

In

Redemptive Relating #4

February 15, 2015

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

1. We are in part 4 of "Redemptive Relating:" With, for, toward, in, up. Let's do a quick review:

a. God is with us! This is the point of His redemptive story! He wants us 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, His fundamental attitude towards us. The O.T. word for this is *blessing*. The N.T. for this is *grace*. We make a difference to others by reflecting the wonder of Christ by being for them.

c. God is always moving toward us. So much of O.T. history is the story of God calling people to himself, people running away to "do their own thing," and God moving toward people, anyway.

Day 1: Christ is after our heart.

Proverbs 4:23 Keep (Guard) your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

1. The "heart" is more than just the physical heart that keeps our blood moving. The "heart" is also the central "you" - your thoughts, feelings, purposes, values, dreams, aspirations, hopes, and more--all those things that makes you a "person." Your heart is like the cockpit of an airplane.

2. What does Solomon tell us to do regarding our heart?

3. What image comes to your mind of someone "guarding" something important?

4. To be *vigilant* is to do something with total attention, effort and perseverance. Don't let up for a second! Why does Solomon tell us to be vigilant about guarding our heart? What could happen to our heart if we weren't vigilantly protecting it?

Mark 7:6-7 ... "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."

4. Jesus is talking about *religious leaders*! They are knowledgeable about the Jewish ceremonial law, follow it to the letter of the law, and are "pros" at being religious. What does Jesus think about them?

5. Has their religiosity helped them? Has it hindered them?

6. What is the point they have missed?

Day 2: Christ indwells His people.

*Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but **Christ lives in me**. The life I live in the body I live by faith in the son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

2. The moment we become Christians, Christ comes to live IN our hearts! Why do you think He wants to do that?

3. What is the difference between Jesus living **in** us and Jesus just being **with** us?

4. Paul uses the words "live" and "life" in different ways in this verse. After each phrase below, jot down what you think he means by "live" or "life."

a. "I no longer **live**" -

b. "Christ **lives** in me." -

c. "The **life** ..." (I live) -

5. What is it that Paul says we gain by having Christ live in us?

6. The **life** (the internal "life") of Christ is the love that came from the Father, that empowered Jesus to live fully devoted to God, and pour out His life and love to those around Him, regardless of the cost. That "**life**" was like a **spring** out of which "water" bubbled up giving him joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, etc. It contrasts with our own "well" (heart) which is centered around itself and is like a **sponge** instead of a well.

Romans 5:3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope.

*⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love **into** our **hearts** by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

7. It is in the midst of suffering that we have opportunity for deeper things:

a. Character shaping.

b. Deeper awareness of God's love *in our hearts*.

8. What strikes you from Romans 5:3-5?

Day 3: The example of Jesus--moving our hearts

Luke 7:36 Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.

³⁷ *When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, ³⁸ and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.*

1. What do we know about this woman? _____
2. Underline six things she did in Luke 7:38
3. Try to take a peek into this woman's heart. What things are going on in her heart? Why is she so moved? Why is her heart so stirred?

³⁹ *When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is... she is a sinner."*

4. What do we learn about Simon the Pharisee? Take a peek into his heart. What do you see?

⁴⁰ *Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said.*

⁴¹ *"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" ⁴³ Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said.*

⁴⁴ *Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.*

⁴⁵ *You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet.*

⁴⁶ *You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet.*

5. Jesus contrasts what the woman did with what Simon, the host, had done. What strikes you about the contrast of actions? What strikes you about the contrast of their hearts?

7. Although Jesus is talking to Simon, the woman can hear what Jesus is saying about her. What things do you think are happening in her heart as Jesus says these words? (Luke 7:44)

⁴⁷ *Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹ The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰ Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."*

8. Jesus moves in our hearts. He loves us and shapes our hearts to love Him and live for Him.

Day 4: Reflecting God's love and grace to one another

Philippians 1:3 I thank my God every time I remember you.

⁴ *In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy*

⁵ *because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,*

⁶ *being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

⁷ *It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.*

⁸ *God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.*

1. A common complaint every genuine Christian laments is this, "I know this in my head, but it doesn't seem 'real' in my heart." How does the truth about God and life, about my sin and growing more like Christ become "heart knowledge?" How would you answer that question?

2. When well meaning younger believers move "away from the church" in search of a deeper spirituality, they move away from the central means and method God uses to take our "head" knowledge and make it "heart" knowledge! How has God used the church in your life to move you from head knowledge to heart knowledge?

3. Paul had taken his mission team to the city of Philippi to start a church. That church was rooted. He shared the gospel and taught them the teachings of Jesus. But church life is more than the teaching. On-going relationships are crucial to our growth.

a. We get "**pictures**" (or "video") of who Jesus is as Jesus lives out His life **through others**.

b. We also "**sense**" something of the heart of God for us through how **they relate to us**.

4. How have you seen this principle in your life? Is there someone(s) who comes to mind, someone's example that has spurred you on? Is there someone with whom their relationship with you has opened your eyes to the wonder of how God thinks about you?

5. Imagine you are one of the Christians at the Philippian church Paul started. Someone begins to read this letter to all of you. What stirs in you as you read the first eight verses?

6. Go back and underline every word or phrase that has to do with how Paul thinks/feels/values them.

7. What strikes you most from these verses?

8. What pictures of Jesus and His heart are expressed by Paul's example, his heart, love and words toward these believers?

Day 5: We move in to people's internal stories

Philemon 1:4 I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. ⁶ I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. ⁷ Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

1. Philemon was one of Paul's close Christian brothers. This letter is written to the church that meets in Philemon's home. Underline the activities and qualities Paul commends in these folks.

2. What **effects** on Paul has this church's activities and heart had on Paul and on other Christians who have heard of their example? (Look for three in verse 7).

3. Paul uses the phrase, "refreshed the hearts" of God's people. We use the term "refreshment:"

- a. Refreshments, as in lemonade on a hot day.
- b. Refresh, like a web page that may need to be updated with new information.
- c. "Freshen up," like taking a bath or shower after a long day.
- d. A "refresher" course in school.
- e. Refreshed, like what you hope will happen after a vacation.

4. Paul says that brothers and sisters in Christ had their **hearts refreshed** by Philemon and the folks his church. What was Paul saying? What pictures come to mind? What are the effects of "spiritual" refreshment by another's example or commitment?

5. Philemon had once had a slave named, Onesimus. We don't know how he became a slave, but most likely it was because of a large debt he could not pay. Onesimus ran away from Philemon, shirking his responsibility to repay his debt through service. He compounded one error by adding another error--stealing from Philemon before he fled. Under Roman law, both crimes could have been harshly dealt with.

6. Onesimus fled to Rome (to be lost in the big city?), meets Paul, becomes a Christian, and gladly serves Paul in the ministry.

7. Paul offers to send Onesimus back to Philemon as Roman law would dictate. Onesimus, now a believer in Christ is willing to go back and face the music, and repay his debt.

8. Paul appeals to Philemon to cancel his debt, forgive his theft, and allow Onesimus to serve in the ministry in Rome.

Philemon 1:17 So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me.

*¹⁸ If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. ¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back--not to mention that you owe me your very self. ²⁰ I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; **refresh my heart in Christ.***

9. How would Philemon's forgiveness of Onesimus, his debt, and freedom "refresh" Paul's heart?