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THE ART OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

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YOUTH
MINISTRY
TRAINING
EVENT 2020

OVERVIEW

**RELATIONSHIPS SERVE AS THE
CORNERSTONE FOR PRETTY MUCH
EVERY ASPECT OF OUR LIVES;
FROM CHURCH TO COMMUNITY, LOVE AND
FRIENDSHIP, TO FULFILLMENT AND BELONGING,
WE MUST BE EFFECTIVE CHRISTIANS IN EVERY
INTERACTION. IN TURN WE WILL FIND PURPOSE
AND HAPPINESS.**

LESSON OVERVIEW

LESSON 1:

GOD WANTS US TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS; HE DOESN'T WANT US TO LIVE IN STRIFE AND WITH STRESS.

LESSON 2:

BEING A GOOD FRIEND IS A LIFE SKILL THAT WE ALL NEED BUT NOT ALL PEOPLE HAVE. AS YOUNG ADULTS, THIS IS THE TIME WHEN WE MAY MAKE FRIENDS THAT COULD LAST A LIFETIME; WE NEED TO MAKE IT COUNT.

LESSON 3:

THINK OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS; THEY PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. IF WE AREN'T HAVING SUCCESS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM THEN WE ARE BOUND TO FIND BIG PROBLEMS IN EVERY OTHER AREA OF OUR LIVES.

LESSON 1

**LESSON 1:
HAPPINESS IN
HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS**

LESSON 1: HAPPINESS IN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

ICEBREAKER:

- **As people come in, hand each one a Valentine card (the ones that come in packs from the store).**
- **Instruct them to get into groups based on the Valentine they have.**
- **Discuss-What is the most important key to having successful relationships.**

LESSON 1: HAPPINESS IN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS

- **Horizontal relationships (peers) including friends, boyfriends/girlfriends, coworkers.**
- **Vertical relationships include those in authority over us (e.g., bosses, parents, pastors, teachers) and subordinates.**
- **Much of what we will discuss will apply no matter the nature of the relationship.**

WHY ARE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS IMPORTANT?

- **God wants us to have good relationships with others; He doesn't want us to live in strife and with stress.**
- **Think of the Ten Commandments- many of these are about our relationships with God and others.**

HOW TO HAVE BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

- **Forgive people.**
- **No one is perfect, so we must extend grace to people, especially to those who don't know the Lord.**

LESSON 1: HAPPINESS IN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

“Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.”

Colossians 3:13 (NLT)

“Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love.”

Ephesians 4:2 (NLT)

- **Be honest and communicate.**
 - **Many issues and drama in relationships come from misunderstandings that could have been avoided by communicating.**
 - **Make sure to be kind and speak things in a loving way (Ephesians 4:15).**
- **Be the first to apologize.**
 - **The argument is probably the fault of both parties involved.**
 - **In the heat of an argument, we should not say hurtful things and then say we were “only being honest.” We know if we are saying something just to hurt the other person.**
 - **In the heat of the moment, we are usually not “speaking the truth in love” and we know the difference between the two.**

“A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.”

Proverbs 15:1 (NLT)

LESSON 1: HAPPINESS IN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

“And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.” Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.”

Ephesians 4:26-27 (NLT)

“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,” James 1:19 (NIV)

- **Avoid negative people or lessen time with them.**
 - **There are some people with whom we just should not have a relationship.**
 - **Some relationships we have no control over, but the ones that we do, we should control the degree of our relationships.**
- **For relationships we can control:**

“Don’t befriend angry people or associate with hot-tempered people, or you will learn to be like them and endanger your soul.”

Proverbs 22:24-25 (NLT)

- **For relationships we cannot control:**

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.” Romans 12:17-19 (NIV)

LESSON 1: HAPPINESS IN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

CLOSING:

- In Scripture we find the answer to the question asked at the beginning: what is the most important key to having successful relationships?

“One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

Jesus replied, “The most important commandment is this: ‘Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.”

Mark 12:28-31 (NLT)

- So the greatest key to having good relationships is to make our relationship with God our first priority; then all our other relationships will fall into place.
- If we truly love our neighbor as yourself, then we will easily be able to do all of these other things.
- We should treat others the way that we want to be treated.

“When people’s lives please the Lord, even their enemies are at peace with them.” Proverbs 16:7 (NLT)

“So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NLT)

**LESSON 2:
BEING A GOOD
FRIEND/FINDING
GOOD FRIENDS**

LESSON 2: BEING A GOOD FRIEND/ FINDING GOOD FRIENDS

ICEBREAKER:

- **What are the best traits of a good friend?**
- **What traits would make you not want to be someone's friend?**
- **Why is it important to be a good friend?**

LESSON 2: BEING A GOOD FRIEND/ FINDING GOOD FRIENDS

“ FRIENDS ”

- **Everyone has “friends,” but if we look closely at the traits of a good friend, I do not know how many people really have all of these traits?**
- **We have changed so much as children and young people but we are not starting to establish ourselves and therefore our friends.**
- **Relationships are so important and friendships are no exception.**
- **We must realize the importance of choosing friends wisely.**

“Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.” Proverbs 13:20 (NLT)

“Don’t befriend angry people or associate with hot-tempered people, or you will learn to be like them and endanger your soul.”

