

[00:00:00] Okay, well, good to see everybody again. We finished up last time we were together talking about some of the God's big idea for everything, specifically relationships and this idea of one or connection or intimacy, all those things being kind of interchangeable ideas and really seeing that as his design, his design intention, his design plan.

We're going to continue on with that theme with some more specifics Of how we can try to walk in it. So, so if we go with the metaphor that we're, we're trying to identify our target, which would be oneness, connection, intimacy, how do we get there? What, what's the path we go on to get to that place of really experiencing connection, then the, the idea of understanding how God made us to need relationship and what that.

What that looks like, how it manifests itself [00:01:00] differently in different human beings, and how that's all a part of the process of knowing, being known, caring, and acting, is we have this construct of need. And so that's kind of the first couple sections here we're going to look at is relate to this, this construct of relational need.

But we will start with just this, this understanding that this is again, part of how God has made us. This is not, um, we look at it from this perspective. First point of theology, relational theology, that God's big idea is that we would experience oneness. The second point of relational theology is he actually created us with the need for relationship as well as many other needs.

And, and some of those are very easy for us to embrace, but this is a part that as we wrestle through. Maybe some of Western Christianity's constructs of it. If you feel like you need someone [00:02:00] else for you, or if you, you're, you're experiencing strong emotion and you're having the sense of, of, of wanting to connect with people that maybe you're, you just don't understand the gospel or, or you don't know God well enough.

And so those could be some of our. If we feel like we need relationship or need care from someone, it can often be attributed to immaturity or weakness, or that it's somehow broken. We have a broken view of what God designed. And what we're going to try to walk through in this session is that this is, this really is, um, part of how God made us.

It's part of his design. That we would actually experience a motivation to move towards, towards, um, oneness, connection, intimacy. Okay, so, so he created us with needs, the reality of relational needs. When we think about how all the different interdependent things that God has created. We just walked through

this in the last week during our Sunday gathering, [00:03:00] but this idea that everything that God created is designed to be interdependent with something else, everything came out of this, this formless and void and then began to have distinctions.

So from, from land and water and voids and expanses and firmament and all the different things that he starts to create these distinct things. And when he created distinct Adam, and, and the first thing that, that we know about in that story after he created Adam is he saw that there was no one to help him.

And it was not good that Adam was alone, that man was alone. And, and so that's why the, the idea of not being in relationship and a lot of the relational needs. can be described as aloneness needs. This is what we, this is, these are some of the things that we experienced when we're experienced disconnection or aloneness.

And so, so when we think about how God made us because of sin, we experienced fallenness. But our aloneness is part of God's design, and then there's a kind of a third, third nest, and that's [00:04:00] brokenness, that's the function of living in a fallen world, and trying to connect in inappropriate ways, or others are sitting against us and hurting us, and then we end up in this place of brokenness, which there's other therapies for that which aren't necessarily in this construct, but part of our brokenness, and all of our aloneness, Is met in relationship.

It's, it's God's intended design. Both originally before the fall and after the fall that we would care for each other that we in the in brokenness and aloneness, but we're dealing mostly with with aloneness here. But when we think about need and God's design, it's very easy for us. to assume that our physical needs are appropriate.

God made us with the need for food and sleep and and exercise and water and rest and all those kind of things. And we're very patient. Mostly we're patient with each other about when we're feeling weak or we're feeling tired or we need food. And we wouldn't say, [00:05:00] well, when you, when you grow up, when you get mature.

you realize you actually don't need those things. You're just not trusting God enough. And so when, when, but, but when we experience emotionally or relationally, and it's this gap of connection, it's very easy for us to say, no, that's, that's a function of immaturity that you just, you have not experienced God enough.

And that's what we tried to propose with the idea of oneness is that even when Adam had everything, And no sin, that's it still wasn't good. So what, what are we dealing with? What is broken? Well, when we have experienced aloneness, when we, our relational needs aren't being met oftentimes. So it's not sin to have those needs.

