



Real Relationships

- Session 1: Love Like Christ (John 15:9-17)
- Session 2: Forge True Relationships (1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19:4-7 20:10-13)
- Session 3: Respect Authority (1 Samuel 24:1-12)
- Session 4: See Their Worth (2 Samuel 11:1-9,14-17)
- Session 5: Share Christ (John 1:35-49)
- Session 6: Encourage One Another (Acts 11:19-26)

We Are Created For Two Relationships:

1. A relationship with God
2. A relationship with everybody else

Each relationship affects the other. We don't lack for "relationships." Just look at our social media profiles. Many of us have plenty of "friends" through social media. But what we long for are real relationships, people with whom we feel a genuine bond. God desires that for us, too. He designed us to live in community in authentic relationships that are far from superficial.

This study, "Real Relationships", examines relationships from a variety of viewpoints, from the foundation of forming true relationships, to the fulfillment we receive from deep relationships, to our responsibility within relationships with those who don't know Christ. We will discover that an abiding life with Christ leads to healthy relationships with everyone else. Be prepared, though: we won't just find the kinds of friends we want for ourselves; we'll also discover the kind of friend we need to be to others.

Lesson 1: Love Like Christ

John 15:9-17 (Background Scriptures: John 15:1-8)

John 15:9-11

9 “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

10 “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

11 “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

Let's Discuss:

How has technology changed the way we relate to each other?

Keyword: Abide (v.9) the Greek word means to stay, to continue, or take up residence. Jesus defined it as dwelling in Him and keeping His commands.

Discussion Question #1

- How does obeying God’s commands demonstrate our love for Him?

John 15:12-13

12 “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

13 “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.

Discussion Questions #2

- What does it look like to love others the way Jesus loves us?

John 15:14-17

14 “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

15 “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

16 “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

17 “These things I command you, that you love one another.

Discussion Questions # 3-4

- What emotions do you experience when you consider that Jesus calls you His friend?
- How have you seen these verses practiced within the church?

Live it Out

How will you let the unconditional love of Christ impact you and your relationships this week?

- *Reflect.* Take some time to think about how God loves you, and reflect on your love for Him. List at least three reasons obeying Jesus brings joy.
- *Read.* Read John 15:9-17 each day and note what it says about your relationship with God. Ask God to give you a fresh perspective each day and to help you stay focused on Him.
- *Share.* Find ways this week you can bring joy to others in your workplace, family, school, or neighborhood.

The Bible Meets Life

Relationships can be fragile. Everything's fine if two people are traveling down the same road, but what happens if those two people don't see eye to eye or open animosity is evident. The Christians role in relationships or any relationship is to love. When we live and dwell in the love of Christ, that same love seeps into all of our relationships.

Lesson 2: "Forge True Friendships"

1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19:4-7; 20:10-13

Let's Discuss:

Strong friendships thrive because of shared commitment.

1 Samuel 18:1-4

1 Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

2 Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore.

3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

4 And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.

Keyword:

- *Loved (18:1)* The Hebrew word covers a range of relationships in the Bible. Here it describes the idea of being knit soul to soul in desire and purpose.

Keyword:

- *Covenant (18:3)* An alliance or pact between two parties representing the strongest bond known to man; included obligations as well as the penalty for breaking the contract.

Discussion Question #1-2

- What do you enjoy most about your lifelong friendships?
- What are the benefits of having your "soul knit" to someone else in friendship?

1 Samuel 19:4-7

4 Thus Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father, and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his works have been very good toward you.

5 “For he took his life in his hands and killed the Philistine, and the LORD brought about a great deliverance for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, to kill David without a cause?”

6 So Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan, and Saul swore, “As the LORD lives, he shall not be killed.”

7 Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these things. So Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past.

Discussion Questions # 3

- What are practical ways we can serve as advocates for our friends?

1 Samuel 20:10-13

10 Then David said to Jonathan, “Who will tell me, or what if your father answers you roughly?”

11 And Jonathan said to David, “Come, let us go out into the field.” So both of them went out into the field.

12 Then Jonathan said to David: “The LORD God of Israel is witness! When I have sounded out my father sometime tomorrow, or the third day, and indeed there is good toward David, and I do not send to you and tell you,

13 “may the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father to do you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And the LORD be with you as He has been with my father.