Proverbs 22:24-25 (NLT)

LESSON 2: BEING A GOOD FRIEND/ FINDING GOOD FRIENDS

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD FRIENDS

“Love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 22:39 (NLT)

“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35 (NKJV)

- Good friends love each other.
- Good friends forgive.
- Good friends are honest and speak the truth.

“The godly give good advice to their friends; the wicked lead them astray.”
Proverbs 12:26 (NLT)

- Good friends are loyal.

“A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need.”
Proverbs 17:17 (NLT)

“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.” Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NLT)

“With their words, the godless destroy their friends, but knowledge will rescue the righteous.” Proverbs 11:9 (NLT)

- Good friends put their friends above themselves.
- Good friends challenge each other.

“As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.” Proverbs 27:17 (NLT)

LESSON 2: BEING A GOOD FRIEND/ FINDING GOOD FRIENDS

BEING A GOOD FRIEND

- **What are some examples of good friends that we find in literature? What makes these relationships stand out?**

- **Have you ever had the realization that you were being a bad friend?**

Explain.

- **What characteristics separate being a good friend from just being a friend? Provide some real-life examples.**

FINDING GOOD FRIENDS

- **Where or how did you meet your closest friends?**

- **What are some of the best ways to start a friendship/relationship with someone new?**

- **Why do we need good friendships for our spiritual and social well-being?**

LESSON 2: BEING A GOOD FRIEND/ FINDING GOOD FRIENDS

CLOSING:

- Our relationships are important, and we need to be good friends in order to make good friends.
- We can look to the example of Jesus.

“This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command...Now you are my friends.”

John 15:12-15 (NLT)

LESSON 3

**LESSON 3:
BUT FIRST...
OUR GOD
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ICEBREAKER:

- **Do you remember the first time you felt God? What was that experience like?**
- **When have you felt closest to God?**
- **When you think of God being holy, do you think of the times when God was close to you? Why or why not?**
- **How does knowing that God is close to us influence our aspirations of being like Him?**

LESSON 3: BUT FIRST... OUR GOD RELATIONSHIP

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” Ephesians 5:1-2 (ESV)

- **Whether a longtime Christian or someone who has just recently experienced God for the first time, the question of where to begin our relationship with God and His church is a daunting question.**
- **Especially in our culture, the idea of relationship has so many implications that it can be scary to engage. Putting ourselves out there, especially spiritually, can change our lives forever.**
- **Thankfully, God is love and He cares for our well-being, going so far as to give us guidelines for living in His commandments and His Word.**
- **By simply loving others and loving God, we can make serious progress in building our relationship with our Creator. Obedience (holiness) begets closeness.**

LESSON 3: BUT FIRST... OUR GOD RELATIONSHIP

MAINTAINING A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- Proximity to God and His church will help us to pursue a fulfilling lifestyle with God—a lifestyle of holiness.

“Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.” I Peter 1:13–21 (ESV)

LESSON 3: BUT FIRST... OUR GOD RELATIONSHIP

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” I Peter 2:9-10 (ESV)

- In I Peter 1:13-21 we discover that holiness is close to every area of life, and in I Peter 2:9-10 we discover how to live as a holy people in the world.
- How is holiness manifested in your daily life? at home? at work? in your community? in your city? at church gatherings?
- In what areas of your life would you like to better imitate God’s closeness?
- Knowing how close God is, what will you do this week to draw closer to God?

LESSON 3: BUT FIRST... OUR GOD RELATIONSHIP

DISCIPLINES AND INTIMACY

“For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” Hebrews 12:11 (ESV)

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” I Corinthians 9:24-27 (ESV)

- On a practical note, we need to look at disciplines we can practice daily that help us to know God better and to begin to see Him in everything we do.
- What spiritual habits do you take part in daily? weekly?
- Do you feel closer to God after you've prayed, read the Bible, fasted, etc.?
- What kinds of habits have you found beneficial for you personally? How has it changed the way you approach your relationship with God?
- Why is it important to know that everyone's relationship with God looks different?

LESSON 3: BUT FIRST... OUR GOD RELATIONSHIP

CLOSING:

- **Jesus made the first move—He died for our sins; He showed us how much He loves us and how deeply He cares for our eternity.**

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8 (ESV)

- **We need to find ways personally to connect with God often, ideally on a daily basis.**
- **If we are close to God and His church, it will be easier for us to live holy and will help us to have a more fulfilling life with God.**

“Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.” Deuteronomy 7:9 (ESV)