It's not broken. It's the way God designed it. So what is sin? Well, it's, it's this, this idea that, um, all those things are legitimate. God made us that way. But when, when we walk in sin, it's, it, [00:06:00] it distorts how we express relationship or seek to meet it or pursue it and how we meet relational needs. We may try to give, to get something.

And it's really, really important to wrestle this through. And as you're teaching this to help people understand, because this is, this confronts. Most Western teaching, most of our worship music, the idea that you're all I need, you're all I need. Well, in one sense, at a macro level, that's true. God's system and his intention and his plan is all we need.

But relationship with him is not all we need, and he never intended it to be. We, we don't declare someone weak for having physical needs. But we do oftentimes, when, when it comes to relational needs, are expressing that. So, remembering again, that definition of every system that God created was intended to be interdependent.

We are so physically dependent on creation that [00:07:00] we will die with just a few minutes, within just a few minutes of not receiving from God's system through life giving oxygen. Obviously food, water, all those things. We will not be healthy if we're not receiving continually the need for rest. We spend about one third of our life recharging.

We spend about one third of our life in a coma, completely non functional, not producing anything. And we consider, well, that's just normal. That's the way God made us. Well, that's pretty inefficient. Somehow God is trying to help us see that we need lots of things. We are a needy people. We're not intended to be independent, but this inter, interdependent.

So when we think about sin, well, what is sin? This would be the way I would define it. And you can push back and you can wrestle with some of these things. By the way, as I'm teaching all of this, after each one of these points, I tend to see how people are responding to it. Is that pressing on me? Does that [00:08:00] feel right?

Because if, if, if, if you saw this is the way I've always thought. That's pretty rare. These ideas of, of God creating us to, to need other than himself and the, the idea that he created us with specific needs those can push on our moralistic. I just need to know the truth, do the truth, and that's all I need.

I am, it's just me and God. It's just me and God, and, and we kind of ignore all the systems he created that say, well no, that's actually not all that he wanted to happen. We talked about that in the oneness in the church and body. So, definition of sin is meeting legitimate needs in illegitimate ways. When we experience a need of hunger, and we go steal food, we sin.

But it's not wrong to say, I have a need for food. That's the way God made me. I have a need for rest. I have a need for sleep. I have a need to, to physically move around or atrophy and I won't be healthy. [00:09:00] Um, so there's, there's sexual, we're sexual beings. There's all kinds of things, physical security, respect, all those things are part of how God made us to be healthy.

And when we don't acknowledge those and when we acknowledge them not just as a system, but as a system that we are intended to walk in, That we're married to somebody with needs, we have those needs, and at this point, some point, walking through this, I start mentioning The genesis mandate, and that's this idea of somehow promising each other that we, we recognize that we are God's primary lifelong agent, covenantal agent to care for and meet one another's relational needs.

That's what's unique about a marriage relationship, that it's long term and we have an assignment to care for another human being in a unique way. In the body, we can all care for each other. Um, but, but in marriage, there's this unique opportunity to express it in a lifelong covenant. So letting people [00:10:00] wrestle with the idea, well what, in fact, even at this moment, if you stop and think about what would it be to be, um, what would it mean to be, have a sin that is not a legitimate need being expressed in an illegitimate way.

And I asked people, if you have an idea, let me know, if you have a thought on that, what would that be? And we've been doing this with literally hundreds and hundreds of couples and lots of maturities. And up to this point, no one's been able to really challenge the idea that. Any sin is, is at its core, it's something that God designed, designed us to need or to be healthy for us that we distort and go and get in a way that he did not ordain.

And so that's kind of a big deal. We can talk about that during the discussion, if it's helpful. So, when we think about what it means to be needy, there's two

ideas. The idea that God created us to be needy, and then for people to wrestle with, how do I feel about me being needy? How do I feel [00:11:00] about my own heart needing human interaction?

And that, both of those can be troubling for people as you get them to consider that. The more troubling thing is when it's, oh, I have to confess or admit I have need. For me to be healthy for me to flourish. I need others to flow into me with that Okay, so so that that's the big idea he created us with it And then the the big idea here that that flows out of that If he created us with needs and we're trying to help people grow in our capacity to experience connection and oneness What is our construct going to be and and and keep in mind?

