

All 4 One

The Relationship Blueprint series week 2

by Chris Famisaran

Father in heaven, Lord, we thank you for the opportunity. As we continue in our series of the Relationship Blueprint, as we talk about being together, all for one, lead in guidance. In Jesus' name, amen.

In 1962, the summer of 1962, two young boys, Lou Wilcox and Bobby Rohrbach Jr. met for the first time. They were riding their bikes in a small, little rural town in Ohio, and on the weekends they would get together. One would actually nowadays, on the weekends they get together, they'll still hang out, go for breakfast, maybe run errands. They'll talk about their families, the wins, the achievements, help with home repairs, and kind of discuss how the world is challenging and changing. If someone can't remember a sport, a name or a TV show, the other one is able to come in and back them up and share what that name or that sport is. They've lived together or they've hung out together for so long, they can finish each other's sentences. They didn't outgrow the other. They didn't leave each other behind. Lou says, "I have a lot of friends, but there's something special about our friendship."

And yet, even in today's age, as important as it is, we know that friendships are valuable. But over time, we found that 40% of Americans say they don't even have a best friend at all, up from 25% in 1990. But for men, the best friend gap is even more pronounced. Typically, they have fewer, closer friends. The percentage of men without any close friends jumped fivefold, to 15% from 3% in 1990, according to the American Perspective Study.

Michael Lattice also notes, "we were taught for generations to focus on work, family and productivity. Don't share. Don't share what's really going on on the inside." You relate, guys?

And yet we find that time strengthens, it deepens bonds. They say it takes about 300 hours to develop a best friend. Anybody have a best friend? Friends are important.

In fact, what is the basis of friendship? Let's go to the Book of John. Okay, let's go to the Book of John. There's a couple of passages that I want to look at. John, chapter 15, 9-17. The theme here is, Jesus is with the disciples. It's the Last Supper. Jesus is sharing some things to give them hope, to give them confidence, because he has admitted that, hey, I'm not going to be here forever. In fact, much longer. John 15, verses 9 through 17. Y'all there? Okay.

Verse 9. As the Father has loved me, so have I. What I have loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's command and remain in his love. I've told you this so that my what? My joy. That positive feeling that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this. What should we do? Love each other? Love one another as I have loved you. Did Jesus show that display that well? Okay. Greater love has no one than this to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends, for you do what I command. I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

I love this particular part where Jesus says, you are not my servants, you are my friends. There is a value there. You didn't chose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit. Fruit that will last. So that whatever you ask in my name, the Father will give you. This is my command. Love each other.

So what command is Jesus telling them, reminding them of? It's been from the very beginning, but he's specifically saying what? Love. Love each other. Love one another. Recently, a couple months ago, we talked about John 13:34,35. This is what he has just said is a follow up to what he says. In chapter 13. It says a new command. I give you love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples. If you love one another.

Briefly, just don't have to turn to it. But Colossians 3:12 also says, Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Patience, patience, patience. When you look through the various acts that Jesus did of healing, of compassion, what are some of the things that really stand out to you?

What stories really stand out where Jesus showed kindness and compassion and ultimately love and care? Anything come to mind real quick, just shout it out. Okay. Samaritan, woman. Woman at the well. How about when Jesus healed the 10 lepers, right? And only one of them came back to thank him? How about the man who he told him to go to the Pool of Siloam? Okay, the paralyzed man, Jairus Daughter. A woman who had been bleeding for many, many years. People that he had fed. Okay. These are just a sampling of things that Jesus did to show his love and his compassion. And if Jesus is our ultimate Role model. Should we not reciprocate? Now, I'm not saying that we go and heal 10 lepers, okay? I don't have that power. But the same love and compassion and care, especially that he showed others. Should we not adopt? Is caring for one another important in relationships? Yes. Oh, you're making me scared.

All right, let's go to the main part of the Bible that I want to focus on today. Let's go to Mark, chapter two. Okay, I know we've already kind of talked about this already. Maybe was it last year or the year before? But this story helps us to bring out the point that I want to. I want to share with today. Okay, so Mark, chapter two, starting at verse one. Okay? This is towards the beginning of Jesus ministry. All right? He's just healed a man with leprosy a couple of days prior. And he goes and he enters Capernaum.

