

Building Successful Relationships

By Michael & Laura Fletcher

This is an
Abbreviated Study Guide for Gateway users
(the full, comprehensive guide can be downloaded from RightNow Media)

This is a 7 part study that is accompanied by:

- 7 short videos
- Fill in the blank notes for each video
- Discussion questions based on each video

Starting May 20th, Gateway will be beginning a sermon series closely based off this curriculum. This sermon series will conclude on either June 10th or June 17th. Once Gateway's series is over, we encourage you to finish out this study with your group.

Each week, you will:

1. Listen to the sermon at Gateway on Sundays
2. Meet weekly as a group to watch the video, take notes, & go over discussion questions.

The videos are found on [RightNow Media](#).

If you go to the main Gateway page on RightNow Media, you will find the link to the videos. Or in the search bar type in, "Building Successful Relationships" to find the videos.

The seven sessions are on:

LOVE

Loving others without condition.

FAITH

Believing more for someone than they believe for themselves.

INTEREST

People are interested in those who are interested in them.

AVAILABILITY

Being present for someone in their time of crisis.

RESPECT

Demonstrating a person's value.

TIME

The key to unlocking a heart.

COMMUNICATION

The lifeline of any relationship.

Session One: Love

- Proverbs 4:23— “Guard your _____ with all diligence, for out of it flow the _____.” (NKJV)
- Theologians say the heart is the center of the _____. • All of _____ flows out of the heart.
- Whoever has the _____ has the _____.
- How you _____ a heart is how you _____ a heart.
- John 3:16— “For God so loved the world that he _____ his only begotten Son...”
- _____ is the opposite of love.
- The love God has for us is without _____.

1. In the video, Michael and Laura emphasized Proverbs 4:23. Can you share an example of how life flows from the heart?

2. According to John 3:16, what is God’s definition of love? How can we tell the difference between true and false forms of love (emotion, infatuation, lust, or need-love)?

3. Why are people afraid to give love without expecting anything in return?

4. What does unconditional love look like in marriage? Between parents and children?

5. First Peter 4:8 says, “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.” What does this verse tell us about unconditional love? Is covering sin the same as ignoring it?

6. Correction, when properly administered, is loving. How do correction and love work together?

7. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 —How can the Church show this kind of love to those who don’t believe?

8. As a group, one of the best ways to share the love that Christ freely gave us is to freely give it to others. Begin to plan an outreach that the group can conduct within the next seven weeks to show your community that Christ’s love is free, no strings attached.

Session Two- Faith

- Proverbs 4:23—“Guard your heart with _____, for out of it flow the issues of life.” (NKJV)
- All of life comes from the _____.
- Faith is _____ for someone than they believe for themselves.
- The way to keep someone from sin and move them forward in their walk with God is _____ (Hebrews 3:13).
- Faith is seeing another person through _____.
- God sees us as _____, not as we are.
- When you see someone through God’s eyes, you give them _____.
- The greatest agent of world-change is _____, not _____.

1. Can you think of a time when someone expressed faith for you and changed your view of yourself, your future, or the obstacle you were facing?

2. Why is someone’s faith in you such a powerful motivator?

3. In the context of Proverbs 4:23, what happens when someone receives discouragement from their loved ones, instead of encouragement?

4. Discuss the relationship between faith and unconditional love. Can you have one without the other?

5. Proverbs 27:6 and Hebrews 3:13 imply that we have a responsibility to build one another up through correction when necessary. How can we speak correcting truth to someone without discouraging them?

6. How might God use you to encourage your spouse/friend/family members/ coworkers in their faith? In their dreams? In their work? In their struggles or challenges?

7. Sometimes we see a future for others based on what we ourselves want. How does having faith for our loved ones differ from having an agenda for them? 8. Read Acts 9:10-17. Why did Ananias have faith for Paul? How can we as the Church imitate this kind of faith for one another?

Session Three- Interest

- Proverbs 4:23—“Guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it _____
_____.” (NKJV)
- Whatever you did to _____ a heart is what you do to _____.
- Interest is _____ what is important to others.
- Philippians 2:3—“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility _____.”
- When you show interest in what interests somebody else, they take your interest as _____.
- Everyone is glad to find .
- Everyone wants to be valued, appreciated, and _____.
- Parents: This principle can your kids’ hearts to you.

1. What are some of the results that come from investing one’s time in what interests someone else?

2. Bearing in mind Proverbs 4:23, what happens in our hearts when someone gives their time to something we’re interested in, particularly when they do not share the same interest?

3. How does sharing interests affect trust between two people?

4. How can we show interest in something that does not naturally interest us?

5. How can we stay in sync with our children’s changing interests and build them up when we spend time doing things they like to do?

6. How does your ability to take an interest in someone else’s passions or hobbies reflect your character?

7. How might you let go of self to genuinely give value to the interests of your spouse?

8. In what ways did Jesus model Philippians 2:3-4? How can we imitate Him as individuals? How can the Church imitate Jesus’ example in its interactions with the world?