These are these are I think biblical words and ideas They are not verses And for some people as you're training this, they'll push back on those, show me the biblical command. Well, there are a lot of, of biblical commands to love one another, care for one another, the way we relate to each other that point to these ideas.

But it is something that [00:12:00] has to be mined out of the big picture of the scripture. There is, it doesn't exist in a, like a great commission. But it does exist in concept in things like John 17 and, and John 14 and all the one another verses, so it weaves together into this picture. So, this is where we'll introduce this pathway.

How do we know we're making progress? How do I really know myself? How do I describe how you experience relational need, or how my wife experiences relational need, or how I experience relational need, or my aloneness? What are some tools we can use? And that's, that's the, the, the relational needs language, and this becomes that pathway that we want to go on.

And there are, there are 10, and they're not the only 10, we have, we could probably delineate out dozens if not hundreds, maybe thousands of subtle ways we experience relationship, but these are some pretty significant top, this is the top 10 ways. That [00:13:00] the Dr. David Ferguson down at Intimate Life and the Great Commandment Network in Austin.

This is his construct, and it is a construct. It takes those big themes of the scripture and tries to put handles on them so we can actually, they can be useful to us. The reason I like them, one is, I do think they're a pretty good summary of the commands of how we are to care for each other. Even, even more so, I believe these are good representations of what God has promised.

Us in the gospel, in Christ, this is how he relates to us. And, and so it becomes, while it is a human construct, it is a very biblical picture of how God has defined healthy relationship. Because this is how he's, he's, he's told us he will relate, relate to and, and respond to his bride, his church. His children, depending on, um, which member of the Godhead you're talking about relating to, but that's [00:14:00] what, that's what we have.

And so oftentimes these needs are a, therefore kind of even command. And this first one, acceptance, it's not up there. Why isn't it there? It is, um, as an example, you can think of, uh, except one other just as you've been accepted. And so the foundation for why we treat each other this way is the way God treats us.

All right, accept it. So that would be a really strong. Example of how God, that's a function of because God accept us, we accept one another. A number of these needs are like that. Some of them are representative of, of love one another versus some are ideas that are, are, are words that define an idea. They may not be specifically Biblical words.

So, what I want to do here, and these other definitions, they will exist in the folder, the Google folder and in the, the uh, um, skills workbook that you'll have access to moving forward. But learning how to, how to [00:15:00] define these in your own mind, becoming highly skilled at these in your own relationships.

And that, so you can help others understand what they're expressing in their own loneliness is really, really a helpful tool. When you think about what it, what it will make you effective at teaching this, training others, this is a core competency, learning what the relational needs are, how people express them.

It's a tremendous opportunity to bring care to people even when they don't know what they're, what they're missing, what, what their need is. When we are highly skilled and understand and can read people's desires by their words and their actions, we can actually bring care without them knowing it. So acceptance is a huge one.

Is a, a, a big core one. What, what acceptance is, the definitions are important. Because a lot of times we'll try to take several of these and, and, and kind of lump it into affirmation, which is more of a summary of You know, positive feelings towards someone or [00:16:00] being delighted in someone. These affections, or, or these words are really, really important when we want to communicate clearly the common language and the definitions of those words becomes very important.

So this is kind of a core area. to obsess a little bit about. And so acceptance is the idea that our relationship is safe. That our relationship is safe. You are not gonna, we're not gonna break relationship because of bad behavior. And that doesn't mean we agree with the behavior or declare the behavior good, just I'm not gonna pull away from you because of that bad behavior relation.

And we, and that's the difference between acceptance in, in the biblical idea of relationship and the cultural idea in, in the cultural idea, you have to declare all behaviors of equal value. Well, obviously in scripture, we can't do that. So that's, that's the first big idea. Acceptance. And then the idea of affection.

This is the desire that we have to be delighted in [00:17:00] that someone cares about us. And even as, as a husband and wife, it does not mean. Um, just the, the physical relationship, the sexual relationship. It's all the touches, all the looks, all the words of affection. It's everything that says by word or touch that I delight in you.

