

### Discipleship Commands

As you discuss this week's message consider how you might better develop Jesus' teaching to love people.

### NO VACANCY – *Relationship*

#### STARTER QUESTIONS:

What is the one thing during the Christmas season that has the potential to make you miss its real significance? How do you typically deal with this 'thing'?

#### RELATIONSHIP CATEGORIES

When we think of the Christmas season, we think of all the get-togethers, celebrations, and homecomings that are typical. We get to see all the people we love. But occasionally, people can be difficult. It's true! What are we supposed to do with these people? Pretend everything is fine?

Hank described three categories of relationships;

- Minor irritations – people do/say things that rub us the wrong way
- Major interruption – people stay longer than expected, maybe open some old wounds
- Toxic interaction – not only open old wounds, may make some new ones

Let's talk about the first two categories. First of all, how do you recognize the people that cause minor irritations or major interruptions? How do you react to these people? What are some examples of things they do that irritate or interrupt?

One of the ways we might deal with these situations is to **be glad**.

*"Whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything."* James 1:2 – 4 (NLT)

In what ways might we grow as a result dealing with these people?

The holidays can be very hectic (traffic, shopping, parties, etc.), and our society is somewhat impatient. But being **patient** is another way we can deal with difficult people.

*“Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.” Eph 4:2 (TLB)*

*“Don't you realize how patient he (God) is being with you?” Rom 2:4 (TLB)*

Finally, we should **make things right** with them.

*“If anyone says “I love God,” but keeps on hating his brother, he is a liar; for if he doesn't love his brother who is right there in front of him, how can he love God whom he has never seen?”*  
1 John 4:20 (TLB)

## **TOXIC INTERACTION**

Unfortunately, some relationships are toxic. There may be hateful interactions, new wounds are created, and they may even be dangerous. Part of the Christmas story illustrates this;

*“When it was time to leave, they (the Wise Men) returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod. After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, and they stayed there until Herod's death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: “I called my Son out of Egypt.” Herod was furious...”*

Matthew 2:12-16 (NLT)

God warned the wise men to **avoid** King Herod. Maybe you need to **establish boundaries** so as not to get hurt.

**NO VACANCY**  
“Relationship”  
December 17, 2017

*“She (Mary) gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”*

Luke 2:7 (NASB)

**Relationship Categorizing:**

- Minor irritations
- Major interruptions
- Toxic interactions

*“If you correct someone who makes fun of wisdom, you will be insulted. If you correct an evil person, you will get hurt. Do not correct those who make fun of wisdom, or they will hate you.”* Proverbs 9:7-8 (NCV)

*“When it was time to leave, they (the Wise Men) returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod. After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, and they stayed there until Herod’s death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: “I called my Son out of Egypt.” Herod was furious...”* Matthew 2:12-16 (NLT)

**Recognizing Minor irritation/Major interruption people in your life:**

- You lose energy.
- You feel anxious.
- You’re more critical of yourself.
- You have imaginary conversations with them.

**What should you do with difficult people?**

1. Be glad you have them

*“Whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything.”*

James 1:2-4 (NLT)

2. Be patient with them.

*“Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.”* Ephesians 4:2 (TLB)

*“Don't you realize how patient he (God) is being with you?”*

Romans 2:4 (TLB)

3. Make things right with them.

*“If anyone says “I love God,” but keeps on hating his brother, he is a liar; for if he doesn't love his brother who is right there in front of him, how can he love God whom he has never seen?”* 1 John 4:20 (TLB)