

## Monday:

All of us are taught our first lessons on relationships from our family of origin. "Family of origin" refers to the significant caretakers and siblings we grow up with. Our biological family, adoptive family or connection to those who care for us are the first social groups we belong to. This is where we establish our relational behavioral patterns. One of the most important things to understand about your family of origin is that we all receive some good and some not-so-good patterns from our family. However, in Christ, we can break bad patterns we learned from our family of origin and grow into and deepen the healthy patterns. WE ARE NOT TRAPPED IN THESE PATTERNS. This requires awareness, intentionality and integration. It is hard work in which we will need to depend on the Holy Spirit.

Let's begin with the following prayer: ***Father send your Holy Spirit to make me aware of the good and the bad I have learned from my upbringing. Give me courage to make choices to deepen the healthy patterns and change the unhealthy patterns, so that I may pass on to those who follow a greater legacy for you and for your glory. Amen.***

During this series, we want to bring awareness to the relational patterns that have developed in our lives. Awareness of these patterns gives us an opportunity to evaluate how we do relationships. It also helps us make intentional choices to improve how we relate to others, with the purpose of passing on healthier relational patterns to those who follow us.

As we study Scripture, we see that the men and women of the Bible provide many examples of families that did not pass on healthy relationship patterns. From our vantage point, we have the opportunity to see their past, present, and future laid out in the pages of Scripture. For this reason, we can learn from their example as we seek God for healing and direction in our own relationships today.

To begin this week, take time to **READ: Genesis 27**. Write out some thoughts about the family dynamics you notice as you read. For example, as a married couple, what do you notice about Isaac and Rebekah? Sadly, they do not share the same plan for their twin sons. How does their lack of communication and respect for one another create difficulties not only in their relationship with one another, but in the relationship between them and their sons, as well as the relationship between brothers Esau and Jacob?

This past weekend, Paul talked about Legacy. He defined Legacy this way: "What we are given by those who came before us and what we will pass on to those who come after us." What are some of the relational lessons Rebekah passed on to Jacob in Genesis 27? For example, her behavior taught Jacob that in the family relationship it is okay to favor one child over another. If we turn ahead in Genesis we can see Jacob following this same pattern. **Read Genesis 37:1-4.** \*Note: Jacob is also called Israel here. We learn in these verses that Jacob loved his son Joseph more than all the others. Jacob's favoritism caused his other sons to feel jealousy and hatred toward Joseph.

As you end your time today, think about your own family of origin. Ask God to help you become aware of some of the relational patterns you have learned. What are some good patterns? For example, maybe you have learned to be a good listener. This week we want to bring awareness to some of the good patterns as well as some of the more challenging ones. What might be a challenging, not-so-good relational pattern you need to ponder this week? For example, maybe your family refuses to acknowledge conflict and for this reason, you are unable to engage in healthy conflict and resolution. Ask God to bring awareness and clarity to what He desires you to see, learn and begin to change through this series.

## Tuesday:

This past weekend we learned that legacy is what we are given in relationship by those who came before us as well as what we will pass on to those in relationship who come after us. We also learned the three keys to leaving a healthy legacy in our relationships: Awareness,

intentionality and integration.

**Today, let's focus on Awareness as the first key to leaving a healthy legacy in our relationships.**

Awareness helps us discover the good and bad that was given to us from our family of origin. It gives us the road map to continue on the good relational paths while at the same time unearthing and shedding light onto the poor relational patterns that have developed in us over time. Awareness is the first key to unlocking a healthy relational legacy. In the Scriptures, God gives us what are called the "one another" verses. These "one another" verses help us understand how to have healthy, God-centered relationships. Not only that, but these verses help us have awareness of what we do well in relationships and what is more difficult for us. There are many "one another" verses. For the next five weeks of the Entrusted series, we will look at these verses in order to bring awareness to what we want to celebrate in our relationships as well as what we want to change. **READ: John 13:34-35**

We find the definition of love in **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**

As we seek to bring awareness to our behavior in relationships, the first step is to consider is how we love one another. Think of your primary relationships and ask yourself these questions:

***Am I patient? Am I kind? Do I envy? Do I boast? Am I arrogant? Am I rude? Do I insist in my own way? Am I irritable? Am I resentful? Do I rejoice in wrongdoing or do I rejoice in truth?***

Spend time in prayer. Maybe you realize you have developed some of these unhealthy habits. Whether these have developed due to your family of origin or from your own choosing, ask God to help you take a step toward health. For example, if you are impatient, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you how to love with patience. If you realize today that you have a pattern of insisting on your own way, ask God to forgive you and to create in you a humble heart that seeks His way rather than your own.