Um, even in brotherly, in brotherly, um, relationships, we can have affection in our culture that might be slugging each other, uh, on, on the arm or, or, you know, other kind of masculine expressions of that we are good friends and I delight in you. And we can express some of those things that we receive as affectionate with one another.

Sometimes that's. That's, that's teasing for some people that says, okay, this, this is an indication that, Hey, we were, we're actually very tight and very close. And then you're telling me now with those words. And so what affection is can vary greatly. The Russian gymnast team, you know, um, has very, very kiss them straight on the lips, kind of, [00:18:00] um, the males.

And we would go, no, that's not okay in our culture, but there's lots of ways we express affection and it is important by the way, just out of, out of, uh, Just a side note in this. You, you will be shocked if you, if you begin using this tool and watching people's assessments, how often the need for affection shows up in men, because there are so few, so few appropriate ways in our culture for men to show affection.

They can almost only always get it from their wives. And their wives don't see that as a distinct need apart from the physical sexual relationship. And so it can really get missed. And this can be a very acute need in a lot of men, and it's not related specifically to the sexual relationship. So next one is appreciation.

And this is, there's five A's. There can be no acronym unless you completely change the words to make an [00:19:00] acronym, which we are not going to do. Um, the, the idea of appreciation is based on what you do. So when you say, I have, I have the need for appreciation or that shows up on your assessments. It says, I am grateful for what you did.

If these are things you say, thank you for actions and words or, or service that someone does for you, that's appreciation. And if that's important to you, that becomes something. And this is one of my top needs that if I'm doing something that somebody notices it, it gets very discouraging for me. This is how I experienced relationship.

Um, if, if, if it seems like nobody ever notices that I'm trying to bring good. So that's appreciation. Approval, in a lot of these, the definitions become very important. Approval is a declaration of who you are, fundamentally what you are like, your personality. What you're good at and [00:20:00] approval says, I like who you are.

I like who you are, which we often don't say to each other as couples. And quite frankly, many of us don't think God likes us. We don't rest in that. He really likes who he made us to be. We would say he loves us and whatever that means, whatever understanding that might be. But for, for us to rest in, God likes who he made me to be, and my wife likes me, and I like my wife.

Those are really, really important senses of friendship and, and that we don't have to be someone different in order to, to receive relational connection. Attention is the, is, is the picture of, I know what's going on in your world. I understand what you're going through. I know you and I care about you. I actually know what you're going through and I know who you are and I care [00:21:00] about that.

That's what the idea of attention is. This is the one, this is the, the, the need, least likely to be desired by most people because it just sounds awful. I have a need for attention. You have visions of people dancing on, on, on tabletops and trying to be the center of attention. But, but oftentimes that actually is how people cope.

If they have a strong need for attention, that it, it, it does come out in this place of. Okay, what can I do to say, hey, I'm here, I'm here. Does anybody see me? Does anybody notice me? Does anybody care? By the way, this is what, where the definitions become really important. Um, the, the very, very common male female definition miss.

Like, we, we miss each other. A, a wife, this would be very typical, doesn't happen in every couple, but the, the, the wife will say, uh, you never listen to me. And, and what she's asking for typically would be, you don't know what I'm going through, you don't understand my world. What the [00:22:00] husband hears is, I, I need to understand the sound waves coming out of your mouth.

I need to understand what you're saying and then find a way to fix it. That's how we, that's how we, when she says you're not listening, we hear as an appeal to be heard and then something to be fixed. And oftentimes in the feminine mind, they don't need it fixed. They just want to know that someone understands what they're going through.

They don't, that's how they experience aloneness. And it's a very, very common area in male, female communication and broken relationship. They just want to know, do you know what's going on and do you care about it? That's all I need. And then I'll go back to working hard and doing my thing. Um, but, so that, that would be one that can be very, very important to get a clear definition on so that you don't miss what your, your mate is talking about and helping people understand that difference.

[00:23:00] Comfort, this is one we talked about in a lot of different contexts, but it basically says I join you in your pain. I join you in your pain, I'm willing to feel with you. Um, in, in some ways this could be, uh, as much a a, a celebration as, as a, as a, an experience of, of dark or hard things. But it's the same idea.

