

Deeper Study Guide

Series: Relationships Matter to God

Study: *Where is the Love?*

Teacher: Pastor Keith

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Scripture: 1 John 4.8

Objective: to understand the *value* God places on relationships, and our *commitment* to reflect Christ in how we treat one another in our relationships.

Our points:

1. Our Church Culture

- a) _____: In Christ, we live in **covenant** with one another and cultivate **Christ-centered** relationships by reflecting His love, truth, and grace in how we treat one another. (1 Corinthians 10.18) We *mutually* commit to **promote** (uphold), **protect** (cover), and **prosper** (bless) our church family.
- b) _____: We are in a **life-changing** relationship with Jesus Christ, internalizing His teachings so that they govern how we think, feel, desire, behave, and respond to our life circumstances.
- c) _____: We are called to the ministry of **reconciliation** – sharing the message of how God reconciles **sinners** (offenders) **to Himself** through **Christ** and extending the same **love, truth, and grace** to one another when our relationships are broken.

Progression: Our church culture is relational, **doctrinal**, and ministerial.

2. God is **relational** and **love**

- a) God is **relational!** He *created* us for a relationship so we can:
 - **Know** Him *personally* – you know His mind and character
 - **Experience** His presence *daily* - *constantly* aware
 - **Partner** with Him *faithfully* – *participate* in what He is doing
- b) God is **love** and its **covenantal**:
 - Selfless – ‘I come to do His will, not mine’
 - Faithful – ‘I’ll never leave you nor forsake you.’
 - Gracious – ‘forgive seventy times seven.’
 - Reconciliatory – ‘I come to seek and save the lost.’

Study: Where is the Love? 1 John 4.8 (NKJV)

1. **What is Scripture saying?** Know God and God is love

- a) ‘does not **‘know’** God - means to be in a personal relationship with Him that influences and transforms how you think, feel, desire, and behave, and extends to how you relate to others.
- b) God is **“love”** – love is God’s nature, not merely something He does. As we come to know Him and be influenced by His love, He teaches us to love others as He loves us.

- c) God's love should influence how I treat others.

Progression: *knowing* God through a *personal relationship* that *transforms* you *internally*, to reflect Him *relationally* to others.

2. **What does it reveal about you?** The way I love others reveals something about how well I know God. Am I selflessly devoted, faithful, extend grace, and seek reconciliation when offense has occurred?

3. **What thoughts need to change?** Because God is love and has loved me, I am called to extend His love to others.

4. **How do I apply it?** God connected me in relationship with others so that we can experience and demonstrate His selfless love, faithfulness, grace, and reconciliation with one another.

Application of Reconciliation:

- a) _____ forgiveness – an [individual] decision to release an offense and choose not to bring it back up or hold it against the person again.
WORD: 2 Corinthians 5.19 (NKJV)

- b) _____ the relationship – a [mutual] decision that takes *both people* to decide to reconcile with one another.

'Mutual forgiveness means you are willing to reconcile the relationship. It does not mean pretending nothing happened, nothing needs to change, and automatically the relationship is restored to its previous level of trust or closeness.'

- c) _____ the relationship – Forgiveness opens the door to restore the relationship but sometimes there needs to be repentance, restitution (taking responsibility, repairing, correcting), and rebuilding trust through changed behavior and accountability.

Building a new relationship identity: WORD: 2 Corinthians 5.17

1. _____ the past behind – your past no longer defines the relationship
2. _____ from what happened – identify what needs to change – establish boundaries that may affect certain conversations, activities, or expectations for the relationship.
3. _____ our new identity – relate to one another through your new identity guided by being 'in Christ'

Principles for building: establish a new relational identity by **leaving** the past behind, **learning** from what happened, and changing the ways you relate to one another, so you can move forward and **live** out a healthier Christ-centered relationship.