

Relating to God

2019-06-02 by Ben Deaver at Tallgrass Church on Psalm 42-43

Mingle Questions—Who’s the last person to tell you they love you? When’s the last time you shed tears?

“In the words of Francis of Assisi when he met Brother Dominic on the road to Umbria, “Hi!”

Story:

- I’m reminded of Johnny. Johnny woke up one Sunday morning and said to his mother, “Mama, I ain’t going to church today.”
- She said, “Hush your mouth child. It’s Sunday morning. You’ve got to go to church.”
- He said, “No mama, I ain’t going and I got two reasons: they don’t like me and I don’t like them.
- She said, “Well, Johnny, I understand. Life is hard. But I’ve got two reasons you’ve gotta go to church this morning: you’re 38 years old and you’re the pastor!”

I’m so thankful that Johnny’s experience as a pastor is definitely not my experience of our church family on Sunday evenings. But I fear that so many are cynical about church community in general, especially perhaps in America, and maybe specifically in our church at times. And this type of cynicism is really putting a damper on our relating to God. How are we doing at reaching our goal of relating to God with all of our churchy activities?!?!?

Brennan Manning, *All is Grace: A Ragamuffin Memoir*

“Do you believe that the God of Jesus loves you beyond worthiness and unworthiness, beyond fidelity and infidelity—that he loves you in the morning sun and in the evening rain—that he loves you when your intellect denies it, your emotions refuse it, your whole being rejects it. Do you believe that God loves without condition or reservation and loves you this moment as you are and not as you should be.”

- Impactful author for me
- *God Loves You As You Are, Not As You Should Be* talk on YouTube
 - I remember when I was cleaning leaves out of my gutter listening to this talk for the first time with tears welling up and blurring my vision. I listened to it again a week and a half ago and it just happened to be the same situation.

Relating Sermon Series

Relating to... Wordcloud List:

Soul/Self, God, Scripture, Disciples, Friends, Technology, Past, Culture, Sexuality, Enemy, Money, Neighbors, Church, Earth, Body, Politics, Family

- *Soul/Self* last week
- *God* tonight

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

Published in 1536 when John Calvin was 27 years old.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND OF OURSELVES MUTUALLY CONNECTED. - NATURE OF THIS CONNECTION.

- Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God
- Without knowledge of God there is no knowledge of self

God's Relating—Father, Son, & Holy Spirit

Experiencing the Trinity by Darrell W. Johnson—“At the center of the universe is a relationship.’ That is the most fundamental truth I know. At the center of the universe is a community. It is out of that relationships that you and I were created and redeemed. And it for that relationship that you and I were created and redeemed! And it turns out that the community is a Trinity. The center of reality is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” –p. 37

Close your eyes and imagine the time before time... Which is impossible to really conceive of.

- Do you see it? Do you see the LIFE Group?
- Before Creation, God was...but God was not alone. God existed in perfect relationship. He had His own LIFE Group!
- Trinitarian love
- It's out of the beautifully perfect relating of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit that Creation occurred.
- God wanted to relate to us in the context of love and not coercion, so He gave us free choice.
- We messed that up.
- The Fall—Since that initial break in relationship with God, all relating on earth and in heaven has been fractured.

Disconnection Relationally

The first problem was the Fall of humanity. Checkout Genesis 3. Some here tonight may need to begin an *INITIAL* relationship with God by receiving the free gift of life purchased by the death of Jesus Christ. This evening I want to speak mostly to those who already have a relationship with God but are struggling to relate to God deeply. You may be stuck or confused or disengaged but have sense somewhere within you that there is more to be had in your relationship with God. There may not be a single, clear cause, but rather a combination of problems.

Saint Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*

“Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee.”

Relating to God...as you are...not as you should be.

Please turn to page 268 in your ESV giveaway Bible!

Read Psalm 42:1-2

PRAY!!!

