

LESSON 8 // INVEST IN RELATIONSHIPS

Big Idea: Wise people know the value of good relationships. Jesus' exhortation to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31) encourages us to focus on developing and keeping strong, healthy and loving relationships.

Every relationship comes with challenges. Common problems like pride, unresolved hurt or anger, and unrealized expectations bring stress and strain. But you can navigate these in a healthy way and make your relationships better as you take responsibility, seek healing and peace, reaffirm commitments, pray through barriers, release offenses, increase your self-control and work on your relationship skills.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (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. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.*

Start Talking:

How have different relationships impacted your life in different ways? Share a few examples.

Start Thinking:

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and 1 John 4:20. What are some of the reasons you need healthy relationships?

How do distance, disrespect and division bring strife and strain in relationships? How can you proactively head these off in your relationships?

Read Philippians 4:6-7. In what ways can praying through relationship barriers impact you and the people you love?

Read Ephesians 4:29-32. How do these verses speak to you about the importance of releasing offenses and seeking healing and peace in your relationships?

Start Praying:

Pray for insight and wisdom about how you can make your relationships better in a way that honors God and the people you care about.

Start Doing:

This week identify one relationship skill you can grow in and practical ways you can take a step in that direction. Maybe it's listening more attentively or affirming others more often. Perhaps you can control your anger better and be less harsh in your responses. Commit this to the Lord, begin to apply it in your relationships and watch how God will work!