

# **“The Gift of Relationships”**

*The Grind- week #2*

## **WRAP-UP**

God made us for relationships, both with Him and with each other. But it takes time and work for those relationships to develop. Jesus didn't deny people because he was too busy. Instead He laid down His life for his friends – and for us. Not only did He die for us, He made time in His schedule for those who needed him. It is all too easy to become buried in a busy schedule and neglect people. But rather than settling for superficial connections, you can invest your time and energy into the lives of others and receive the gift of relationship that God wants you to have. If you are not already part of a group, find one that you can be a part of and enjoy the gift of relationships.

## **Memory Verse**

*We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too. - 1 Thessalonians 2:8 NLT*

## **PRAYER (20 MIN)**

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more space)

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## **Challenge-**

*Make a list of the people you have a good relationship with. Now pick one person to invest time in this week. Invite them to take a walk, have a cup of coffee together or see a show. Carving out space for this person will give your relationship an opportunity to grow even deeper. Next week, choose another person on the list, and do the same.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Throughout scripture, starting at Genesis and the story of God creating us to have a relationship with Him – all the way through the epistles and Paul's encouragement of the churches to love one another, we find that we were made for relationship. But we often don't take advantage of the gift of relationships offered to us. We allow busyness, or fear or other excuses to rob us of the richness of true relationships with others. Let's take the time to see how we can deepen our relationships.

## **Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)**

Besides your family, who would you say you have the deepest relationship with? How long have you known them?

## **STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)**

### **1. Made for Relationships**

*Genesis 2:18 NLT - 18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him."*

*Romans 12:4-5 NLT - 4 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, 5 so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.*

*John 17:20-21 NLT - 20 "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. 21 I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one--as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.*

We were made to be in relationships. How do we know? God said so in Genesis 2:18. And even though He was referring to Eve in that verse, we find in the New Testament that we are also made to be in relationship with other believers. Look at what Paul says about our relationships and what Jesus prayed for our relationships in the passages above.

What do you think Paul meant by “we all belong to each other”? When have you seen the best representation of unity amongst believers? What were the circumstances that drew them together? What makes it difficult to be in unity with other believers? What can be done to resolve that?

## 2. What are Your Excuses?

*Mark 5:22-24 NLT - 22 Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet, 23 pleading fervently with him. "My little daughter is dying," he said. "Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live." 24 Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him.*

*John 15:13 NLT - 13 There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.*

Many things can prevent us from moving beyond a superficial connection to a deep relationship. Busyness, or hurry can become our way of life. But when keeping our schedule preempts our relationships we need to rethink our priorities. Jesus was the best example of allowing people to be a priority. Read Mark 5:21-36. In this passage Jesus allows himself to be interrupted not once, but twice. First by Jairus, then the woman.

Jairus was hurting. His daughter was dying, and he asked Jesus to come. Jesus didn't hesitate to set aside what he was doing and go with Jairus. When have you had someone set aside their needs to respond to you? How did it affect the depth of your relationship with that person? How does this relate to John 15:13?

*Mark 5:30, 33-34 NLT - 30 Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my robe?" ... 33 Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she had done. 34 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over."*

Another obstacle to developing relationships is fear. Jesus was looking for whoever had touched him, but what kept the woman from coming

forward (Mark 5:33)? This was a unique circumstance, but fear can keep us from connecting with people even in everyday situations. What fears must be overcome if we are going to develop a deep relationship with someone?

## 3. Don't Settle

*1 Thessalonians 2:8 NLT - 8 We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too.*

*Hebrews 10:24-25 NLT - 24 Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. 25 And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.*

Good relationships take time and work. In fact, we may have to say no to some things to make space for our relationships to grow. If we love our neighbors as ourselves, then that love will find its expression through deepening relationships. What was Paul willing to do because of the love he had for the Thessalonians?

If you have been in a group for a while you may already have experienced the love that can develop amongst the members. Congratulations on nurturing those relationships. Or maybe you are only starting that journey. Please don't settle for superficial connections. What advice did the Hebrews receive about doing life together in Hebrews 10:24 -25?

One way relationships develop is when you work together for a common goal. Talk with your group about ways you can express love and good works both inside and outside of your group. Find a project that you can do together. Is there an elderly neighbor with leaves to rake? Can you take up a collection of food for the Lord's Pantry at church? Maybe you know someone who is hospitalized or homebound who would appreciate a visit from the group. Find and do a project together and watch your relationships grow.