Verse 1. A few days later, Jesus again enters into Capernaum. The people heard that he had come home. So who's the local crowd? People who know who he is. All right? They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, I guess, standing room only, right? Not even outside the door. And he preached the word to them. And in verse three, some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, son, your sins are forgiven.

And there's two amazing parts to this part already, okay? Number one, that Jesus says, son, your sins are forgiven. Is that not good news? But to get to that point, what had to happen? This guy's four friends, his four bros, right? Put him on a mat and carried him, hoping that they could see Jesus. It's commonly said especially there's one point where Jesus has been talking. He's been preaching all day. And when the sun goes down, what did everybody do? Those who were sick, those who were lame, those who needed healing, they immediately went to Jesus. And what does Jesus do? He spends hours listening and healing them. Jesus has been surrounded by people already the whole day. Okay, now listen. I love you all. I love you all. But sometimes I even myself need to decompress. Sometimes I need to be by myself. But Jesus lovingly goes and he listens and he heals those who needed healing, care, and compassion. The man was carried by his friends. And not only did they, they just didn't wait at the door. They were ready and willing to do anything possible to have their friend be healed. So they climb on the roof and they open the roof up. How many of you ever gone to somebody else's house and tried to open the roof up? You'd get arrested for trespassing or vandalism or name the list of offenses, right? But they didn't care. Now, the roofs were a little bit easier to get through. You didn't need to take a chainsaw because most houses at that time were made of. The roof was made of thatching and mud. So they take you to the roof to get help.

Now, who do you think had the hardest job? Four guys who carried this man, Jesus, having to deal with this awkwardness. Maybe the man on the mat who had to make the hardest choice, the guy who was healed. Why? He had to admit that he needed help, right? And so sometimes it's hard because we have pride that gets in the way. And yet do people not care? How often, perhaps, when you've asked for help, that you've been given help?

So the four men, they didn't care. This was their friend. They wanted to help this friend out. They carried him. And not only that, though he says, son, you are forgiven in verse, verse six, he says, now some of the teachers were sitting there thinking to themselves, why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God alone? And they didn't recognize Jesus and his divinity or the Messiah. And so immediately Jesus knew in the Spirit that they were thinking in their hearts and said to them, why are you

thinking these things? Which is easier to say to this paralyzed man, your sins are forgiven? Or to say, get up and take your mat and walk. But I know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. So he said to them, I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home. And what does the man do? He gets up and he walks out. This amazed everyone, and they praised God, saying, we have never seen anything like this. Remember, it's early in Jesus's ministry and he's headed towards his path towards Jerusalem. And along the way, he helps those who are in need, kindness, compassion.

Noted author and Pastor Erwin McManus, many years ago, over 20 years ago, was with his son, speaking at a conference, I believe it was in Florida. They were at the beach, and his son Aaron, who was 10 at the time, they were walking down the beach, and there were several, hundreds of students there as well, but none of them recognized that in the water, there was a man who was physically disabled, who was awkwardly trying to get out of the water. And as he tried to walk out of the water, the water kept pulling him back in, and he fell. He helped himself again. He fell again. Now, Erwin, courage and kudos to him for telling answers. He was trying not to pay attention, trying to look away, right? He wouldn't have to have any responsibility. He tried to walk away, but his son Aaron was. What was he doing? He was walking towards the man. And Erwin's son said, I have to go and help that man. And McManus writes, His words pierced through me and stood there paralyzed into my hypocrisy. It was clear that this was Aaron's moment. I had missed mine. His compassion moved him to heroism. And while Aaron seized his divine appointment, I was stuck in a moment I couldn't get out of. And as Aaron went down to go and help this man, several other young men went and helped this man out of the water. And he said to his father at the time as well, before the kids got there, he struggled helping this guy get out of the water. Eventually, the young guys noticed, hey, go and help this guy.

When Aaron got back to his father, remember, he was only 10 years old at the time. His tear, he was crying tears. He said, I couldn't help him. I wasn't strong enough. McManus ends with, he couldn't see that no one would have helped this man if he had not taken initiative. Kindness. Compassion. Care. What does it mean to be compassionate? What does it mean to care?

Well, last week we talked about listening to one another. Okay. It's important that in all relationships, they require communication. And yes, you can communicate. When we think about communication, we think about talking, talking, talking. But that's just half a part of communication. You have to listen. Not only listen with what they're saying, but also listen to how they're saying it. Communication draws people together. Words have the power to inspire others and also emotionally, mentally destroy them.