Session Four- Availability

- Proverbs 4:23—“_____”, for out of it flow the issues of life.” (NKJV)
- Whoever has the _____ has the person.
- Availability is making room for others in _____ and in _____.
- Galatians 6:2—“Carry one another’s _____, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”
- Crisis is a huge _____.
- You don’t have to have all the _____.

1. Have you ever seized (or missed) an opportunity to be available to someone going through a crisis? What was the effect on your relationship?

2. Galatians 6:2 tells us to “carry one another’s burdens.” What do you think this means practically?

3. Is availability just a question of time? In what other ways should we be available to our loved ones?

4. Michael said that a crisis should be defined by the person going through it. If you have a close relationship with someone, does this give you a voice in defining what is or isn’t a crisis for them? Why, or why not?

5. Read Luke 5:17-20. Jesus was willing to be interrupted in times of crisis, because He never forgot that His primary purpose was to restore our relationships with Him. How can we maintain a similar attitude?

6. Read Mark 6:31-34. What do you think made it possible for Jesus to be available to the crowd even when he was physically exhausted?

7. Proverbs 4:23 warns, “Guard your heart...” (NKJV) How can we keep our hearts from being hardened by those who might abuse our availability?

8. If relationships are built by winning hearts, how should the church respond to crises in our community?

Session Five- Respect

- Proverbs _____—“Guard your heart _____, for out of it flow _____.” (NKJV)
- Whoever has the heart _____.
- Respect is _____ a person’s worth.
- Romans 13:7—“Give everyone what you owe him...if _____, then respect; if _____, then honor.”
- Every person deserves some measure of respect because they were created _____.
- Every person desires to be _____, accepted, and honored.
- Respect where it’s not _____ is powerful.
- Respect is a _____; we can get good at it.

1. What makes you feel respected?

2. Why do we tend to evaluate people’s worth according to their station?

3. If respect means establishing a person’s worth, how did God demonstrate respect for us as human beings?

4. Read Proverbs 4:23. What does your respect for others communicate about God’s heart towards them?

5. How does respect balance with love in a marriage?

6. What role do you think pride and humility play when we respect those we lead?

7. How do you respect someone when you think their behavior doesn’t merit respect?

8. Do you think most non-believers would agree that the Church respects them? What steps might we take as the Church to communicate respect to those outside?

Session Six- Time

- _____ 4:23—“_____ your _____ with all _____, for out of it _____ the _____ of _____.” (NKJV)
- Whoever _____ has the person.
- Time is the key to _____ the heart.
- Ephesians 5:15-16—“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, _____ the time, because the days are _____.” (NKJV)
- Time is the _____ of relationships.
- You can use time as a _____.
- If you spend time with someone, you will gain _____, negatively or positively.
- If you _____ spending time with someone, the relationship will wane.

1. Do you have any relationships that wouldn't have existed if you had not spent a lot of time with that person? Share your story.

2. Why does spending time with someone put us in a position to capture their hearts, or them in a position to capture ours?

3. If time is the currency of relationships, how do you intentionally or unintentionally communicate other people's value with your time?

4. If, as Proverbs 4:23 tells us, whoever has our heart has our life, what criteria should we use when prioritizing the way we spend our time?

5. If love is spelled “T-I-M-E”, and not all time spent together is equal, what kinds of activities yield the best return?

6. What benefits do you reap from spending time alone with your spouse/children/etc.?

7. Under what circumstances would it be a poor decision to invest too much time with someone? Why is an “emotional affair” just as detrimental as a physical affair?

8. Ephesians 5:15-16 advises us to “walk circumspectly...redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” (NKJV) As members of the body of Christ, how can we advance the Kingdom of God by investing our time in the world around us?

Session Seven- Communication

- Communication is the _____ to every relationship.
- Ephesians 4:29—“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for _____ according to the need of the moment, that it may give _____ to those who hear.” (NASB)
- Edification means _____.
- Resolution to conflict is always found in _____.
- Communication is the most _____ of the seven keys.
- Almost every time a relationship wanes, there has been a _____ in communication.
- Get rid of _____ words and start speaking _____ words.

1. Read Proverbs 15:4. In what ways can our words be “a tree of life”?

2. Proverbs 15:4 also says that the deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. Have you seen or experienced this?

3. Read Luke 6:45. How does the way that we communicate reveal the state of our hearts?

4. Why do Michael and Laura say that “silence is lethal” in relationships?

5. Do our words impact only the person to whom we speak? Who else might be affected, either positively or negatively?

6. In what ways do we teach children the importance of words? How can you become more intentional about modeling life-giving communication?

7. Proverbs 4:23 reminds us that all of life flows from the heart. How can words bring life (or death) to a church body? 8. Second Corinthians 5:20 says we are Christ’s ambassadors. How do the words we speak portray Jesus to the world around us?