

# FAITH BASED RELATIONSHIPS

## FAITH TO SEE THE CHRIST IN EACH OTHER

**1 Corinthians 11:1** *"Imitate me as I imitate Christ."* This doesn't say imitate me BECAUSE I imitate Christ, but AS I imitate Christ. This means we need to SEE THE CHRIST in each other so that we CAN imitate it. It takes great faith to see what's great in each other.

Paul set for us an example of seeing the Christ in the Corinthians.

### **1 Corinthians 1:4-9**

*"I always thank my God for you and for the gracious gifts he has given you, now that you belong to Christ Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Through him, God has enriched your church in every way—with all of your eloquent words and all of your knowledge. <sup>6</sup> This confirms that what I told you about Christ is true. <sup>7</sup> Now you have every spiritual gift you need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup> He will keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns. <sup>9</sup> God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."*

He said these things despite the fact that he addressed challenging issues later in the letter.

### **1 Thessalonians 1:3**

*We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly. <sup>3</sup> As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**WHAT PREVENTS YOU FROM SEEING THE CHRIST IN OTHERS?**

**WHAT IS ONE CHRIST-LIKE QUALITY YOU WOULD LIKE TO IMITATE IN SOMEONE ELSE IN THIS GROUP?**

## FAITH TO LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

### **James 1:19-21**

*My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, <sup>20</sup>for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.*

*<sup>21</sup>Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*

Be quick to listen.

### **2 Corinthians 7:2-4**

*<sup>2</sup>Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. <sup>3</sup>I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. <sup>4</sup>I have great confidence in you; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.*

It takes effort to connect with others. In fact, Paul appeals to the Corinthians, asking them to "make room" for him and his companions in their hearts. He then follows up with encouragement. In the same way, we have to exercise FAITH to connect with others through listening to them.

Here are a few concepts to think about to learn to engage in **ACTIVE LISTENING**:

ATTITUDE	receptive and accepting (I really want to hear)
FOCUS	care about what others think and say (what does he/she think?)
RESPONSE	clarify what you heard them say (sounds like you feel/think)

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MESSAGE express the feeling/need in the message they shared (I hear what you are saying)  
RESULTS speaker is willing and eager to share more (listener cares)  
Active listening helps us to truly connect with others.

WHAT HELPS YOU TO FEEL LISTENED TO OR UNDERSTOOD?

WHAT PRACTICAL DO YOU NEED TO WORK ON TO BE A BETTER ACTIVE LISTENER?

## FAITH TO SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE

True relationships involves all aspects of life—both positive AND negative. So truth in faith-based relationships will include both positive and negative communication.

- Positive communication includes encouragement and sharing the good that we see in each other.
- Negative communication includes pointing out things that may be uncomfortable to say. The key is that we speak in faith and in love for each other.
- Faith: we believe and therefore speak (we don't hold back what God moves us to share)
- Love: we are in a continuing relationship with each other, in which forgiveness from God makes us all the same.

*Ephesians 4:15*

*Instead, speaking the **truth** in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.*

*Ephesians 4:25*

*Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak **truthfully** to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.*

*1 Corinthians 13:4-7*

*1 Peter 4:8*

WHY SHOULD WE SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE?

HOW SHOULD WE SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE?

WHEN SHOULD WE SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE?

(WHY DO WE THINK WE ARE ASKING THESE QUESTIONS?)

Explanation:

1<sup>st</sup> level: we are modeling how we think it is best to conduct this discussion in this group.

2<sup>nd</sup> level: as a leader, you must see the bigger picture—not just mimic what we do, but think about WHY we have the discussion questions, and HOW we can help the group to be a place where they can grow in their faith (also called CONVICTION).