



A Better Life

Message Four – A Better Relational Life

Announcements

101 Starting Point – Sunday, February 2nd at **2:00 pm** at all campuses. 101 Starting Point is the first step toward getting involved at Church of the King by learning about the vision and mission of the church. Register at www.churchoftheking.com/register

401 Small Group Training – Sunday, February 16th and 23rd from 5:00–6:30 pm at the Little Creek Campus in Globe 345. Get equipped to lead a **God in the Mirror** Small Group beginning with our church-wide series on March 8/9th. Register at www.churchoftheking.com/register

Warm-up

Who was your best friend growing up? What made you such good friends?

Today we are going to be discussing the importance of godly relationships as we look to live a “better life.”

Strong friendships provide positive physical and psychological benefits. Studies are finding that what we need to extend and enhance our lives is found in **life-giving relationships**. The benefits from positive relationships range from lower stress levels, to enhanced brain health, to living longer. Friends give you a longer and happier life.

Word and Application

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. The Bible has been declaring the positive benefits of friendships for thousands of years. How can friends help one another? What is one of the nicest things a friend has done for you?

Unfortunately, many people have been burned in relationships or don’t believe they can build healthy relationships. The starting point to having a better relational life is understanding and embracing **forgiveness**.

Read Ephesians 4:32. When it comes to unforgiveness and pain we need to learn to release it. God can take our pain and give us a new beginning.

The heart of God is for us to have healthy relationships. We see healthy, godly relationships throughout the Bible. However, perhaps the best-known, godly friendship in Scripture is between **Jonathan and David**.

Read 1 Samuel 18:1-4. Jonathan loved David as his own soul and was willing to do anything to help David. While other people were trying to keep David down by putting limitations on him, Jonathan lifted and strengthened David. He encouraged and supported him.

For the rest of our time together we are going to discuss **Three Ways to Build or Re-build Healthy Relationships**:

1. Focus on the best in others.

Jonathan could have been jealous of David. But he had the humility to see the greatness and potential that God had placed on David's life. Jonathan could have seen some of the weaknesses in David and written him off. However, he focused on the potential in David - not on David's insecurities and weaknesses.

Unfortunately, **familiarity can breed contempt**. As humans, the closer we are to someone, the more we tend to over-evaluate that person. We need to focus on the greatness, the gifting, and the joy of the friendship - and keep it in view regardless of how close we are to the individual or how many of his/her weaknesses we see.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:7. Do you find it easy to focus on people's faults or their strengths? What are some practical ways that we can learn to focus on the best in other people?

2. Honor with your words.

Read 1 Samuel 20:4. In this verse, we read how Jonathan continued to encourage his friend, David. We bring out the best in others by showing them that we care. As a rule, we never bring out the best in someone by condemning and criticizing or verbally beating a person down. If we treat and love people the way that God created them, they're much more likely to change for the better. We **bring out the best** by speaking loving and encouraging words over people.

Read Hebrews 10:24. What role do we have in encouraging others in life and their relationship with God?

How can you honor others with your words? How can you encourage people to change negative behaviors?

3. Be an investor.

Read 1 Samuel 18:4. Jonathan was King Saul's son. He was the heir apparent to the throne. His armor was the symbol of his power, his status, and his position. Yet, he gave this armor to David.

If we want our relationships to thrive, we must invest in our friends. **We need to be givers rather than takers.** We need to make relational deposits into people's lives, blessing them practically with our actions and, at times, even with our resources. Putting people first, encouraging them, and doing something for them are ways of making relational deposits.

What are some relational deposits you can you make this week in your relationships?

Think about your relationships – do your actions suggest that you are a true friend?

What is God challenging you to do to help develop friendships with those in your life?

Prayer

Pray for healthy relationships for everyone in the group and for these relationships to grow stronger every day. Also, take time to ask for specific prayer requests from those in your small group.