



RELY  
Shane Philip  
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The Crossing Church  
Las Vegas, Nevada

## OPENING

This week we are continuing our study called **Crazy, Stupid Love**. It's about all kinds of relationships and how we can develop long-lasting, respectful and loving bonds with others. God is a relational God who created us for relationships with Him and others.

## SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**Philippians 2:5** In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

**Genesis 1:26a** Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness."

**Genesis 2:18** The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone."

**Genesis 2:24** That is why a man leaves his mother and father and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

**Ephesians 4:27-28b** Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry and don't give the devil a foothold.

**Romans 12:5 (NLT)** We are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other and each of us needs all the others.

**John 1:12** Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

**Jeremiah 31:3** I have loved you with an everlasting love.

**Psalms 100:5** For the Lord is good and his love endures forever.

**Zephaniah 3:17** The Lord will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.

**John 3:16** For God so loved us that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

## OBSERVATION

We have looked at Dr. Van Epp's<sup>2</sup> **Relationship Attachment Model** for healthy relationships regarding knowing and trusting others and our next topic is relying on them. Future studies are about committing and touching. When we get the order of this progression messed up, we risk the relationships we are so eager to enjoy being short-circuited. We can easily end up disappointed or completely undone.

**QUESTION: In what ways have you changed your approach to relationships with others since starting this study?**

Jesus hand-selected twelve dysfunctional men to share His life with. They became brothers and relied on each other. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus asked Peter, John and James to stay with Him as His arrest and death were imminent – what a picture of reliance by the Son of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture referenced here is NIV

<sup>2</sup> Christian author and therapist

## **APPLICATION**

Our goal for this study is that we approach all of our relationships with the mind of Christ – to love, serve and forgive the way Jesus loved, served and forgave us. Reliance is the very essence of God. God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit together are the Holy Trinity, three in one in communion with each other. Each relies on the other two Persons and together They have completeness and unity. We are made in the image of the Godhead and we are hardwired for relationship. The most joyous moments in our lives involve other people: Weddings, births, graduations, etc. God's plan is that we would rely on Him and each other.

**QUESTION: What is your understanding of the Trinity?**

**QUESTION: When have you recently enjoyed celebrating a joyous occasion with friends? What happened?**

Only after we have learned to trust someone can we move forward to relying on them. There are two extremes, however, that we need to be wary of: 1) We can become too **dependent** on others. This extreme looks like relying on them for everything, not making our own decisions and needing permission or approval before making them. 2) the next extreme is being too **independent**. We think we don't need anyone – if we want something done right, we do it ourselves. The ideal position for godly people is **interdependence**. Henry Cloud wrote, "Marriage, while it is an utterly unique relationship, was never intended to be the place where someone gets all of their needs met. An unresolved dependency on another person for any completeness and happiness is death to my marriage. And I need to stop looking for the spouse that I want and start loving the spouse that I have to give my marriage a chance to be great."

**QUESTION: Where are you in when considering the three behaviors of dependence, independence, and interdependence?**

Men and women are just so different. Those differences can cause distance between us and distance is where Satan loves to set up shop. When we marry, we are to leave mothers and fathers as our reliance shifts from our parents to our spouses. If we are married, our spouses should be the most important person in our lives. We should rely and depend on them.

**QUESTION: Who are you relying on more than your spouse? Is this dependence causing difficulties in your main relationship?**

The distance we feel today is often not related to anything that happened today. We may be upset or angry because we are carrying hurts from the past. These strongholds will continue to haunt us until we take control of them and let go of their power over us. We often build distance in our relationships by hanging on to them too long and giving them a foothold into our lives. Billy Graham's wife, Ruth, said, "A good marriage is the union of two good forgivers."

**QUESTION: How much have you been forgiven by Jesus?**

**QUESTION: What is causing a distance in your relationships?**

**QUESTION: How reliable is the most important person in your life?**

If we have ever been hurt, the temptation is to not make ourselves vulnerable enough to be hurt again – but this is not God's plan. We are to love, serve, pray for, instruct, encourage, accept, and show hospitality to one another. If we are isolating ourselves from others, we need to make a commitment to fellowship with others. For introverts, this is not any easy commitment to make. We tend to recharge by being alone and that is where we do our best thinking. It may be time for us to re-engage – to rely and be relied upon. Extroverts are just out there all of the time!

**QUESTION: How completely are you forgiving those who have hurt you?**

**QUESTION: How do you define yourself – an extrovert or an introvert? How does your nature in this regard affect your reliance on others?**

God's plan is that we would be dependent on Him and interdependent on each other. Sometimes we get this backward: We are dependent on another person and sort of interdependent with God. This is because we know about Him, but really don't know Him to the point of trusting and relying on Him. If we are in this place, be encouraged to pray, "God, make Yourself known to me." That simple prayer can set us free as we realize that God sent His Son to live a perfect life, to die for our sins and be resurrected three days later. Listen to what

He says to us: "I love you with an everlasting love; my love endures forever; I take delight in you; I don't rebuke you, but I rejoice over you with singing; I love you so much that I gave my Son so you will not perish, but live with Me forever." We can trust and rely on a God like this!

#### **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, when we reflect back on the many times You have been there for us, protected us from danger, healed us from illness and shown Your love for us, we know how reliable and trustworthy You have always been. Help us to live like we serve a God who will always love us, never leave us or forsake us, will protect us and can always be relied upon. In Jesus' name. Amen.

#### **QUESTIONS**

**QUESTION: In what ways have you changed your approach to relationships with others since starting this study?**

**QUESTION: What is your understanding of the Trinity?**

**QUESTION: When have you recently enjoyed celebrating a joyous occasion with friends? What happened?**

**QUESTION: Where are you in when considering the three behaviors of dependence, independence, and interdependence?**

**QUESTION: Who are you relying on more than your spouse? Is this dependence causing difficulties in your main relationship?**

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