



## BLOG ANNOTATIONS

### **"WE ARE ALL AN ALGORITHM! CREATED BY OUR CREATOR"**

Every person walks through life with a default algorithm, a patterned way of thinking, reacting, and relating that's been shaped by experience, culture, trauma, and sin. It's the spiritual operating system beneath the surface, often invisible but always active. We speak from it. We defend from it. We love it, imperfectly. And unless something interrupts that algorithm, it remains unchanged.

That interruption is Jesus.

Without Christ, our algorithm is jaded by the fall. Sin has infiltrated our spiritual DNA, and even our best intentions are filtered through self-protection, pride, and fear. We may try to override it with discipline or self-help, but the default always reasserts itself. As Paul writes in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." It is not a tweak; it is a total rewrite.

But here's the challenge: most people don't know their algorithm is broken. Or maybe they realize it is broken, but they have no idea how to fix it. That is the reason for this book. As followers of Jesus, we're not just called to preach truth; we're called to understand people. To step outside ourselves and discover the spiritual code that drives someone else. Not to judge it, but to gently expose it to the light of Christ.

As leaders, we must continually focus on relationships. We are all leaders to some extent, especially if we start seeing the world this way.

Relationships aren't necessarily about us, although they involve us. They need to focus on: *How do I reach that other person? What is their default? What is their algorithm?*

I took some steroids last week; honestly, it messed up my head, but also let me see the world in a different way. It made me think about people's defaults. It made me think about algorithms. It made me think about what people are like. Everyone has a certain algorithm: a way of life, a way they do things. When Christ comes in, He changes the way we live. He permanently changes the way we live in the eyes of the creator. We are justified in Christ, but in the flesh it is different.

We might live in alignment for a time, but eventually, we fall back into our default algorithm, one jaded by sin. Many recognize that drift and draw near to Christ, and in that nearness, we are being sanctified. But sanctification isn't a steady upward climb. It's a continual battle

between our old DNA (our old algorithm) and the new DNA (the new algorithm) being formed in us. If we are not careful, we fall back to our default rather than who Christ wants us to be. Thankfully, God's word has given us the tools to allow him to change who we are.

Romans 12:10 says, "Love one another with brotherly affection." Now, I know my son doesn't always treat his sisters with brotherly affection—he picks on them. But when it comes down to it, he truly loves them. He just does not understand how to love them the way they need to be loved. The only way to love one another is to see them through the empathy of Christ. The only way we truly love one another is to love them the way they need to be loved.

When I look at people, I ask, *How will this person respond if I say this? Will they respond negatively or positively?* As we build small groups, leaders need to ask, *How will someone respond if I say this?* If they respond negatively and it won't help them grow, we should phrase it differently.

The problem is, we don't always do that. We think about ourselves, our default, our sin. We function based on ourselves rather than on those around us. Instead of considering how someone else will respond. We respond to them our way! So how do we love one another?

We do this to show them honor. When we show honor, we think about them—How do I support them in a way that allows them to grow in Christ, not so we can be right, or get something from them, but so they will discover Christ and his algorithm rather than our own sinful algorithm.

One way we do this is by eating together.

That's why we eat together. When we share meals, our blood sugar normalizes. Obviously, we must eat slowly. We must eat the right foods. Even the order matters; there is even evidence that if we eat starchy vegetables and protein before we eat our bread, it reduces spikes in our blood sugars. Science aside, when we eat, it opens us up to discover one another.

We can talk and truly communicate. Acts 2:46 tells us to break bread and enjoy meals together with glad and generous hearts. As we share, we consider what someone will say, how they'll respond, and how they'll grow in Christ.

We always need to listen before we teach. I was studying my dogs this weekend. Mae responds completely differently from Marla. When I understand how May responds, I can train her effectively. But if I use the same method on Marla, it doesn't work.

People are the same. How will they respond to what I say? I can challenge people, but I must do it with the goal of growth—not to be right or to win an argument. Because when someone wins an argument, someone else loses. And we don't want people to lose—we want them to grow in faith and draw closer to Christ.

We do this by affirming their identity. When we understand that we've been crucified with Christ, that it's no longer we who live but Christ in us, our default changes. The life we now live, we live by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

This change takes time. I can change for a day or a week, but it takes consistent thought: *How can I be like Christ, not my sinful flesh?*

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says, "Two are better than one." When we work together, we grow stronger. But when we are isolated, pride takes over and things fall apart. That doesn't build up; it tears down.

Our goal, First Baptist Church, is to lift people up. We do this by interceding in prayer. If I'm not connected to God in prayer, I'll fall back into my old default. But if I stay connected to God, I can live with thanksgiving. And thanksgiving changes the way I deal with people.

When people know we care, we can speak truth in love, even when it's hard. But we must ask, *How will they respond? Will this shut them down or build them up?* When we build them up, we can name issues, dig deep, and help change defaults. But we can't change defaults until we understand ourselves and others.

When we understand others, we can put away falsehood and speak truth. We become members of one another in Christ. That works in every area, not just leading an office but leading a home. I need to understand my wife, my kids, and the people around me. When I do that, I can be a servant leader focused on their growth.

When we do this, we can activate the mission together. Because the only thing that truly changes people is Christ. Not meditation, Eastern religion, or perfect diets. Those might work for a moment, but not for eternity. Only Christ changes for eternity.

When we go to Christ, He transforms us. Then we can make disciples who make disciples, teaching them to obey all He commanded, not out of obligation, but out of freedom.

Freedom in Christ gives us the ability to love consistently. John 13:34 says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you." How did Jesus love us? He died for us. He understands us. He doesn't provoke us, He grows us. That's how we love one another.

So, love like Christ. Love others by understanding who they are. That's my challenge: think about their default. How do I reach and care for them in a way that honors Christ and helps bring them into right standing with God?

As we grow as a church, as small group leaders, as families, because honestly, family is just a small group, we want to raise children who are outstanding citizens, who think deeply, and who have empathy for others.