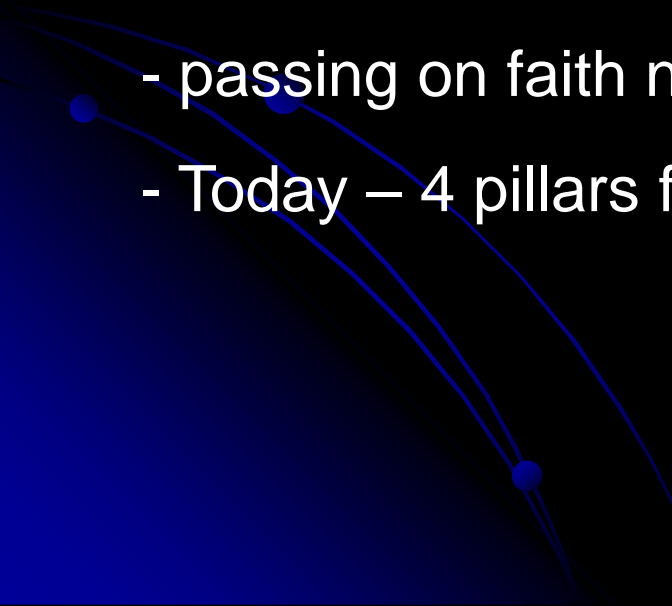


i-design: Relationship Pillars

i-design series – God's design

- created image bearers – equal value, distinct roles
 - understanding roles, embracing design – important
 - created for relationship – with God and others
 - meant to learn from one another – serve together
 - passing on faith not religion
 - Today – 4 pillars for building relationship on
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1. Love – the motivation

- deal with the why issues

- a) God's Love towards us.

- Rom. 5:6-8 *“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

- John 15:12-13 *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”*

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- John 3:16-17 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."*

- created for relationship with God, He initiates and invites us to respond. His motivation is love for us

- b) Commanded to reflect that towards others

- John 15:12 *"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."*

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- 1 Cor. 13:1-3 *"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing."*

• - our motivation must begin with Love! Anything done outside of that gains nothing

- Luke 6: 27-28, 31 *"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Do to others as you would have them do to you."*

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c) Love Defined

- 1 Cor. 13:4-8 *“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”*

- 1 John 4:7-12 *“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”*

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2. Selflessness – the posture

- culture says – look out for #1, take happiness, get for yourself, define your needs, consume – be takers

- bible commands – humility, serving others, others first, give up your life, allow God to deliver

a) Surrender Self to God

- 1 Peter 5:5-6 *“Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble’. ‘Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time”*


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- Mark 10:42-45 *"Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

- Phil. 2:1-4 *"If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."*

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b) Surrender to Others 1st

- relationships work when we put others 1st
 - husbands and wives
 - parents and children
 - friends and work relations
 - church and fellowship
 - we reflect God to them when we serve other from a motivation of love
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3. Repentance – critical actions required

- pillar of key importance – understand and practice this

a) In relationship with God

- how the relationship starts

- 1 John 1:8-10 *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.”*

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- steps of repentance:

- recognize the sin, ask for forgiveness, accept the forgiveness, turn from the behavior.

b) In relationship with others

- Col. 3:12-13 *“Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity “*

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- know the inner lawyer
- learn how to apologize well
- own your mistakes – accept forgiveness

c) Payment and Discipline

- need to understand, God does not demand payment from us for failure – Christ has paid in full. Make a distinction between discipline and being punished as payment.
- God's wrath against sin has been fully satisfied

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- Heb 12:6-10 *“Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”*

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4. Forgiveness – the gateway to relationship

- accepting and extending forgiveness is biblical
- need to know difference between forgiveness and reconciliation.
- to forgive is to release the offense (take hook out)
- John Piper says.....
- Eph. 4:31-5:2 *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”*

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a) accepting forgiveness

- removed, never to be remembered against you
- no guilt, shame, avoidance, embarrassment
- free to live up to your position – sons & daughters

b) extending forgiveness

- Resist thoughts of revenge: Romans 12:19, "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord."

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- Don't seek to do them mischief: 1 Thessalonians 5:15, *"See that no one repays another with evil for evil."*
- Wish well to them: Luke 6:28, *"Bless those who curse you."*
- Grieve at their calamities: Proverbs 24:17, *"Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles."*
- Pray for them: Matthew 5:44, *"But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."*
- Seek reconciliation with them: Romans 12:18, *"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."*

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- Be always willing to come to their relief: Exodus 23:4, *"If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him"*

So What

Four Pillars to Establish Relationships in God's Design

1. Motivation – Love – evidenced by God, required of us
2. Posture – Selfless Service – shown by Jesus, commanded to us his followers
3. Critical Action Steps – Repentance – acknowledgement
4. Crucial Gateway – Forgiveness – received and extended