

“ADJ - Relationships Part 3” (7-24-22)

Review: We need our minds renewed & we are a diverse body which is challenging but should be celebrated. Pillars for healthy relationships: Grace, Humility, Love, Generosity, Faithfulness, Honor, & Blessing

Today - Main Text: Luke 15 - A father and his 2 sons

1) Lust or Love

Luke 15:11-16 (ESV)

(11) And (Jesus) said, “There was a man who had two sons. (12) And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. (13) Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. (14) And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. (15) So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. (16) And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

Note: The son's ongoing issue is his un-met and dis-ordered desires. He operated more out of lust, then love!

Dave Buehring on lust vs. love

“Lust is a desire to use someone selfishly for one’s own gratification and purposes. Love sacrificially gives, while lust only takes what it can get.”

Our Problem - we are obsessed with our desires - they must be fulfilled, it’s evil to deny them, especially if they don’t “hurt” anyone else.

- Well who determines what causes hurt? What if don’t hurt anyone else, but they hurt me?
- What if getting all of our desires met is harmful to us (and others)?

Example: Paul to the Corinthians . . .

1 Corinthians 7:32-35 (ESV)

(32) I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. (33) But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, (34) and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. (35) I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

Note: This is really about love being ordered properly. There is no secret relationship that will solve our need for love except for one. And that only in its proper order - undivided devotion (sacrificial love) to the Lord!

If you are single - you can embrace celibacy/purity and love well in the many other forms of relationship God has given: friendships, family, church community

If married - you can embrace love as a sacrificial act to prefer your spouse above yourself. Marriage is not our ultimate fulfillment - we are ultimately fulfilled in Christ!

Dis-ordered Love: The secret of all relationships & the solution to so much of our struggle with sin is about learning to love - to be sacrificial and to have properly ordered loves!

Application: Love God first & live out of his love for you, then order things from there - if my belly is my primary love then I will sin against others by prioritizing my own desires first!

2) Served or Submitted

Luke 15:25-30 (ESV)

(25) “Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. (26) And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. (27) And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ (28) But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, (29) but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. (30) But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’

Note: The older son may have served, but he was never submitted - his heart is revealed by his angry refusal. Even his serving had clearly been a means to get something in return.

Dave Buehring on submission

“The obsession to demand that things always go our way is one of the greatest bondages in society and the church today. Submission is the ability to lay down this compulsion.”

Ephesians 5:22-25 (ESV)

(22) Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. (23) For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. (24) Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. (25) Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

Note: We spend more time arguing or abusing this passage to empower someone over another instead of hearing the larger message about submission! This passage is about loving well by surrendering my desires for the good of another.

The Bible describes all kinds of relationships we are called to be submissive in: Marriage, parents, government, employers, & church leadership

We often spend so much time & energy justifying our rejection of authority by pointing out abuse (which is real), but so often its just an excuse to avoid submitting to the God ordained authority that we need!

Matthew 20:25-28 (ESV)

(25) But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. (26) It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, (27) and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, (28) even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Note: Jesus lived what he called them to - He submitted, even to the point of the cross - submitting his life into the Lord's hands!

3) Fulfilled or Committed

The Father gives to both his sons . . .

Luke 15:11-12 (ESV)

(11) And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. (12) And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them.

The Father forgives & embraces his younger son . . .

Luke 15:20-24 (ESV)

(20) And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. . . . (22) But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. (23) And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. (24) For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

The Father and the angry elder brother . . .

Luke 15:28, 31-32 (ESV)

(28) But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him . . . (31) And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. (32) It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'

Note: The Father in this story is never "fulfilled" by his sons - he deals throughout with their selfishness, betrayal, & pride at great cost to himself. Yet, he is committed to loving & serving them - calling them into the good of His unconditional love and encouraging them to embrace him & each other in love!

How can we move from living like these 2 sons to embracing the Father's way of love?

Philippians 2:1-4 (ESV)

(1) So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, (2) complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. (3) Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. (4) Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Note: Any comfort or fulfillment that is to be found, is in Christ and so we are called to committed relationships rooted in sacrificial love! How can we possibly do this?

Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV)

(5) Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, (6) who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, (7) but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. (8) And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Note: In Christ is the only way to live like this - The phrase "in Christ" appears over 90 times in the NT

Philippians 4:11-13 (ESV)

(11) Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. (12) I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. (13) I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Note: Relying on Jesus = fulfillment in Him, instead of relying on our circumstances & relationships

John Piper - "God is most glorified in us, when we are most satisfied in Him"

2 Corinthians 2:14-15 (ESV)

(14) But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. (15) For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing

Conclusion: The only way to live out Healthy relationships - exchanging lust for love, being served to being submitted, searching for fulfillment to being committed - is by living in Christ!