

26-Building A Strong Foundation For Your Relationships

Examine your relationships. Do you nurture fondness and admiration? Are you emotionally connected? Do you let the important people in your life influence you? Do you let the four horsemen –criticism, contempt, defensiveness, stonewalling – destroy relationships? Do you turn toward each other when you face adversity? Or do you turn away from each other? Do you use harsh start-ups? Do you produce emotional flooding? What body language are you communicating? How effective are your repair attempts?

How are you doing on this quiz? If these questions make you uncomfortable then it is time to step back, examine yourself and listen to the Holy Spirit! Relationships are the foundation of mankind. Are you taking care of the important relationships in your life? Your parents, your siblings, your spouse, your kids, your friends. What is the condition of these relationships?

Love your neighbor, Honor your father and mother, Live with your spouse in an understanding way are messages from the Creator of the Universe. When He includes a message in the Ten Commandments it must be important! When Jesus speaks we need to listen! The book of Proverbs is crammed with wisdom!

Convicted? Then it is time to lay a new foundation. Time to lay a foundation built on His Word, those that honor every relationship in your life. The key is sharing the love, mercy and grace you receive from the Lord with everyone. When you nurture fondness and admiration you reflect the way Christ sees you. When you are “present” for someone you can connect emotionally with them during challenging times just as Jesus walks with you. When you accept the influence of those closest to you, you grow because they want the best for you. When you cast out the four horsemen, you replace chaos with peace in your life. When you turn toward someone instead of turning away you show them how important your relationship is. When you replace a harsh startup with a soft startup you open your heart as

well as the heart of the person you are speaking with. When you recognize emotional flooding in the person across from you, stop and change course to a more loving and caring approach. When you read the body language of the person you are speaking with, you accept the feedback and change the way you are delivering your message. When your repair attempts fail, it is time to rethink your strategy. Listen to that quiet little voice – the Holy Spirit- and follow the example of Jesus. Your relationships will blossom!! Each of these areas is addressed in more depth by John Gottman. A summary and link can be found in the appendix.

Verses:

Proverbs 11:12 “A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbor, but a man of understanding holds his tongue”.

1 Peter 3:7 “Likewise, husbands live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman”.

Ephesians 6:2 “Honor your father and mother which is the first commandment with a promise so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth”.

Matthew 5:23-24 “Therefore if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and reconcile to them; then come and offer your gift”.

Personal Reflection:

Which relationships in your life need repair? What changes will you make? Who will coach you? Who will hold you accountable?

Group Discussion:

Share with the group the area where you struggle. How can the group encourage you? How can they hold you accountable?