



KNOW  
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The Crossing Church  
Las Vegas, Nevada

## OPENING

This week we are beginning our study called **Crazy, Stupid Love**. It is about all kinds of relationships and how we can develop long lasting, respectful and loving bonds with others. We believe that God is a relational God who created us for relationships – and that all relationships get better when we do them God’s way.

## SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**1 Samuel 16:7** The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

**Philippians 2:1-5** Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

**Ephesians 5:33** However, each of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

## OBSERVATION

The biggest predictors of divorce listed in John Gottman’s book, Why marriages Succeed or Fail, are Criticism, Contempt, Defensiveness, and Stonewalling. **Criticism** attacks the person and not the behavior. It is attacking character. It is the difference between, “You never think about anybody but yourself!” and “I was scared when you were running late and didn’t call.” **Contempt** is a mixture of anger and disgust and includes name-calling, rolling our eyes, sneering, mocking and hostile humor. It is the greatest predictor of divorce. **Defensiveness** is typically a response to criticism. It is a way of blaming the other person instead of taking responsibility. **Stonewalling** is withdrawing to avoid conflict. The person shuts down, distances him/herself and stops responding to the partner.

**QUESTION: Which of your relationships needs to be repaired?**

**QUESTION: In your most important relationship are you engaging in any or all of these attitudes toward the other person?**

## APPLICATION

To help us meet the goal of this series, we are looking at the **Relational Attachment Model** formulated by Dr. John Van Epp. He follows the Biblical progression for all relationships: To start **KNOWING** a person before we **TRUST** then **RELY** on them and only then **COMMIT** and **TOUCH** them. We may be single and not interested in

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

dating or marriage at this time, but this progression is how all healthy relationships work. It's not hard to see that one of the most common mistakes people make before they **KNOW** someone is they move to **TOUCH** before they develop the other crucial areas of the relationship. Whether we want When we become sexually active too early, we don't know if we can trust each other – or rely on each other – or what level of commitment is in the relationship. When we run ahead of the progression that is best for us, we end up in a situation that has no foundation. This is why God designed the sexual experience for marriage.

**QUESTION: As you look back on the relationships you've had in the past, which ones didn't start with knowing that person? How did they turn out?**

So, let's discuss the first piece of this progression this week: **KNOW**. All healthy relationships start here because, if we trust someone and rely on them before we know if they are trustworthy, we can set ourselves up for a lot of sadness. So, how do we get to know someone and grow together? To begin with, there is a 90-day rule. In a 10-year study, it was determined that half of all dating attraction is significantly altered by some newly found characteristic within 90 days. Daters found out something significant enough that it changed their view of that person so that half of those couples broke up. So, we see that investing time to get to know a person saves a lot of heartache.

**QUESTION: When has this happened to you? How grateful were you to make this discovery early in the relationship?**

God judges us by what's in our hearts, but people judge other people by surface attributes like careers, appearance, and wealth. The problem is that those things can change.

**QUESTION: How do you judge people when you first meet them?**

**QUESTION: In which of your relationships are you looking only at superficial aspects of that person and not at their heart?**

**QUESTION: In which of your relationships are you in love with the heart of that person?**

Our attitudes need to value others. Humility is a major component of the attitudes that bring people closer together. It means to put others above ourselves. It means becoming interested in what others are interested in. It is natural to prefer our own interests. We can be vain and conceited, but that doesn't build communication or relationships. Jesus is asking us to approach our relationships with others as He approaches His relationship with us: Listening, communicating, experiencing.

**QUESTION: How much effort are you putting into the major relationship of your life today? Are you listening, communicating, and experiencing together?**

How do we discover the integrity of a person or their character or their hearts? It takes shared experiences. Weekly date nights or monthly romantic dates, or quarterly getaways together or annual vacations. The idea is to look forward to doing something together on a regular basis. We can't grow a relationship without knowing what the other person needs. Shared experiences over time grow relationships as we learn what the other person needs. Tim Keller wrote: "To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us." It takes two imperfect people coming together, learning to know and love each other through imperfections

**QUESTION: How often do you plan special events while building relationships? What types of events work for you?**

**QUESTION: We offer this advice: Wives, tell your husbands three things you respect about them. Men tell your wives often how much you love them. If you haven't already When will you begin?**

The best thing that can happen to us and our relationships is not that we are in church, but that Jesus is in us. So, our goal is this: If He is in us, we should be "like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind, doing nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit." These seem so impossible to attain in our human condition, but with Christ in us we can do all things.

**QUESTION: When will you be ready to commit to having the mind-set of Jesus and applying His principles to all of your relationships? What would keep you from doing that?**

**PRAYER** Heavenly Father, we are so grateful for Your presence in our lives as You love us, communicate with us, listen to us and guide us. Help us to follow Your example and build relationships that are long standing as we apply the lessons You have taught us, and to have the mindset of Your Son. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## **QUESTIONS**

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