

[00:00:00] As they begin scrolling or start looking, I just want to at least have this verse up here. So we're going to be transitioning now from, um, mostly higher level and then some practical application to the very, very, very, very practical. And I don't know if you remember, The idea that we wanted to set the target of oneness, the pathway of relational need or created with needs and that construct of, of using that relational theology and create with needs.

And then the third piece that we want to do a good job of is making sure. That we're, we're creating real connection that there's this sense of knowing and being known experientially, not just informationally, and the care piece is really comes up in the foundational piece of that is in Romans 12, 15 [00:01:00] mentioned this before I had no way want to compare what we do or declare something.

I just why this is so important to me to keep ending people. These tools is primarily for this piece. There are so many good relational tools out there, how to have a better relationship, how to ask for forgiveness, how to assert yourself. There's so many good tools out there. The distinction and, and, and the, and really the only reason I feel compelled to keep putting this model out there is.

I don't sense that in the midst of the event, in the midst of the skill, in the midst of the training, you're actually creating an opportunity to connect all of them and rightly and are all champions of great connection one to another, but the actual exercises. don't necessarily [00:02:00] lead you to this place of connection.

And so, so this Romans 12, 15 emotional responding or responding, engaging your heart, all those kind of ideas are all at the center of this care piece that actually leads to this empathetic connection. And, and, and so we're gonna do it in two parts today. First, I want to explain why I think it's going to be important for you to have your own story of this journey.

And then we'll, we'll jump into how I would teach it at a conference or sitting with a couple, some of the key elements of what we want to try to emphasize about this practice of emotional engaging, emotional responding, meeting emotion with emotion. So a big idea we want to hang on to in this section, though, is.

Your story is going to be really important convincing people to take the risk. If this is real and active in your life and your marriage, your friendships, it's going to add a lot of cred to what it is you're trying to call people into. Because for [00:03:00] many, it is really scary to think about this. We've had couples that

absolutely can't feel anything, that they're completely shut down, and a few, very few, are just really Right out of the gate, very relationally intuitive.

And so you're going to be dealing with couples either, even, even if it's just one on one couple, couple to couple, you're going to be running into people all over the spectrum and your story and having a clear story is going to be really important. And this verse is really what started Cindy and I's journey down this road of relational theology.

And, and, and kind of forming this conviction that I think this is what God wants us to be doing with a, with a significant portion of our min ministry energy and how it can be central to the, the, the, the very essence of what it means to be the people of God in, in the church. And we were at a couples conference probably 15 or 16 years ago in, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, sitting in the back row and a good friend, Craig Correa, was teaching maybe [00:04:00] 150 couples, I don't know, somewhere in there, big, big conference center, lots of, lots of couples from all over the state of Iowa, we're all gathered in this room and he laid out a few, the paradise exercises, he taught us that, that first introduction to relational needs as a part of life.

Yeah. But this exercise, this Romans 12, 15 exercise, and this is my story, because when I was asked to do this, We, we, we sat down, we walked through the exercise, shared stories from childhood, which is how we always introduce the exercise. And then the, uh, had a wonderful time crying, um, enjoying each other, celebrating all these fun stories from childhood, felt incredibly connected with Cindy.

We just had a wonderful time. But the, but the, the aha moment for me was I realized I do not obey these verse. Versus this, this command, this directive as a pastor. I don't treat people this way. And I would have typically been someone [00:05:00] who would have had gone to great lengths to understand what's the right decision, what's the right truth, hand it to people, hope they apply it, and oftentimes I think it was a very cold, sterile transaction.

And I really don't know how impactful I was as a shepherd. In fact, I don't think I was. Because I didn't engage my heart very often, and I certainly didn't engage it intentionally as a practice of obedience. And so that really began to change the way I viewed pastoring, the way I viewed parenting, the way I viewed my first response in communicating with my wife, is to lead with this empathetic connection, this place of connection.

And there's something amazing about it, I believe, it's a deeply spiritual thing. When we can express care, one to another, without, without, sometimes without even being in the same room. And it can actually land, it can change their sense of person, because someone else is meeting their emotion, is [00:06:00] joining them in that.

And so, I don't know where you are. You may be already intuitive at all of that. It may be a, a, a, a journey for you to explain how you went from, it's, it's almost like a testimony because you're asking people to, to step into this spiritual journey, you're asking people to, to take a step of faith and trust that you will take this risk.

There will be a benefit to you and so your testimony is going to be a part of that and certainly Cindy and I's testimony as how we relate is part of our story and why people are willing to step in and walk with us, but certainly why this piece, why this practice is so important has been pretty significant as well.

We always want to share a little bit of that story, primarily because Well, maybe there's a couple reasons. One is that testimony. It's good. It's good. It was good for me. We hope it'll be good for you. The second piece is to know that there is a transition, [00:07:00] that this, this way of being connected, almost everybody has to make a decision to choose it.

To be exposed to it because we don't typically do that. Well, in modern Christendom, there's, I'm sure there's many flocks that do an amazing job. Uh, the circles I've been exposed to most typically, it would not be a common practice to have to hold this up as a super high value. And so all of us are going to make that transition.

And so that kind of normalizes needing to change your mind about something or, or to explore something new. And so for those reasons, your story. And how you tell it and how these practices impact you are going to be super important to how your impact with others and how much they're willing to step in and kind of track along with you as you share.

Um, the rest of the rest of the content and lead them into some of those exercises. Remember, as we step into the exercise section, you're gonna, you're gonna bump into people that are all over the map [00:08:00] again, in terms of, I am terrified, we are deeply distressed, we're mostly connected, uh, feeling pretty good about it, these, you know, this is all going to be really good, we're getting along pretty well anyway, this will just be, you know, some, some, uh, some bonus material that we get to use.

