saul, he met Jonathan, the king’s son. There was an immediate bond between them, for Jonathan loved David.”* 1 Samuel 18:1

**A Jonathan…**

* Believes in you when no one else does.
* Is loyal even when you make it hard to be loyal.

**“Loyalty publicly results in leverage privately.” – Andy Stanley**

* Is the first to call in a good times and bad.
* Gives and gives and wants no payment. (Mark Swank)

*“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends*.” John 15:13

Laying down a life doesn’t mean just death, it means laying down selfishness.

* Walks with you in all seasons.

**Success in life is having those closest to you love and respect you the most.**

**Jonathan is more than a Best Friend he is a True Friend.**

**Best friends are often built on common interests; true friends have interest in building you.**

*There are “friends” who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother.”* Proverbs 18:24

**Want a friend be a friend.**

To add value to others you must first value others. – John Maxwell

We have to take a long look at ourselves; do we value the potential true friends in our lives?

**Nathan: You Need an Editor**

**Nathan means ‘Gift.’**

Editor is someone who drowns your work in red ink not because they hate it but because they love it and they want others to be able to love it.

*“Then Nathan said to David, “You are that man! The Lord, the God of Israel, says: I anointed you king of Israel and saved you from the power of Saul. 8 I gave you your master’s house and his wives and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. And if that had not been enough, I would have given you much, much more. 9 Why, then, have you despised the word of the Lord and done this horrible deed? For you have murdered Uriah the Hittite with the sword of the Ammonites and stolen his wife. 10 From this time on, your family will live by the sword because you have despised me by taking Uriah’s wife to be your own.*

*11 “This is what the Lord says: Because of what you have done, I will cause your own household to rebel against you. I will give your wives to another man before your very eyes, and he will go to bed with them in public view. 12 You did it secretly, but I will make this happen to you openly in the sight of all Israel.”* 2Samuel 12: 7-12

* David is a king, a very successful king. The more successful you become the more people tell you what you want to hear.
* You have to know Nathan’s heart.

**Trusted adviser** (**Trust is more important than love. – Jeff Gitomer**)

**Won’t compromise God’s purpose in you for you…**

**Nathans will…**

1. **Get under your skin…**

“Advice is seldom welcome, and those who need it the most like it the least.” – Samuel Johnson

1. **Ask questions**… Counselors ask questions to help YOU come to conclusions.
2. **Tell the truth**…

**Because we often lie to ourselves.**

**Judges 16:20 “But he did not know that the Lord had left him.”**

**Without Nathan David would have corrupted the messianic line.**

**These relationships are essential to reaching our full potential. We are designed with a defect; we have blind spots that we will never see.**