## Wednesday:

*Today, let's focus on Intentionality as the second key to leaving a healthy legacy in our relationships.*

As we begin to have awareness to how we live in relationships, one of the keys to health is to be intentional. Maybe we know what steps we need to take; the awareness is there, but the purposeful intention and motivation to change is not. Simply knowing what we need to do in our relationships is not enough. It takes intentionality to seek God in this area, first asking Him to help us take the steps we need to take and then actually taking those steps in real time. For example, maybe God is asking you to forgive someone who has hurt you.

**READ: Colossians 3:13**

Forgiveness only comes with intentionality. It comes as we seek God, consciously bringing our hurt back to Him and asking Him to show us how to love and forgive the person or persons who have hurt us. Think about your family of origin. What "unwritten rules" did you learn about forgiveness? Did you learn that forgiveness must be earned? Did you learn that forgiveness is an empty "I am sorry" that is spoken without meaning behind it? *First, we must be intentional to learn God's wisdom and what His picture of health in a relationship looks like. Then, we must be intentional to take steps toward this health by allowing God to make it a reality in our life.*

In the example of forgiveness, God's wisdom teaches us that forgiveness sets us free. Forgiveness is more about us than it is about the person or persons we are forgiving. When we live holding onto grudges, harboring resentment and bitterness against those who have hurt us, we are the ones who suffer. Maybe you have lived with an unhealthy relational belief about forgiveness. Maybe you can see your pattern in one of the examples above, or perhaps it's something different. The truth is that unforgiveness is a burden. When we allow God access to our hurts, when we intentionally pray and welcome loving Christian counsel as we walk through what was done to us, God can and will lift our burden of unforgiveness. He will set us free. Not only that, but He will work to sustain a legacy of forgiveness in our

future relationships.

Here are a few examples of other **unhealthy** relational beliefs we learn and then live out:

The other person/persons in my relationships will make me happy.

I can change the other person/persons in my relationships.

I have changed myself all I can in my relationships.

I am right to respond from my emotions in my relationships.

As we spend the next five weeks learning healthy relational patterns and beliefs through the “one another” verses in Scripture, take notes about what is most applicable to you in your relationships. Pray and journal about what God is showing you. Ask Him to work in you and through you so that the relationships He has entrusted to you become the healthiest they can be. Ask for direction on how to be intentional. Ask Him for clarity about where you are and what your next step is on your journey of relationships.

#### **Thursday:**

**Today, let's focus on *Integration* as the third key to leaving a healthy legacy in our relationships.**

As we become intentional about living out the “one anothers” in Scripture, the Holy Spirit will work in us bring about the changes we need. An inward transformation will occur as we continue to integrate Christ's teachings into who we are.

Let's look at a “one another” verse. **READ: John 15:12.**

As we take steps to know and become like Jesus, Jesus makes it clear through Scripture that He expects His followers to love one another as He has loved us. The more we follow Christ, the more our natural inclination to love develops. Love becomes who we are, not because of our will but because of our pursuit of Christ and the work of His Spirit in us. Integration is the third key to leaving a healthy legacy in our relationships, because healthy relational choices and patterns occur the more we seek awareness and are intentional in our relationship with Christ. Integration is us applying what we learn, living out the reality of who we are becoming in Christ. This happens over time as we continue to take steps on our journeys.

Think about your relationship with Christ. How has your relationship with Him changed who you are in your other relationships? Maybe before your relationship with Christ you were an angry person or someone who was consistently dishonest. It could be that before you knew Christ you were constantly judgmental. Whatever poor relational choices you made before Christ, as you pursue Him in relationship your relationship with Him should bring change over time. This doesn't mean we are perfect. It means that we have awareness when we are choosing to act in ways that are inconsistent with who Christ teaches us to be. This causes intentional times of learning and growing, which leads to integrating what we learn into our choices and behaviors. Christ does not want anger, dishonesty, or judgment to rule in our relationships. He wants His love to rule in our relationships. When we give Him control, His Spirit changes us from the inside out.

Spend time in prayer. Ask God to continue to reveal His specific will for you and where you are in your relationships. Ask Him what He wants to change. Ask Him for the desire to follow Him and allow Him full access into your life. Purpose in your heart and mind to integrate the way of Christ in your relationships.

#### **Friday:**

*Take a few deep breaths and settle into silence.*

Choose a very simple prayer to express your openness and desire for God to work in you. (Example: *Abba, Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit, I belong to You.*)

Close your eyes and offer your prayer to Jesus, allowing His will and love full access into your entire being.

If/when you become distracted, offer again your simple prayer to God.

One at a time, choose one of the “one another” verses below. For each verse, ask God to help unlock His truth in you, using the three keys of awareness, intentionality and integration. Ask Him to help you leave a healthy legacy in all your relationships.

**READ: Romans 12:10**

**READ: Romans 14:13**

**READ: Romans 15:5**

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DEVO | May 20/21, 2017