

# REALTALKS

## “Managing Relational Expectations”

**For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.**

**2 Corinthians 10:12-13 NKJV**

### **I. Testimony**

#### **A. The Wisdom of Pastor Charles McGowan**

1. 30 years ago, Pastor Charles McGowan was the widely respected Senior Leader of Christ Presbyterian Church here in Nashville.

2. He was invited to speak to a gathering of about 30 Pastors here in the city, followed by a Q & A session.

3. He was asked, “What is the #1 problem you have had to deal with in your role as the Senior Pastor of a large church?” His answer: “Congregational expectations”.

4. He went on to explain the endless difficulties of being a minister is not so much the work itself, but what the members of the congregation expected his work should be:

- What he should preach
- How he should preach
- What he was expected to do in individual situations

a. For example, if someone got sick...

- Some people expected nothing of him
- Some expected a phone call
- But some expected a personal visit!

5. The bottom line of his message was that the most difficult thing for Pastors was figuring out who needed what and doing their best to satisfy their expectations.

## **B. This Touches a Bigger Issue**

1. As I thought about what he said, it occurred to me he had addressed an issue that is not limited to the relationship between a Shepherd and his flock; it's a problem that affects all our relationships!

2. Human beings are "hard-wired" to expect other human beings to think and act according to the standards we set for them in our minds.

3. Sometimes we are conscious of doing this to each other; but most times we are not.

4. We grow up with standards others set for us to meet and without realizing it, we easily setting up standards for others to meet.

## **C. Setting Standards Can be a Good Thing**

1. Parents are charged with training up their children in the way should go. (Proverbs 22:6)

- The "house rules", where acceptable behavior is defined
- 2. Civil authorities establish laws that set standards for expected behavior:
  - Speed limits and traffic regulations
  - 3. There are standards of cultural civility
  - A certain level of respectful behavior is *expected* from others (politeness is universally appreciated; rudeness is always unwelcome)

4. These are all legitimate expressions of relational expectation; but a problem creeps in.

## **II. The Problem of Unreasonable Relational Expectation**

### **A. Comparing Ourselves Among Ourselves**

1. The Apostle Paul ran into this problem in the Church at Corinth.

a. Some of the people were judging him on the basis of how he stacked up against their other leaders, who were always ready to commend themselves

b. They considered Paul, by comparison with them, to be weak and unimpressive

c. In correcting them, Paul said...

**“When we measure...or compare ourselves with others, we are not wise.”**

2. When we expect too much of other people, we will not be wise.

a. People who expect a lot of themselves tend to expect a lot from others and will be frustrated with those who don't measure up

3. Managing our expectations of others is a powerful relational skill that can be learned, improved, and cultivated.

### **III. Elizabeth Shares**

### **IV. Ray and Elizabeth Discuss**

### **V. Group Time**

