

Study Guide - 2 February, 2020

Series: Redeeming Relationship

Text: John 17:26



This guide will help you facilitate a clear understanding of the Bible passage with a focus on applying God's truth to our lives together. You should spend at least half your time discussing questions that are application focused. Look at the Big Idea and What your CG Must Take Away sections at the beginning of the guide to keep the discussion focused.

Introduction and Series Overview

The aim of the Redeeming Relationship series is to help us understand the various roles we play relationally, and how each of these is to be done under God empowered by the gospel. This gives us a proper framework for both redeeming broken relationships and relating to others, and how to generally relate to church members in a way that builds them up. It also helps us understand our own hearts and each other in relationships so that we can be compassionate and clear with them, as well as specific relationships that people find themselves in family, marriage, kids, work, etc.

Big idea of the Sermon

God's love that is enjoyed between the Father and the Son will be in us and among us.

What your CG must take away from this study

God demonstrates His triune love for us by sending Jesus to die on the cross so as to restore us to a loving relationship with Him therefore we ought to imitate that love in all our relationships with one another.

We are starting a new series on Redeeming Relationships. What is one thing you would like to get out of this series?

John 17:26

"I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Read the following excerpt from "The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of by God" by D. A. Carson (pg 82-84) along with John 17:26.

One of the faces of love I have virtually ignored in this series of addresses is our love. My focus has been on the love of God and the various ways the Bible speaks of that love. Yet sooner or later one cannot

adequately grasp the love of God in Scripture without reflecting on the ways in which God's love elicits our love. To use the categories I developed in the first chapter and keep redeploying:

(1) God's intra-Trinitarian love ensures the plan of redemption. The Father so loves the Son that he has decreed that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. God the Father "shows" the Son things, gives him tasks, including the supreme task of the cross, to that end; the Son so loves the Father that out of obedience he goes to the cross on our behalf, the just for the unjust. The entire plan of redemption that has turned our hearts toward God is a function, in the first place, of this intra-Trinitarian love of God.

(2) God's providential love protects us, feeds us, clothes us, and forbears to destroy us when mere justice could rightly write us off. The Lord Jesus insists that the evidence of God's providential love call us to faith and God-centered kingdom priorities (Matt. 6).

(3) God's yearning, inviting, commanding love, supremely displayed in the cross, "compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Cor. 5:14-15). With Paul, we are debtors; we owe others the Gospel.

(4) God's effective, electing love toward us enables us to see the sheer glory and power of Christ's vicarious death on our behalf, by which we are reconciled to God. We grasp that God has not drawn us with the savage lust of the rapist, but with the compelling wooing of the lover. Out of sheer love, God has effectively secured the salvation of his people. We love, because he first loved us.

(5) God continues to love us—not only with the immutable love that ensures we are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us (Rom. 8), but with the love of a father for his children, telling them to remain in his love (Jude 21). Christ tells us to remain in his love by exactly the same means that he remains in his Father's love—by obedience (John 15:9). Thus we are disciplined, in love, that we might be loving and obedient children of the living God.

All this has transformed us, so that we in turn perceive the sheer rightness of the first commandment—to love God with heart and soul and mind and strength. As that is the first and greatest commandment, so the first and greatest sin is not to love God with heart and soul and mind and strength. For this there is no remedy, save what God himself has provided—in love.

1. What kind of relationship does Jesus enjoy with the Father?
2. From the sermon on Sunday, and what we've read in the D.A. Carson's extract above, what should be the basis of relationships and how does this affect the way we think about relationships?
3. How does sin make relationships difficult? (You could consider Genesis 4:3-9)

4. Read John 12:27-33. How has The Father chosen to glorify Jesus?

Case Study

Barney and Ted have been in the same CG for 3 years.

Barney and Ted both hit it off initially with 2 things they share in common - 1) The experience of coming to faith in Christ during university and 2) Manchester United. They began to know each other better and meet up regularly to do One To One Bible reading, and hangout as friends, both with the CG and individually as well.

However, Barney soon gained an impression that Ted can come across as being defensive on certain issues, especially when it comes to financial matters. For example, there was once that Ted objected to a suggested place for dinner, but when asked if his objections were based on perceived priciness, Ted denied so.

On the other hand, Ted always senses an attitude of entitlement from Barney - and wonders if he's being taken for granted when he sometimes goes out of his way to help Barney. For example, there was once when Barney asked Ted to bring back a pile of books from a business trip and Ted felt that Barney did not properly appreciate his effort.

Due to these things, their friendship which initially grew, waned and cooled off after a certain time. Some folks in the CG are aware of this and some are not - resulting in sometimes awkward tensions in the group. Ted has been thinking about finding another CG to join.

5. Why do you think this friendship seems to work in the beginning but when it's gotten worse didn't pick up?

Note: It is important to avoid getting segwayed into the details of the relationship for this question. The focus ought to be on "expectations" and "common bond"

6. What do you think is the issue in this relationship?

Note: In some sense there's quite a bit of overlap between this question and the last. So this question is mainly helping the group to crystallize some of the presenting issues/challenges that both Barney/Ted may be facing in this relationship.

7. What does it look like for Barney and Ted to begin to relate to each other biblically?

Note: The leader ought to avoid how-tos and specific steps here but lead the group to think through biblical principles. It can be tempting for us to give specific steps of how-tos but it's at this juncture more important to help the group to think more principally and then to recognize the difficulty in practice is not in the lack of "advice" but a lack of "changed hearts"

8. What does it look like for the CG to relate to Barney and Ted biblically?

Note: This relates to the wider community - it might be worthwhile to spend some time to imagine how would such a relational dynamic between Barney and Ted influence the rest of the group. When two persons are in a difficult relationship with each other within a larger community - it might tempt folks to take sides, or tempt folks to gossip, or tempt folks to give superficial advice without listening and discerning carefully.

9a. What relationships do you find difficult? And why?

9b. How does God's love change the way we should think about relationships? (If possible, think about the specific relationships and challenges in 5a)

10a. What situations do you find difficult to navigate in your relationships? (e.g. Pointing out sins, avoiding difficult conversations)

10b. (For those specific situations) How can we overcome them through Christ's love?

Apply Practically

Share prayer requests and pray for each other in your CG, specifically for the relationships you find difficult. Pray for each of you to comprehend God's love for us, and to imitate that love in our relationships.