

## Godly or Toxic Relationships?

March 30, 2014

### Matthew 20:20–28 ESV

20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something.

21 And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.”

22 Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.”

23 He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.”

24 And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers.

25 But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

26 It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,

27 and whoever would be first among you must be your slave,

28 even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

### CONTROL MECHANISMS:

- **bullying & intimidation** - *to strike fear of retaliation or consequences - “Do this or else!”*
- **condemnation & humiliation** - *to convey worthlessness or guilt - “You are inferior and beneath me.”*
- **obligation** - *to induce an undue sense of debt - “After all I’ve done for you...”*
- **deceit & manipulation** - *twisting or perverting someone’s perspective, thoughts or emotions for selfish advantage and gain - “I know the real truth...”*
- **flattery** - *feeding someone’s ego to compel them to gratify you in exchange - “There’s no one like you.”*
- **gratification** - *feeding someone’s carnal desires to compel them to gratify you in exchange - “Give me what I want, I’ll give you what you want.”*

### CONTROL MOTIVES:

- **pride & superiority** - *“I’m superior and therefore I deserve...”*
- **power & control** - *“The euphoria of power over others!”*
- **fear** - *“What might happen if I don’t stay in control...”*
- **insecurity** - *“I need my self-worth validated by your compliance...”*
- **past wounds** - *“That will never happen again...”*
- **revenge & retaliation** - *“I will give you what (I think) you deserve...”*

### CONTROL CONSEQUENCES:

- **lack of trust & transparency** - *“There is no safety to be vulnerable in this relationship...”*
- **shallow & fragile relationships** - *“The relationship is over if I stop giving what you’re demanding & taking from me.”*
- **resentment, strife & alienation** - *“Your need to control is pushing me away farther & farther...”*
- **false sense of recognition, love, acceptance, loyalty & respect**
- **parasitic relationships** - *“This relationship exists for what I can take from you...”*
- **codependency** - *“I am dependent/addicted to your control of my life & to meeting your needs...”*

## RELATIONSHIPS GOD'S WAY

1. **The purpose of relationships is never self-serving nor control, but always to serve.**
  - a. *"How can I enable them to know, love, worship and obey God more?"*
  - b. *"How can I make life easier and enjoyable for them?"*
  - c. *"How can I reassure them of my love and loyalty?"*

### **Philippians 2:3–4** ESV

3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

2. **Serving in relationships is always free from any and all obligation or perceived indebtedness (*no strings attached*).**

### **Philippians 2:5–8** ESV

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,

7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

3. **Leaders are to be the "chief" servants.**

a. *serving first and serving most*

b. *those who follow want to follow, are inspired to follow, instead of being coerced to follow*

### **Matthew 20:26–28**

26 It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,

27 and whoever would be first among you must be your slave,

28 even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

### **Matthew 11:28–30** ESV

28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

4. **The context and the environment of relationship is to be supportive encouragement, free from all of the control mechanisms listed above.**

### **Ephesians 4:1–3** ESV

1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,

2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

### **Colossians 3:12–15** ESV

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.

### **Hebrews 10:24–25** ESV

24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,

25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

### **Romans 12:17–21** ESV

17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.

18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

20 To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

## **JESUS IN DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Luke 22:31–34** ESV

31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat,

32 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

33 Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death."

34 Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me."

#### **Even when Peter was arrogant, argumentative and going to fail, Jesus:**

- *reassured Peter of His love by praying for him*
- *encouraged Peter to not give up*
- *admonished Peter that there was a purpose after failure*

### **Matthew 16:21–23** ESV

21 From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you."

23 But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

#### **Note Jesus' response:**

- *NO control mechanisms (we implement the control mechanisms when we want to, or think we*

- have to, produce the change in the person ourselves)*
- *Jesus was not rejecting Peter, but setting a boundary for His own sake*
  - *loved Peter enough to clearly identify and expose his sin*

**John 13:12–17** ESV

12 When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you?”

13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.

14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.