Discouragement/Dryness/Depression/Disinterest – Psalm 42:1-2

- **Picture 1:** This picture gives the exact opposite impression of the text.
- Sing, “As the deer panteth for the water so my soul longeth after thee...”
- **Picture 2:** The panting deer is experiencing the slow agony of death, not rapid flight from an enemy...
- This deer knows where to find water but for some reason the source of water has dried up.
- The goal in this deer’s life is drinking from the waters that provide life. The goal in a human’s life is the same, to drink from the waters that provide life, God Himself.
- Spiritual Dryness Spectrum—Spiritual Dryness; Spiritual Drought; Spiritual Darkness; Spiritual Deadness
- Are you.....discouraged?...spiritually dry?...depressed?...disinterested?
- Spiritual depression, the dark night of the soul
 - You still believe in God, but can’t experience Him (His reality).
 - What used to work doesn’t work right now.

Problems Preventing Intimacy with God

Deprivation Physically – Psalm 42:3

- In our culture we tend to train well but not restore well.
- Technology, busyness, and a poor diet are killing intimacy in our relationships.
- *How are you taking care of yourself physically? Perhaps there’s a specific scary step of faith right here?!?!*

Disruption of Community – Psalm 42:4

- Community is practically difficult.
 - Transitions make community difficult.
 - Different life stages make community difficult.
 - Marriage, babies, etc.
 - When you’re discouraged/depressed community is difficult.
 - *How are you engaging in community? Perhaps there’s a specific scary step of faith right here?!?!*
- Cynicism with community is easy to come by...and get stuck in...
 - He has experienced the presence of God through community in the past but not anymore.
 - Maybe he’s cynical about community. That would never happen in our culture, would it?
 - My spiritual life isn’t like it used to be in college...or at my other church...or when I was single...or when I was in this place at this time...
 - Psalm 32 and 51 are dealing with guilt. Not so here...
 - If you follow Jesus, this will come!
 - If you are considering following Jesus, just know, this will come!
 - The double whammy believers face! We get discouraged/depressed. Then we get discouraged/depressed about our discouragement/depression.
 - Community is often unhelpful when someone is facing this darkness. We don’t know how to help each other so we ask these questions.
 - Have you...Prayed in faith? Confessed all known sin? Claimed all promises? Rebuked the devil? Pleased the blood? Counted and thanked God for all your many blessings?
 - Obviously you’re doing something wrong!
 - Like Job, searching for something else to repent of but finding nothing...
 - People often cover a deep darkness with a smile and the right words to say.
- Things quickly go from bad to worse.
 - “When it rains, it pours.”
 - **Illustration:** You’re late for one credit card payment and you’re hit with a late fee. Interest starts racking up. Then your bank is overdrafted. Then your credit rating goes down. Next thing you know your house is in foreclosure. Etc. Etc.

Deception

- His tears are speaking to him, “Where is your God?” (42:3)
- He is speaking to God, “Why have you forgotten me?” (42:9) He is speaking to God, “Why have you rejected me?” (43:2)
- His enemies are speaking to him, “Where is your God?” (42:10)
 - Object permanence, the understanding that an object continues to exist even when it cannot be observed. Maddox doesn’t have a great grasp on object permanence yet. He still needs to mature and grow up. We need to mature spiritually to understand that even when we cannot see or experience God that He is still there and He is still good.
- *What lies are you hearing about God? And who are you hearing these lies from? Yourself? Others? The Enemy? Perhaps there’s a specific scary step of faith right here?!?!*

Dysfunction of Family – Check out the family history of this Psalmist.