This is the, the, the empathy being emotionally present with people, meeting emotion with emotion. And this, this is a key need because this is what God has given us to actually process all the trauma and hurt of life. And because we're so bad at it, oftentimes we end up very, very isolated in relationship when we don't know how to experience pain where we're.

This is that that's how we can exist. In this trying to feeling deep pain, not experiencing comfort from one another. And then we form these battle lines and this disconnection, but it's a really, really key skill to be able to comfort one another. [00:24:00] Next one is encouragement. It's just the urging one another to persist or persevere towards a goal.

It's basically just saying to each other, I believe you can do it. I believe you can do it. I believe in you and, and, and reminding them that it's worth pursuing. This is often what we offer instead of comfort, when it, when people need comfort, we try to encourage them. And that's what it sounds like.

There's certainly an appropriate time for encouragement. We need to be reminded that we should keep pressing into, to challenging things. Respect is one that, because, well, there, love and respect is a ministry and a pattern of relational development, has this really, really broad definition for what respect means.

And I think it can mean all of those things. It's a fine way to define it. In this tool, in this construct, respect is much narrower. It basically says, I value your personality. Because you're made in the image of God, I can grant you respect. I can grant [00:25:00] you dignity. You have meaning to me because you are human.

And it doesn't mean I respect everything you stand for, what you believe in. It means you as a human being matter and your opinions matter and your personhood matters to me. And so when we, when we, when we're talking about respect, it's, it's really important to keep it more narrow. Otherwise for, for some of us, respect could be this really broad definition and it makes it really hard for people in our lives, especially our mates, to understand how to actually express care for us.

A security. This is, um, the promise that we will, I will help you feel safe. It can be relational harmony. It can be systems harmony. The whole idea that the up is up and down is down. This is one of, I think, in many different relational hierarchies, this, this, this sense of safety. That I will help [00:26:00] you feel safe.

I will participate in that. Um, is the idea of what security, how that plays out. And we can talk more about that as we go along or if there's questions. But it's, it's, it's either in relationship or in physical, sometimes, um, the number one fear, the top fear of most women is the fear of an abandonment. The top fear for most men is failure.

So when we think about meeting the need of security in our lives, it would be really, really important that we understand how that manifests itself. Is it in a relational way? Is it a financial way? Is it in a way the systems of our homes are set up? So, but it's an important one to understand and to walk it out.

Support Is the last of the 10. It says, I will help you with your burdens. I'll come alongside and help you do those hard things. This is again one of my top relational needs pretty consistently. It's this idea [00:27:00] that we're not alone when we're trying to do hard things. There's someone coming alongside and helping us with our problems, our struggles, our projects, whatever it might be.

And so that's the, that is the uh, the 10 relational needs. And I'm going to show you one more slide. We won't spend a lot of time. This is the, this is the way to look in your booklets and in your page, um, where you have the, the, the left, uh, um, left column is the word with those kind of summary phrases that we mentioned, a little bullet point definition, the last one, the one on the right.

This is important for you to understand as you're trying to help people out. sort out what they're experiencing, how do they know, um, they're trying to sort out their own heart so they can be known. These, those are common, uh, unpleasant or undesirable emotions that we experience if that need is being, not being met.

Okay, so it's just a tool, it's not. Perfect. It's not complete, [00:28:00] but it's just a way to prompt. Oh, I'm feeling kind of desperate here. I'm feeling lonely. I'm feeling very disconnected. Oh, well, maybe it is attention. And so it's a tool to just help discern. what people are experiencing. So, when we think about the, the idea of God created us with needs, this concept, this construct, the 10 relational needs, this is all developed by Intimate Life folks, and it's been a really helpful tool, uh, in this process for us.

We want to understand these definitions are a core competency. When we're, for our own lives, for our own connectedness, with our own wives and relationships, but also as we're handing this to other people, it's really, really important that we, we begin to understand the, um, these definitions and how it works out, what it looks like in someone's life when they're experiencing that aloneness.