

A Stranger into a Friend

- **The first day of school, job, or a new congregation.**
- **All have one thing in common.**
- **We are strangers**
- **We know nothing about each other.**
- **After a few weeks/months/years**
- **Some strangers remain strangers**
- **Others mere acquaintances**
- **A few become friends and close friends.**
- **What is the one ingredient?**

Communication

- **We talk; find encouragement; share.**
- **If they do the same a closer tie begins**
- **tentatively share only superficial.**
- **If safe, we share innermost hopes/fears.**
- **The more we can share – more valuable the relationship.**
- **A trusted Co-Worker; Good Neighbor; Best Friend; Loving Spouse; Respectful Child, faithful brother or sister.**
- **The Family, Workplace, Team, Church that communicates is healthy and strong.**

Value of Relationships

Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. 10 For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up. 11 Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone? 12 Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken. Eccl 4:9-12

- *3 Can two walk together, unless they are agreed? Amos 3:3*

Value of Relationships

- *A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Pr 17:17*
- *there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Pr 18:24*
- **It takes time and effort to make and keep friends, but it brings great rewards**

Our Relationship with God

Any different?

Can God be a Stranger?

Can God become a Close Friend?

Does Communication create a closer relationship?

Does a lack of communication lead to estrangement?

Communication:

- **All that affects human friendship will also impact a relationship with God.**

COMMANDS to LISTEN:

- *“But My people would not heed My voice, and Israel would have none of Me. 12 So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, to walk in their own counsels. 13 Oh, that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways!” Ps. 81:11-13*

It's All the Same!

- **A selfish spouse.**
- **Unruly children.**
- **Lack reverence to God.**
- **Come from the same root problem.**
- **Inability (lack of desire) to talk and especially to listen.**

Won't Listen – No Fellowship!

- **Mt. 7:21-23; 15:9; Gal. 1:6-9; II Jn 9; 1Cor 4:6; Rev 22:18-19**
- **Adam & Eve; Cain Saul**
- **Nadab & Abihu; Israel Korah**
- **Withdraw from Every Brother...**

Listening – the Beginning of Fellowship

- *This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 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 Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 Jn 1:5-7*
- *We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. 1Jn 4:6*

Communication:

- **All that affects human friendship will also impact a relationship with God.**

Also COMMANDS to TALK

- *Pray without ceasing, 1Th 5:17*
- *Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; Col 4:2*
- *Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; Rom 12:12*

Communication:

- *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-- Eph 6:18*
- Must never stop LISTENING or TALKING to God
- All good friends will drift apart....

Talking to God

- **The importance of prayer is not simply in making requests.**
- **Prayer is our only means to express our love, devotion, thanks, praise, repentance and confession.**
- **God delights in our prayers for through prayer we draw near to God and give Him the opportunity to intervene in our lives.**

Prayer is His Delight

- *But the prayer of the upright is His delight. Pr 15:8*
- *Draw near to God, he will draw near to you. Jas 4:8*
- *Jehovah is near unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. 19 He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him; He also will hear their cry and will save them Ps 145:18-19*

Prayer a Memorial & Incense

- *a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always...
“Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. Acts 10:2-4*
- *And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.
Rev 5:8*

Do We Believe?

- *And he spoke a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint; . . .*
- *... Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? Lk 18:1, 8*

This is My Father's World

- This is My Father's world**
- The Birds their carols raise**
- The morning light the lily white**
- declare their Maker's praise**
- This is my Father's world,**
- He shines in all that's fair,**
- In the rustling grass I hear Him pass,**
- He speaks to me everywhere.**

Improving Frequency and Depth

- **Morning/Evening prayers(a long talk)**
Ps 55:17; 88:13; Mk 1:35
- **Fervent prayer for forgiveness as often as we sin** **Mt 6:12**
- **Praise Him for all the delightful things we experience. “Then sings my soul...”**
- **Pray before each meal.** **I Tim 4:5**
- **Pray for wisdom whenever in a difficult situation.** **Jas 1:5; Neh 2:4-5**

How Great Thou Art

- **O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder**
- **Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made**
- **I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder**
- **Thy power throughout the universe displayed**
- **Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee**
- **How Great Thou Art, How great Thou art!**

Improving Frequency and Depth

- When we feel anxious we cast all anxieties on the Lord Phil 4:6-7; 1Pet 5:7
- When tempted pray for deliverance Mt 6:13
- *“This is my Father’s world...He speaks to me everywhere”* Respond with praise.
- Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for all men. 1 Tim 2:1-4
- Supplications for all the saints Eph 6:18

Great is Thy Faithfulness

- **Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest**
- **Sun, moon and stars in their courses above**
- **Join with all nature in manifold witness**
- **To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love**
- **Great is thy faithfulness!**
- **Morning by morning new mercies I see,**
- **All I have needed Thy hand hath provided**
- **Great is thy faithfulness Lord unto me.**

It's Our Choice!

- *You do not have, because you do not ask James 4:2*
- **OR**
- *giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Eph 5:20*