- Think about this story from the perspective of these sons.
- **Numbers 26:9-11** ⁹The sons of Eliab: Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These are the Dathan and Abiram, chosen from the congregation, who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the LORD ¹⁰and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured 250 men, and they became a warning. ¹¹But the sons of Korah did not die.
- The father of these guys, Korah, was involved in a rebellion against Moses and Aaron. You can read about it in Numbers 16. He and a couple other guys gathered 250 chiefs, well-known and well-respected guys and approached Moses and Aaron and tried to level them as leaders. How much do you think this event affected the sons of Korah?
- They were not just kicked out but they were swallowed alive by the earth because of their own sin.
- I bet they wondered if they were also going to mess things up and be destroyed by God.
- Talk about the need for Soul Care in the life of this family.
- Our family history definitely affects our spiritual life today. God wants to redeem and heal that as well.
- *What family history may hinder you from experiencing joy in God? Perhaps there’s a specific scary step of faith right here?!?!*

Problems Preventing Relating to God

- Deprivation physically, disruption of community, disillusionment with God, deception, dysfunction of family

Paths Toward Relating to God...again...or for the first time.

Pour out your soul...to God, including questioning God. Psalm 42:4

- Theological correctness isn’t necessary when pouring out your soul to God.
- **Psalm 13:1-2; Psalm 74:1; Psalm 88:1-18**
- This is part of getting out of the funk. You’ve got to get it out in the open. Pour it all out there. If you’ve got a problem with God then talk to Him about it.
- Some are in denial about the state of their soul.
 - “Let go and let God.”
 - “That wasn’t God’s will for me.”
 - “God has something better in store.”
- Practical ideas—Journal. Hike the Konza. Go on a drive. Read the Psalms. Put the Smartphone down.

Preach sermons to your heart – Take your soul to task!

- On preaching – You have to know the text you’re preaching on but you also have to know the audience you’re preaching to.
 - You do your listening well and they’ll do their listening well.
 - Listen to your heart. Then speak/preach to your heart.
 - He analyzes his hopes. **Psalm 42:5a**
 - What are you hoping in that is failing you?
 - Then he preaches to himself. **Psalm 42:5b**
- Remembers the grace of God
 - **Psalm 42:8**
- My story from three years ago...
 - Early mornings, sleepless nights...
 - Deception from the enemy or even from myself...
 - Often before or after a great success...
 - ACMI 2010
 - You’re too young.
 - You have no business being in this role.
 - This will fail.
 - You’re not spiritually mature enough.
 - Etc.
 - **Romans 8:1** – This is my refrain when I’m preaching to my soul.
- My story from just a few months ago...
- You’ll have to keep preaching the same message over and over again.
- Practical ideas:
 - Get a key verse that you will go to when you’re whining to yourself.
 - Read something like *The Call to Joy and Pain* by Ajith Fernando or *A Gospel Primer for Christians* by Milton Vincent.

Plead with God to show up

Psalm 43:3 Send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling!

This is awesome, because the Sons of Korah wrote this Psalm and we have the clear answer to their pleading with God. The answer that they only saw foreshadowed in their time. Does anyone know how God responded to their request in Psalm 43:3?

THE Path is Christ

- God clearly answers this prayer in the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ.
- His panting/thirsting (42:1)
- His tears (42:3)
- His sleepless nights (42:3)
- His memories of being with God (42:4)
- His unanswered cry to God, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (42:5, 11; 43:5)
- His deadly wound in the bones (42:10)
- His taunting (42:10)
- His forgotten-ness (42:9)
- His rejection (43:2)
- His oppression (43:2)
- He is the Light (43:3)
- He is the Truth (43:3)
- His experience of the hill of Calvary (43:3)
- His body on the altar (43:4)
- He is our exceeding joy (43:4)
- He is our hope (42:5, 11; 43:5)

Put yourself (back) in community

Psalm 43:4 Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy,
and I will praise you with the lyre,
O God, my God.