Discussion Question #4

- What can we learn about true friendship from the story of David and Jonathan?

Live It Out

How will you let the commitment of Jonathan and David influence your friendships this week?

- *Say thanks to a friend.* If you have a friend who has stuck by you through everything you faced, thank that person. Thank God for this friend, and let your friend know of your prayers.
- *Seek to be a friend to others.* Follow the example of Jonathan and David and even more of Christ to demonstrate a sacrificial kind of friendship to others. Seek to be this kind of friend to those God has placed in your life.

- *Renew a friendship.* If you have a friend you have let down in past years or did not stand with during a difficult period, seek to restore that friendship. Let Christ be seen and honored as you return to being the kind of friend He calls you to be.

The Bible Meets Life

We are familiar with business contracts and marriage covenants, but we rarely think of our friendships in terms of covenant. It's not likely a formal agreement, but we often recognize a bond between friends that goes beyond just a shared interest or affinity. In this study David and Jonathan gives us an example of what such a covenant looks like.

Lesson 3: "Respect Authority"

1 Samuel 24:1-12

1 Samuel 24:1-7

1 Now it happened, when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Take note! David is in the Wilderness of En Gedi."

2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

3 So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.)

4 Then the men of David said to him, "This is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.'" And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

5 Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe.

6 And he said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD."

7 So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on his way.

Let's Discuss:

What have you been taught about respecting authority?

Discussion Question# 1

- Have you ever been confronted with a difficult authority figure?

1 Samuel 24:8-11

8 David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down.

9 And David said to Saul: "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Indeed David seeks your harm'?"

10 "Look, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and someone urged me to kill you. But my eye spared you, and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed.'

11 “Moreover, my father, see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and see that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it.

Discussion Questions# 2

- What can we learn from David about dealing with difficult people in authority?

1 Samuel 24:12

12 “Let the LORD judge between you and me, and let the LORD avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you.

Discussion Question #3

- What holds you back from trusting God in situations involving difficult people?

Live It Out

God has placed authorities over you. How will you honor Christ this week and show them honor and respect.

Encourage. We live in a day when authority is questioned more than honored. Choose an authority figure in your life, a police officer, elected government official or church leader and express your support and encouragement.

Pray. Follow the principle in 1 Timothy 2:1 and pray regularly for those in authority.

(“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”)

1 Timothy 2:1-2 NKJV

Repent. If there is someone in authority to whom you have failed to show proper honor or respect, confess that to God. Change your attitude, and as appropriate, apologize to the person for your former lack of respect.

The Bible Meets Life

Most authority figures are good leaders whose authority we can respect. Unfortunately, we encounter other authority figures who, at best, are inept in what they do or, at worst, are self serving or even “out to get us.” When it comes to respect, the Bible makes no distinction between the two types of leaders. David modeled for us how we can respect even the worst kind of authority figures.

Lesson 4: "See Their Worth"

2 Samuel 11:1-9, 14-17

Do You Agree?

*When we see others as
Christ sees them, we
will treat them
accordingly.*

2 Samuel 11:1-4

1 It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

2 Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold.

3 So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

4 Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house.

Discussion Questions #1-2

- What can we learn about the private life of David from these verses?
- Where do we see people objectified or undervalued today?

2 Samuel 11:5-9

5 And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, "I am with child."

6 Then David sent to Joab, saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David.

7 When Uriah had come to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war prospered.

8 And David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift of food from the king followed him.

9 But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house.

Discussion Questions #3

- What can these passages teach us about the progression of sin in our lives?

2 Samuel 11:14-17

14 In the morning it happened that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah.

15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retreat from him, that he may be struck down and die."

16 So it was, while Joab besieged the city, that he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew there were valiant men.

17 Then the men of the city came out and fought with Joab. And some of the people of the servants of David fell; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

Discussion Question #4

- What are some warning signs that show we're viewing people as objects or obstacles?

