

Relational Revolution:

Clarify Expectations

Ice Breaker: Describe a time when someone or a business completely exceeded your expectations?

Series Introduction: This series examines the importance of healthy relationships and their connection to spiritual health and maturity.

1. Pastor Brian stated that “A mark of a growing Christian is a deepening love for God and love for people.” What do the following passages say about the importance of love and its spiritual implications? (Matthew 22:37-39, 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, Galatians 5:6, 1 Peter 4:8)

Matthew 22:37-40 *Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 *If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.*

Galatians 5:6 *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*

1 Peter 4:8 *Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.*

2. How can relational immaturity become a roadblock to spiritual maturity? What are some reasons that keep us from loving others in an emotionally mature way?

Week 1 - Clarifying Expectations

Ephesians 4:15-17, 25-27 *Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. 17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking....*

25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold.

3. How does truth and love combine to bring maturity to the body of Christ? Do you think this principle can also apply to personal relationships? Why or why not? (1 Peter 1:22)

1 Peter 1:22 *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.*

4. Christian author, Bob Biehl, wrote “All miscommunications are the result of differing assumptions.” How can miscommunication lead to misunderstanding, lack of growth, disunity and give the devil a foothold in our relationships?

One form of having differing assumptions that can sabotage relationships is due to unhealthy expectations. This includes Unconscious Expectations, Unreasonable Expectations, Unspoken Expectations and Un-agreed Upon Expectations. – Emotionally Healthy Relationships, Pete and Geri Scazzero.

5. How can each of these types of expectation, if unresolved, lead to unhealthy relationships?

6. What would be some examples of unhealthy expectations that you have had of others or someone has had of you? How did that affect your relationship with them?

Avoiding Unhealthy Expectations

7. Stop Mind Reading (Proverbs 18:2) – How can thinking we know the thoughts and motives of another person, lead to miscommunication and misunderstandings?

Proverbs 18:2 *Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions.*

8. Stop Making Judgments (Matthew 7:1-5) – It is common for us to assume the worse in others when we question someone's behavior, but excuse the same behavior in ourselves (Fundamental Attribution Error). How can judging others lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding? What should we do before we consider the behavior of others?

Matthew 7:1-5 *"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. 3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*

9. Start Having Conversations (Proverbs 18:15, 1 Corinthians 2:11a) How can having conversations help to avoid unhealthy expectations? What kind of conversations lead to better communications and understanding?

Proverbs 18:15 *The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out.*

1 Corinthians 2:11 *For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them?*

10. Start Clarifying Expectations - How can clarifying expectations whenever a misunderstanding occurs help to keep or restore relationships?

Steps to Clarifying Expectations

- a. First examine your own expectations that may be unconscious and determine what expectation you are bringing into the relationship.
- b. Second, discern whether these expectations are realistic.
- c. Third, assess if the expectations have been clearly spoken and take the responsibility speak the expectation out loud.
- d. Fourth, in order for an expectation to be a healthy expectation, both people have to agree to it.

11. How do you think these steps would be valuable in building healthy relationships both personally and within the church?

12. Which of these steps has been a challenge for you and why?

Sermon Challenge: Who are the important relationships in your life where you are experiencing disappointment? Take an honest look at your own expectations and set aside some time this week to talk with that person about your expectations.

13. Did you, or are you going to, meet with someone about your expectations? If so, is there anything you would like to share with the group or that the group can pray for you in this relationship?