And you'll find people all over the place. And so the more we can help them overcome some of those fears, anxieties, ignorance, there's just sometimes there's just not a sense of how do you do this? I've never been asked to do this. And so we have this opportunity to, to shepherd people into a new experience, hopefully one that will be very satisfying and connecting for them.

So work hard on your story, whether it's, it's, you're just telling it around the dinner table with people, or in a meeting with a pre marriage couple or doing a conference. Um, I don't know how many of you are planning on doing anything instructive in terms of the larger group of people. I know Tom is in a place where he's, he's been asked to [00:09:00] lead a weekend retreat of some kind.

And so these are going to be really important steps to help people go, I'm going to listen to you. I want to listen to you because you told me that part of your story. So

stop there.

All right.

Questions about the story part or why that's significant.

Makes, makes sense of why that's significant. I think, uh, I would say my story is a work in progress here. Just even hearing you say that that's important. piece some different parts of it together here, but that's, that's helpful to know [00:10:00] why that would, you know, be impactful on others you're trying to lead into this for sure.

And all you can share is what your story has been and why you want to keep, keep, keep moving through. And it's just like anything else we have in the faith, we can share whatever we learned and, and people can embrace it to a degree, whether that's evangelism training or gospel identity kind of stuff we might work through.

Hopefully we're all still on a journey. Towards a much greater understanding of those topics, but we sure don't want to wait till we feel like we have it all together before we call people into that. That journey. I don't know if I mentioned this in, in the original, um, why we go here, but just to keep reinforcing whenever you're doing this, even with a couple, you're going to meet for six weeks in your living room.

All you're doing is you're showing them a path and you're opening a door and giving them some [00:11:00] resources to walk out on that path. That's the most you're going to accomplish while they're with you. It's just showing that gate and, and hopefully help them take a couple steps. Now, long term, you can coach and support and encourage and have a, have a format for that.

But that's all any of us are going to do at any given time, just take a few little steps forward.

And I'm curious what the timeline was for you of that aha of like realizing, especially around,

uh, rejoicing with those rejoice, like when, when was that? And yeah, well, um, I had probably been a pastor at least 10 years. Okay, at that time, and very proud of all my right answers, very, very much. I mean, I would have just approached, I would just now I would describe myself as just a moralistic truth [00:12:00] teacher.

It's really simple. I was sharing even when I was out that way this last weekend. I was a big, big promoter that, you know, don't be stupid. Um, you know, walk in the truth, make good decisions, don't be stupid. And really had a sense of independence and the ability to build a life through right thinking and right choices.

That was pretty safe and easy. Very much a, um, a moralistic view of the world and very little compassion. expressed for those who didn't want to walk in truth. So I think, I think I truly had a Holy Spirit moment where I go, I want to be the guy that everybody wants to tell their happy stories to, and I want to be the guy that, that when people are just absolutely brokenhearted, they know I will stop and care.

There may not be anybody else [00:13:00] on the planet, but they know I will do that. And I, and I certainly do that imperfectly, but that's my hope. That's my standard, that's my target, is that I'm, I'm always ready to stop and, and I still feel like I got some pretty good answers and truth and will help people. But, but first I wanna meet with where they are and, and let them know that they're not alone in it.

Even as they're trying to make different decisions or form new habits.

Yeah, I think that's really valuable piece. I appreciate what you're sharing today, Pat. And I think your testimony has been a powerful piece, even for the reason

I'm here. And so, I think there is something really cool about that. Just, just to highlight a couple things you shared that really, that idea that, you know, it doesn't come natural for any of us.

Like, we all, that's, that's pretty cool to be able to communicate that. I [00:14:00] think some people are like, well, I'm not empathetic, and other people are. Those, those kind of Whatever emotional people or something. I was like, no, none of us really start that place, but it is something that God can grow us in. I think that's really cool.

And, and I really just appreciate your, you saying, I want to be the guy that people come to. That's that just, just saying that transforms a lot of my thinking of what, what that would look like, like in order for me to be that guy. Who would I be? What would that look like? Who, why would someone want to come somewhere to somewhere and share their successes in their, in their griefs with.

Anyways, that's, it's really cool to even just think on that line. So like that I've, I've found, um, you know, attempting, you talk about showing people the gate and asking them like, Hey, there's, there's the path. [00:15:00] Um, I guess I've found some couples that. We're super excited and, like, yeah, let's, right on.

Thanks. We're going for it. And then some that, you know, the, I think we can be impatient sometimes. And I'll speak for myself. I can be impatient sometimes. And it's like, okay, we've, we've tried this for a week or maybe two weeks. There's nothing left to practice. I actually heard that last night from somebody.

Well, we have nothing left to practice. And, I don't know, it's uh, it's a, it's, it's hard. It's, it's great, but it's hard to watch sometimes when, like, here's, here's what it is. I, I can't really do it. Might be bad if I could, though, anyway. Right.[00:16:00]

Yeah. Don't, don't lose heart. I mean, some people we've had people get up and walk out and never come back. We've had people get up and walk out in the middle of one of our bigger events and we see them a year later and they're like, thank you so much. You saved our marriage. And we didn't have a clue how it turned out, but the Lord somehow came alongside it and really helped them.

And, and, and they're super. Grateful for the material and we can't do anything with it. It's not, it's not, it's, it's like the gospel. All we can do is tell them the good news and somehow the spirit has to persuade them. We, we can't, we can't

make them do anything. And sometimes they're so terrified or hurt or broken or, or abused that it is, it's just terrifying to think about taking an emotional risk.