

For

Redemptive Relating #2

February 1, 2015

We exist to enjoy and share the love and message of God with everyone.

DAY 1: God is for you.

1. We are part of three communities.

Community #1: the Trinity. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit relate in perfect love, delight, honor and joy with one another. They invite us to enjoy their love for us.

Community #2: the church community, God's family, our brothers and sisters. We are to reflect the wonder of Trinitarian love with one another.

Community #3: the lost community. We relate to lost people as salt and light, reflecting God's love and sharing His message that they may also enjoy the wonder of God's love.

2. The phrase "for you" is found 477 times in the bible.

3. Genesis 1 records each of the major elements of creation, usually followed by, "and it was good." But, no matter how spectacular creation looked at any given period, there was something significant missing--no one with whom God could relate. Imagine standing at the rim of the Grand Canyon with virtual silence. No one with whom to share that spectacular vista. Imagine standing down at Newport Coast taking in the sunset on a summer evening, alone, with no one to share the beauty. What would that be like?

4. It's not until the last time of creation that Adam and Eve enter the scene. Then, the entire picture of creation takes on relationship, joy, communication, sharing, etc.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

²⁹ Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.

5. All of the earth as a gift for Adam and Eve, and for you and me.

6. What strikes you most from this passage in Genesis 1? How do you see that God is "for" us?

DAY 2: God for us, as seen in creation.

1. Read back through the passage from Genesis 1:26-31 from yesterday's devotional.
2. Below, are some points made about the nature of how God thinks about us human beings. Next to each one, place a number (1-10) that reflects how that point shows God's value of you!
 - ___ We are made in His image, His likeness, for relationship. (1:26)
 - ___ He gave us all of creation to rule, as a gift for our blessing (1:26)
 - ___ He gave us gender, each one being reflective of something of God's nature (1:28)
 - ___ His attitude toward humans was to "bless them." (1:28)
 - ___ There is joy even in procreation (1:29)
 - ___ All the world given as if a "Christmas present" from a generous and loving Father (1:28)
 - ___ His amazing provision and varieties of food, both in the plant and animal worlds (1:28-30)
 - ___ Whereas every other part of creation was "good," this part of creation, the creation of human beings was "very good."
3. Which aspects of creation, above, rated your highest numbers?
4. Why? What about this became more personal to you?
5. God being "for" us has to do with the heart of God, his core attitude toward you. How often are you aware of God really being for you?
6. The closest we probably come to being for someone is when we become parents. All of your "world" shrinks down to this one little kid. He or she has your undivided attention, and brings you great joy. Does this image add anything to how you should think of God being for you?
7. What images, words, pictures, attitudes, etc. do you sense when you read the Genesis 1 passage?
8. Can you put yourself in that picture?

DAY 3: If God is for us..."

1. The New Testament makes the truth that God is for us more personal.

Romans 8:15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

Romans 8:16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

¹⁷ *Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

2. Paul teaches us that God adopts us as His children! How does the idea of adoption drive home that God is for us?

3. As you read this next passage, underline everything that indicates that God is **for** us.

Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us?

³² *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?*

³³ *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies;*

³⁴ *who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us?*

³⁵ *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

³⁶ *As it is written, "For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."*

³⁷ *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

³⁸ *For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,*

³⁹ *nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

4. What struck you most from these verses?

5. What happens that makes you "forget" that God is for you? Do you ever wonder if God is against you, or is ambivalent toward you?

6. How would these verses help dispel what derails you?

DAY 4: Relating as for the people in your life.

1. We may know God is for us in our heads, but how does that knowledge "get" into our hearts? God uses people to make this personal and "real." When we see a brother or sister in Christ who is powerfully for us, our hearts take it from there! "Perhaps God is a whole lot more for me than I imagined!" Let's look at three examples.

Philippians 2:19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you.

²⁰ *I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.*

²¹ *For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.*

²² *But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.*

²³ *I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me.*

²⁴ *And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.*

2. How is Timothy for the people?

Philippians 2:25 But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.

²⁶ *For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill.*

²⁷ *Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.*

²⁸ *Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety.*

²⁹ *Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him,*

³⁰ *because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.*

3. How is Epaphroditus for the people?

4. Read back through both paragraphs from 2 Timothy. This time, ask yourself, how does Paul demonstrate being for people?

5. Do people sense you are for them? Does your presence and relating hint at how much God is for them?

DAY 5: Power: when someone is for you in spite of failure

1. Redemptive relating is powerful when you sense someone is **for** you, in spite of your failure(s), both past and recent!

Matthew 26:31 Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."

³² *But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."*

³³ *Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will."*

³⁴ *"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."*

³⁵ *But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.*

2. What is Peter's response to Jesus' prediction? (v. 33?)

3. He did not believe that he could fail that badly, even though the others might! How strong is his sense of loyalty as seen in v. 35?

4. Jesus is arrested. Peter follows in the shadows to witness what happens. Peter is confronted three different times by people claiming that Peter was a follower of Jesus. Here's the climax.

Luke 22:60 Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed.

⁶¹ *The **Lord turned and looked straight at Peter**. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times."*

⁶² *And he went outside and wept bitterly.*

5. What do you imagine was the look on Jesus' face?

6. What do you think happened to Peter when the rooster crowed? What did he realize about himself? What did he realize about Jesus?

7. Think of a time when you failed the Lord, especially after believing you would not fail. What would a compassionate look of Jesus mean to you?

8. How much more impactful would Jesus' words be to you, *knowing He knew you'd fail!*?

*Luke 22:32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And **when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.**"*