

# Up

## Redemptive Relating #5

February 22, 2015

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

We are in part 5 of "Redemptive Relating:" With, for, toward, in, **up**. Let's do a quick review:

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

God's fundamental attitude is **for** 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.

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.

God is moving **in** to our lives and **in** to our hearts. We relate powerfully to others when we enter their inner story with curiosity and care.

God relates to us to elevate our hearts **UP** to Him as first priority and first love. We powerfully relate to others when we help awaken someone's hidden desire for God above anything else.

### **DAY 1: Drawing us up from deep places**

*Proverbs 20:5 The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.*

1. There are some things that people know about us. There are other things virtually no one knows about. We think of "secrets" we carry with us. We fear that if anyone found out about \_\_\_\_\_, we'd be humiliated.

2. Solomon tells us that there are not just secrets we hold inside. What else does he say resides deep in the heart?

3. According to Proverbs 20:5 what allows a person to disclose what is deep inside his heart?

4. What qualities make up a "man of understanding"?

5. Why do you think it is important to draw out the deepest parts of our hearts?

6. Has someone done this with you? What was the effect on you?

## **DAY 2: First steps: HEARING someone's inner story.**

*James 1:19 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.*

1. God made us in His image, as relationally beings. We long to know others and be known by them. That longing to be known runs to the deepest parts of our hearts. It is patently not enough that someone knows our name or what we do for a living.
2. We are more known when someone knows not just our "outer world" (occupation, age, family, hobbies, etc.) but when they also know our "inner world," something of our internal battles and challenges, victories and defeats, hopes and shattered dreams.
3. We are a paradoxical people. Though we want to be known by others, we reluctantly share our inner stories!

4. How would the teaching of James 1:19 help someone to open up about their inner world?

5. Why do you think James adds the word "quick" in regards to "listening?"

6. What is his second piece of advice?

7. Why do you think he adds the word "slow" about our "speaking?"

8. When was a time you wanted to share something about your inner world, but your friend was either not listening well or just talking too much?

9. What was the effect of that kind of relating on you?

*Proverbs 18:13 If anyone gives answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.*

10. Here is another example of speaking too soon. Re-write the first part of this verse in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_

11. What is the effect of answering someone before they've really been heard?

### DAY 3: Pondering, and stirring up

1. As people share their inner stories with you, their trials, difficulties, challenges, etc., how are we to respond in a way that moves their hearts UP, Godward?

*Hebrews 10:24 and let us **consider** how to **stir up** one another to love and good works,<sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

2. "**Consider**" - This Greek verb means to **diligently** and **attentively ponder**. Which of the following responses would **not** fall under "consider."

a. Quick advice.

b. Jump in and tell your own story.

c. Remind them of a truth they probably already know.

d. Blurt out a Christian cliché you heard on the radio.

3. How do we ponder? As your friend tells his inner story quietly ask yourself these questions:

a. What is going on deeper in my friend?

b. What do they wish would be different about their response to their challenge?

c. Does my friend have someone who can share and shoulder this challenge with them?

d. Does my friend need someone right now who is for them?

e. What stirs in me, as my friend share his story?

f. What does God seem to be shaping in my friend?

g. About what are you more curious? What else would you like to know?

4. Which of the items above strike you the most? Which ones could you see yourself **pondering** as your friend shares some of their inner story?

5. What effect can you imagine your pondering would have on your friend? Would they feel invited to share more with you?

6. The second response we'll look at in Hebrews 10:24 is "stir up."

"**Stir up**" - The Greek word literally translated is "unto a paroxysm." It means to arouse, to excite, to awaken. The writer tells us to "consider" how to "stir up one another to love..." How do you do that? To help understand this let's think about the opposite. Instead of stirring up someone to love, we exhort, tell, teach, advise, tell, challenge, rebuke, etc. It's some kind of pressure from outside them to get them to love.

7. The writer is intent on the opposite--to relate to someone in such a way that your friend's movement to love comes from within them, not outside of them. Most likely, your tools will be your ears and asking verbal questions. What thoughts are going through your mind? Has someone related to you in this way? Jot down your recollections of how this was done with you.

#### **DAY 4: What not to do...(Job's "friends")**

1. The book of Job is a book to read when suffering becomes overwhelming and life becomes confusing. You see the struggle of Job's inner story. A battle rages in Job's heart between what God "ought" to be doing and what God is actually going on.

a. Godliness did not prevent death of loved ones.

b. Godliness did not prevent harsh medical issues.

c. Godliness did not insure that God would come "rallying" to pull Job out of his trials and ease his suffering.

2. Enter Job's "counselors." For seven days they listened to Job share his inner world. Then they entered into dialogue with Job. I've listed the essence of each of their individual responses to Job.

a. "God is just."

b. "God protects."

c. "Remember God's promises."

d. "God is faithful."

e. "Remember the mystery of God."

f. "God is good."

g. "God is unsearchable."

h. "Don't be surprised by spiritual darkness."

i. "God is just." (repeated)

j. "Remember the insignificance of man as compared to the magnificence of God."

k. "God is righteous."

l. "God is omniscient."

m. "God is majestic." (repeated)

3. Go back and underline every one of these that is true.

4. What strikes you about that list?

5. Why would Job's "counselors" be so ridiculed for their interactions with Job?

6. What was missing from their interactions? What did Job's friends fail to do?

7. Think of a time when you shared an internal struggle with someone and their response was akin to one of the things Job's friends shared. What was the effect on you, internally?

## DAY 5: How would you respond to Paul's inner story?

1. Let's practice what we've studied. Imagine you're having dinner with the apostle Paul. You know him to be a great Christian leader, church planter and missionary. He opens up to you...

*2 Corinthians 1:8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life.*

*<sup>9</sup> Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.*

*<sup>10</sup> He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,*

*<sup>11</sup> as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.*

2. For each of the following questions write down what you're **pondering**:

a. What is going on **deeper** in Paul?

b. Does Paul wish his response would be different in this challenge?

c. Does Paul have someone who can share and shoulder this challenge **with** them? Does Paul need someone right now who is **for** him?

d. What **stirs** in **me**, as Paul shares his story?

e. What does God seem to be shaping in Paul?

f. About what am I more curious? What else would I like to know?

g. If the roles were reversed what kind of response would I want to hear?

h. Do I see God at work in Paul? What is God building in him? What picture of the character of Jesus do you see in Paul?

3. What strikes you about this exercise? Was it more difficult than you thought? It requires being other-centered, being curious about someone else's story, and not in a rush to unpack my story.

4. If we're going to **stir up** someone to love and good deeds, it requires them doing a lot of the talking, and you doing a lot of listening and asking questions. As they dig down and tell more of their story, they will discover that the desire to love and do good deeds resides in the deeper recesses of their heart, where Christ is. They then will "stir themselves up" - internal motivation.