

Toward

Redemptive Relating #3

February 8, 2015

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

DAY 1: God moves toward us; people move away from God.

1. We are in part 3 of "Redemptive Relating:" With, for, toward, in, up. Let's do a quick review:

a. God is with us! This is the whole point of His redemptive story! He wants us to be with Him, and to enjoy all the benefits and joys of knowing and walking with Him. We reflect God's character and heart when others sense we are with them!

b. God is for us. This is God's fundamental attitude towards us. The Old Testament word for this is *blessing*. The New Testament word for this is *grace*. We make a difference with others by reflecting the wonder of Christ when they sense we are for them.

c. This week, we look at the third way God relates to us: toward.

2. God is always on the move toward people. So much of Old Testament history is the story of:

a. God calling people to himself,

b. People running away to "do their own thing," and

c. God moving toward people, anyway.

3. What strikes you about these three things?

4. Are there any bible characters that come to mind that illustrate this pattern?

5. Here are some that come to mind. Adam, Eve, Cain, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Pharaoh, Aaron and Miriam, God's people especially in the book of Judges, David, Jonah, etc. Pick one of those names where you're familiar with their story. Jot down what you remember about (a) God calling / reaching out to them, (b) them rebelling or turning away from God, and (c) God moving back toward them.

6. Lastly, think about your own story. Jot down an illustration from your own life where you've seen God moving back toward you.

Day 2: Mission of Jesus: moving toward people redemptively.

1. Yesterday, we looked "big picture" at the Old Testament. Today, we'll look "big picture" at the New Testament.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

2. Jesus is speaking in this passage. What does He equate with God's love? What did love **do**? (John 3:16).

3. What did love look like in John 3:17?

4. Compare God "sending" Jesus, and Jesus moving "toward" us.

5. Jesus illustrates His coming with the imagery of light and darkness. What is it that light did in John 3:19?

6. What the response of people to His coming:

a. ...from John 3:19--

b. ...from John 3:20--

c. ...from John 3:21--

7. What has been your response to His coming toward you?

DAY 3: Jesus' example: Woman with the issue of blood

1. People often assume that Jesus came to make our life easier, or more prosperous, more comfortable, or at least not so hard! If that's the case, you're going to be very confused about life!

2. Two people are in need in the following story. First, a young daughter of Jairus, and second, a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years.

Luke 8:40 Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him.

*⁴¹ Then a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet, **pleading** with him to come to his house ⁴² because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, **was dying**. As Jesus was on his way, **the crowds** almost crushed him.*

3. What "pictures" comes to mind of this situation? How big is the crowd? What do you hear in Jairus' voice? Is urgency needed?

*⁴³ And **a woman** was there who had been subject to **bleeding for twelve years**, but no one could heal her. ⁴⁴ She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.*

4. If you had been Jesus and knew that power had gone out of you to heal the woman, what would you have done, given the urgency of a daughter dying, along with the crush of crowds?

⁴⁵ "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." ⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me."

5. Why do you think Jesus stopped the urgent rush toward Jairus' daughter, amid the crush of people, in order to talk to this woman? What do you think He was communicating...

a. In words?

b. In attitude? (Hint: think "toward")

⁴⁷ Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. ⁴⁸ Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

6. What is Jesus communicating to her about:

a. Himself?

b. Her value to God? If someone said, "God loves you," what meaning would those words have to her?

DAY 4: Jesus' example: two blind men

Matthew 20:29 As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him.

³⁰ *Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"*

³¹ *The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"*

³² *Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.*

³³ *"Lord," they answered, "we want our sight."*

³⁴ *Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.*

1. This is the final "episode" before Jesus enters Jerusalem for the last time. His arrest and crucifixion are only a week away! What would be on your mind?

2. What is the setting of this story?

3. How is this story similar to the story from yesterday?

4. Two blind men call out to Jesus. How does the crowd respond to these men? What reasons can you think of to justify their response?

5. How does Jesus respond to these two men, even in the midst of the crowd, and a rendezvous with destiny?

6. How is Jesus moving toward these men?

7. What needs to change in you in order to respond as Jesus did? What would you need to see:
 - a. About people?

 - b. About God?

 - c. About yourself?

DAY 5: Call and commission.

1. We do not follow the "god" of deism. Deists believe that God wound up the universe like a watch and then "let it loose." The God of deism just sits back in his "chair" as a passive entity. The God of the bible is "on the move!" He calls us to be the same--on the move, toward people.

2. Jesus provides the example for us.

Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

3. What do you think Jesus meant by "seeking the lost"?

4. What would it mean for you to seek the lost?

5. Every Christian has a "call," a purpose, a mission that involves lost people. It is not just a job for pastors. For each of the verses below, underline the words and phrases that indicate we are called to be "on the move" **toward** people:

John 20:21 "...As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

Matthew 28:19-20 "As you are going, make disciples of all nations."

6. None of the disciples were seminary trained. No one had a Master of Divinity degree. None of these guys had a "formal education." They were ordinary men who were moving toward the people in their lives.

7. "Toward" means initiative! You are not waiting around for "things to happen." You are not waiting for people to take the initiative with you. You are called to emulate our Savior, who sought out people to love them, listen to them, meet what needs He could and share His message of the kingdom of God.

8. That call does not depend on your feelings or how "successful" you've been as a Christian. Lost people need you relating to them as Jesus related to lost people.

9. Finish this week praying, asking God to open your eyes to the opportunities He gives you.