Live It Out

This week, how will you see and treat others as Christ does?

Evaluate. The tendency of our fallen human nature is to treat people as objects rather than as God's image bearers. When we do this toward a whole group of people, we see prejudice and racism. Confess to God if there is a group toward which you do not treat with the same respect or worth that God desires.

Serve. Is there a person in your life you have treated more as an object for your happiness or called a friend as long as he or she can help you? Change your attitude and find a way to serve the person instead of seeing him or her as someone to serve you.

Restore. Broken relationships are a great hindrance in the local church. Do you have someone with whom you need to be reconciled, or someone you need to encourage to seek reconciliation?

The Bible Meets Life

Culture places great emphasis on our personal happiness, but people often take advantage of others to achieve that personal happiness. When the mindset is solely on our own personal happiness, we fail to take into consideration the ones we are involving. The individuals just like us have great value in the eyes of God. They are people made in the image of God for whom Christ died, and we are to show them the same love Christ does.

Lesson 5 "Share CHRIST"

John 1:35-49

John 1:35-39

35 Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples.

36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?"

39 He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

Let's Discuss:

When have you needed courage to introduce yourself to someone?

The lamb of God (v 36) in the Old Testament God prescribed a lamb without blemish as the proper sacrifice for sin. The lamb of God identified Jesus as the ultimate substitutionary sacrifice for sin.

Discussion Questions #1-2

- When did you first hear about Jesus and when did you first understand just who He is?
- How can we use our words and actions to point others to Jesus?

John 1:40-45

40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ).

42 And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).

43 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me."

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Discussion Questions# 3

- What often holds us back from telling others about Jesus?

John 1:46-49

46 And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

48 Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Discussion Question #4

- What are some of the ways we can invite others to "come and see" who Jesus is?

Live It Out

What will you do to invite others to "come and see" Jesus?

Pray. If you've never talked about Jesus with someone else, begin with prayer. Do you know of anyone without Christ? Pray for the person, pray for the opportunity to talk to that person, and pray for boldness.

Invite. Invite others to "come and see" by inviting them to join you in your bible study or to your church.

Tell. Telling others about Jesus does not require a deep grounding in the Bible and theology. Telling someone about Jesus is as simple as telling how you met Him and what He has done in your life.

The Bible Meets Life

A relationship with Jesus Christ covers every other relationship. As we saw in the first lesson, the love of Christ and our love for Christ lead us to love others and ground every aspect of those relationships in love. The best we can love others is to introduce them to Jesus the one who leads us to love them.

Lesson 6: "Encourage One Another"

Acts 11:19-26

Let's Discuss:

Have you ever seen anything viral on social media?

Acts 11:19-21

19 Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.

20 But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.

Greeks (v20) Literally "Hellenists," describes the people who identified themselves with Greek culture, customs, and language. The term sometimes would have referred to Grecian Jews but here means Gentiles.

Discussion Questions #1

- Why do we sometimes shy away from certain groups of people when sharing the gospel?

Acts 11:22-24

22 Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.

23 When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

Discussion Question #2-3

- What captures your attention about Barnabas in this passage?
- What are some practical ways we can help each other grow in our walk with Christ?

Acts 11:25-26

25 Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul.

26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

Discussion Question # 4-5

- What role does encouragement play in discipleship?
- What are some of advantages in doing God's work together?

Live It Out

We are surrounded by people who need encouragement. What will you do to encourage others to grow in Christ and serve Him?

A note of thanks. Identify one person who has encouraged you. Write a note to him or her and express your gratitude for the help and encouragement.

A word of encouragement. Take time this week to encourage someone in their walk with Christ.

A relationship of encouragement. Develop an ongoing relationship with someone that includes regular meetings.

The Bible Meets Life

New parents certainly love their infant children, but they want to see them grow and mature. That child cannot grow without the assistance of the parents and other caring adults. It's the same regarding our growth as Christians. We need each other. We have the opportunity to challenge and encourage others to grow spiritually and be all they can be in Christ.