- “Then I will go to the altar of God...and I will praise you with the lyre...”
 - Body of Christ analogy and reality
 - The importance of community
 - The members of the Body must related well to one another to relate well to the Head.
 - **1 John 1:1-4** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— ² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— ³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.
 - **1 John 1:7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
 - **Illustration:** Visiting the Thorpes. My relationship with Steve, the father, is enriched as I get to know the rest of his family. I had a great time getting to know each and every one of his five kids!
- “...to God my exceeding joy...” “...O God, my God.”
 - Relating to the Trinity
 - Not a concept
 - Not just a Higher Power
 - Not a figment of your imagination
 - **1 John 4:19** We love because he first loved us.
 - Tallgrass’ Mission Statement

Interactive:

- Write out a verse on the notepads. What did God say to you as you wrote out a verse of His Scripture? Pick a verse that you are already somewhat familiar with. Or choose one from this list.
- Most of these Psalms were written by King David—a man after God’s own heart! What does this mean, especially given that he sinned BADLY?!?!
 - David was committed to the relationship through thick and thin, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health...
 - King David was an expert in repentance. Repentance is just turning back again to the relationship.
- Take your pick:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Romans 8:1 ○ Psalm 4:7 ○ Psalm 16:11 ○ Psalm 27:4 ○ Psalm 37:4 ○ Psalm 42:1 ○ Psalm 43:4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Psalm 46:10 ○ Psalm 63:1 ○ Psalm 63:3 ○ Psalm 73:25 ○ Psalm 73:26 ○ Psalm 84:10 ○ Zephaniah 3:17
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- Talk to someone close to you about how they relate to God or about how it’s been difficult to relate to God. Then we’ll share with the whole group.
- Close your eyes and imagine Jesus looking at you. What’s the look on His face?
 - How do you think He looked at the thief on the cross? The sinful woman at the well? The sinful woman who anointed His feet?

Q&R&Testimonies

- How do you relate to God? Share best practices, tips, ideas, creativity, etc.
 - Different ways of relating to God
 - Through His Word
 - Prayer
 - Nature
 - Community
 - Tallgrassians
 - Judy LeMoine and her candle
 - David Renberg and tawG
- Share a scene when you felt distant from God.
- Share a scene when you felt close to God.
- Share a story connected to our Hexagonal Prayer Challenge.
 - I want you to think about and pray for your relationships every time you see hexagons!
 - Anyone know where there were taken?
 - Take some photos of hexagons and send them my way!

Resources:

- Talks
 - Brennan Manning, *God Loves You as You Are, Not as You Should Be* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKSofu9YlyQ>
 - Dennis McCallum, *Sensing Your Soul* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCGT7x4bZVY>
- Books
 - Ruth Haley Barton
 - *Sacred Rhythms*
 - *Invitation to Silence and Solitude*
 - Milton Vincent, *A Gospel Primer for Christians: Learning to See the Glories of God's Love*

“God loves you unconditionally, as you are and not as you should be, because nobody is as they should be. It is the message of grace...A grace that pays the eager beaver who works all day long the same wages as the grinning drunk who shows up at ten till five...A grace that hikes up the robe and runs breakneck toward the prodigal reeking of sin and wraps him up and decides to throw a party no ifs, ands, or buts...This grace is indiscriminate compassion. It works without asking anything of us...Grace is sufficient even though we huff and puff with all our might to try to find something or someone it cannot cover. Grace is enough...Jesus is enough.”

—Brennan Manning, *All is Grace: A Ragamuffin Memoir*

Pray the boldest prayer imaginable—Ephesians 3:14-21!

In the words of Francis of Assisi when parted from Brother Dominic on the road to Umbria, “Bye!”

The Chopping Block:

Psalm 42:1-11

As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.

²My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God?

³My tears have been my food
day and night,

while they say to me all the day long,
“Where is your God?”

⁴These things I remember,
as I pour out my soul:

how I would go with the throng
and lead them in procession to the house of God
with glad shouts and songs of praise,
a multitude keeping festival.

⁵Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation ⁶and my God.

My soul is cast down within me;
therefore I remember you
from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,
from Mount Mizar.

⁷Deep calls to deep
at the roar of your waterfalls;
all your breakers and your waves
have gone over me.

⁸By day the LORD commands his steadfast love,
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.

⁹I say to God, my rock:
“Why have you forgotten me?

Why do I go mourning
because of the oppression of the enemy?”

¹⁰As with a deadly wound in my bones,
my adversaries taunt me,
while they say to me all the day long,
“Where is your God?”

¹¹Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.

Psalm 43:1-5

Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause
against an ungodly people,
from the deceitful and unjust man

deliver me!
²For you are the God in whom I take refuge;
 why have you rejected me?
 Why do I go about mourning
 because of the oppression of the enemy?
³Send out your light and your truth;
 let them lead me;
 let them bring me to your holy hill
 and to your dwelling!
⁴Then I will go to the altar of God,
 to God my exceeding joy,
 and I will praise you with the lyre,
 O God, my God.
⁵Why are you cast down, O my soul,
 and why are you in turmoil within me?
 Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
 my salvation and my God.

1 John Passages

- **1 John 1:1-10** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— ²the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— ³that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. ⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.
- **1 John 2:3-5** ³And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.
- **1 John 3:23-24** ²³And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.
- **1 John 4:7-12** ⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.
- **1 John 4:19-21** ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

***Experiencing the Trinity* by Darrell W. Johnson**

- “‘At the center of the universe is a relationship.’ That is the most fundamental truth I know. At the center of the universe is a community. It is out of that relationships that you and I were created and redeemed. And it for that relationship that you and I were created and redeemed! And it turns out that the community is a Trinity. The center of reality is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” –p. 37
- “Again, C.S. Lewis helps us from another of his radio talks on the Trinity. ‘The union between the Father and Son is such a live concrete thing that this union itself is also a Person. I know this is almost inconceivable, but look at it thus. You know that among human beings, when they get together in a family, or a club, or a trade union, people talk about the “Spirit” of that family, or club, or trade union. They talk about its “Spirit” because the individual members, when they are together, do really develop particular ways of talking and behaving which they would not have if they were apart. It is as if a sort of communal personality comes into existence. Of course, it is not a real person; it is only rather like a person. But that is just one of the differences between God and us. What grows out of the joint life of the Father and Son is a real Person, is in fact the Third of the three Persons who are God.” –pp. 51-52
- “What does it all mean? It means that in the deepest mystery of his being God is an intimate relationship, a fellowship, a community of love.” –p. 51
- “‘To be is to be related.’ Because it is true of God; it has to be true of us. We need to be in relationship in order to be fully human. In the famous words of the poet John Donne: ‘No man is an island.’ It is because we are created in the image of the Trinity that loneliness is so crushing, that broken relationships are so debilitating, that death is so painful. Lack or loss of relationship violates our essential nature, created to reflect the relational essence of God. That is why Jesus emphasize ‘righteousness’ so much. Righteousness simply means ‘right relationship.’” –pp. 52-53
- On labels—“Christo-centric Trinitarian” –p. 54
- “As I have been reflecting on this, I have come to see that we are co-lovers in three ways. We are co-lovers with God *of God* (worship); we are co-lovers with God *of one another* (community); we are co-lovers with God *of the world* (mission).” –p. 64

Set List:

All Creatures of Our God and King
 Holy, Holy, Holy
 Divine Invitation
 The Benediction

- From Wikipedia
 - A **honeycomb** is a mass of hexagonal prismatic wax cells built by honey bees in their nests to contain their larvae and stores of honey and pollen.
 - The axes of honeycomb cells are always quasihorizontal, and the nonangled rows of honeycomb cells are always horizontally (not vertically) aligned. Thus, each cell has two vertically oriented walls, with the upper and lower parts of the cells composed of two angled walls. The open end of a cell is typically referred to as the top of the cell, while the opposite end is called the bottom. The cells slope slightly upwards, between 9 and 14°, towards the open ends.^[*citation needed*]
 - Two possible explanations exist as to why honeycomb is composed of hexagons, rather than any other shape. First, the hexagonal tiling creates a partition with equal-sized cells, while minimizing the total perimeter of the cells. Known in geometry as the honeycomb conjecture, this was given by Jan Brożek and proved much later by Thomas Hales. Thus, a hexagonal structure uses the least material to create a lattice of cells within a given volume. A second reason, given by D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, is that the shape simply results from the process of individual bees putting cells together: somewhat analogous to the boundary shapes created in a field of soap bubbles. In support of this, he notes that queen cells, which are constructed singly, are irregular and lumpy with no apparent attempt at efficiency.^[3]
- <https://askdruniverse.wsu.edu/2015/11/02/why-do-bees-make-hexagons/>

Shield of the Trinity

The **Shield of the Trinity** or *Scutum Fidei* (Latin for "shield of faith") is a traditional [Christian](#) visual [symbol](#) which expresses many aspects of the doctrine of the [Trinity](#), summarizing the first part of the [Athanasian Creed](#) in a compact diagram. In late medieval [Europe](#), this emblem was considered to be the [heraldic arms](#) of God (and of the Trinity).

Summer & Neighboring in MHK

- The Nothing Festival
- Third Thursdays
- Arts in the Park
- Twilight Swim
- Tallgrass LIFE Groups
- MomLIFE play dates

Gospel Relating

- My Soul
- God/The Bible
- Discipleship
- Friendship
- Soul Care
- Technology/Social Media
- My Past
- Culture/Cosmos
- Sexuality
- Neighbors w/ Different Worldviews
- Opposite Sex
- The Enemy
- One Another/The Church
- Money?
- Neighbor
- The Bible
- The Church
- Physical Earth
- Physical Body
- Politics
- Temperaments/Personalities
- The Catholic Church (Universal Body of Christ)
- World Religions (Jews, Muslims, Bahai, etc.)
- The Lost

Ideas:

- Friendship
 - *Reclaiming Friendship: Relating to Each Other in a Frenzied World* by Ajith Fernando
 - <https://www.xenos.org/counseling/friendships>

- *Fighting for Friendship - Practical Wisdom for Building and Maintaining Friendships* by Conrad Hilario (at XSI 2016—*Love: The Mark of a Christian*)—<https://www.xenos.org/teachings/?teaching=3503>
- *Spiritual Friendship from 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13* by Scott Risley—<https://www.xenos.org/teachings/?teaching=3957>
- *Wisdom and Friendship from Proverbs* by Scott Risley—<https://www.xenos.org/teachings/?teaching=3273>
- *Counselors Offer Advice on Building Friendships*—<https://www.xenos.org/news/counseling/counselors-offer-advice-building-friendships>
- *Advice on Building Friendships Part 2*—<https://www.xenos.org/news/counseling/advice-building-friendships-part-2>
- https://smile.amazon.com/Friend-ish-Reclaiming-Friendship-Culture-Confusion/dp/1400213517/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?keywords=reclaiming+friendship&qid=1557945765&s=gateway&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1
- Cosmos/Culture/World—In the world but not of the world!
 - Hexagon Venn Diagram for Hedonism vs. Ascetism Tension
 - Colossians 2:16-23
- Technology / Social Media / Marketing / Etc.
 - June 5 Brown Bag Lunch
 - <https://iterativemarketing.net/peso-model-marketing/>
 - <https://www.prsa.org/>
- Soul Care
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2019/05/17/entertainment/game-of-thrones-counseling-trnd/index.html>

Colossians^{ESV}

Chapter 1

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

²To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, ⁷just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf ⁸and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

⁹And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

²¹And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³if indeed you

continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, ²⁵ of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶ the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

Chapter 2

For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, ² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. ⁵ For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. ¹¹ In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

¹⁶ Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. ¹⁸ Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, ¹⁹ and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

²⁰ If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— ²¹ “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” ²² (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? ²³ These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

Chapter 3

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its

creator. ¹¹ Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

¹⁸ Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. ²² Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. ²⁵ For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

Chapter 4

Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

² Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—
⁴ that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

⁵ Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

⁷ Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. ⁸ I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, ⁹ and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹ and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. ¹⁶ And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.”

¹⁸ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.