What else can we do to be compassionate? We can be kind. Oops, sorry. Got ahead of myself to be kind. What are some ways that we can be kind? Well, obviously compliment one another. All right, maybe they have a really cool hat, maybe a really cool jacket, new car, a wonderful house. Name it something as simple as that was an inspiring speech. There's many ways that we could compliment each other. Okay, that was a really great meal. My personal favorite by Ron Swanson. Please and thank you. Manners go a long way. Amen. How many of you appreciate it? When somebody says please and thank you, does it feel like please and thank you have gone the way of the road? It's gone out the window. Sometimes it seems like that, right? We sometimes tend to lack or forget our manners. But please and thank you try to make people laugh. Laughter is like medicine for the soul, as it says, how can you help others? Where can you volunteer something as simple as trying to smile makes a difference in somebody's life? Maybe you've been having a bad day and there's somebody that you're walking down the street or you're driving, and sometimes somebody will just smile, and all of a sudden you feel that much better.

I don't know if I shared this story, but several months ago, I was headed to the hospital. I think it was in Torrance, and there was a guy who was on. It's not a motorcycle, it's a tricycle. You got the two wheels in the front and one in the rear. And he was bumping music that I do not associate with. Not a thing against it. Just. It's not my particular flavor of music. But he was playing it really loud because he had a helmet on. I thought, well, dude, that's kind of rude, but you're just forcing your music on me. But as I turned left, this guy was having the best day. He was cruising. He was waving his hands like, you know, he was having a great time. And I look over and I just, for the moment, the joy that he had in his life that he was experiencing, I was stoked. So I threw

him a shaka. You know, stoked. That's awesome. And he was like. He nodded to me. He saw it, and he recognized my appreciation, what joy he expressed. I took joy from what he was experiencing. Spread joy to others, make them feel good, something. Although I could not see his smile, I saw his smile with his eyes. Right? How about. Have you ever maybe been on the bus or someplace where somebody really needed to take a seat? Share your seat. Okay. And think of others.

But also, not only should we listen or be kind, but encourage one another. How hard is it in to say something nice? Maybe write a note, be a good listener. When somebody, you know, maybe you need to have a conversation of how we can grow. Don't lead with, hey, you did this wrong. Think of some things that they already know that they're doing well, and point that out. Hey, love how you did that on presentation. You did a great job. All right. You put the dishes away really well. Thank you for taking out the trash. Okay. Little things like that Build them up and recognize somebody's effort. How did you feel when somebody said that as they tried to encourage you and they told you, hey, I have confidence in you and I think you can do this job. You may have felt like a couple of feet high. So all of a sudden you felt 10ft high, right? Encourage one another, tell them that you have confidence in them, but also back that up with, hey, how can I help you? And along the way, point out, celebrate the wins. Celebrate the wins.

Now, being compassionate as well sometimes might also mean forgiveness. Forgiveness can be hard sometimes too, especially if it's somebody that was really close to you that has hurt your feelings or maybe betrayed you.

Victoria Ruvolo was 45 at the time. I think back in 2005, she was driving down the road near Lake Runkonkoma in New York. And as she was driving down the road, there was a group of five young men who were about 19 years old. They somehow had stolen a credit card and were driving really fast. They opened a window and what came out of the window? A 20 pound frozen turkey. That turkey ended up on Victoria's windshield and straight to her face. She was in surgery for 10 hours with the doctors, not only trying to fix everything, but also repair and reconstruct her face. Well, obviously the young man, Ryan Cushing, who was riding with the others, was, I guess the guilty individual, was caught,

went to jail, and was about to be sentenced. And yet Victoria shows up to his sentencing October 17, 2005. Victoria asked the judge for leniency because he was looking at 25 years. A young man at 19 could potentially spend the next 25 years of his life, the prime of prime young part of his life. And in her statement, she read, despite all the fear and the pain, I have learned from this horrific experience and I have much to be thankful for. Each day when I wake up, I thank God simply because I am alive. I sincerely hope that you have learned from this awful experience. Ryan, there is no room for vengeance in my life, and I don't believe a long, hard prison term would do you or me or society any good. Cushing at this point experiences this tremendous amount of grace and he's weeping, he's remorseful at what he had done. He ended up being sentenced for six months. But then Ruvalo also added, I truly hope that by demonstrating compassion and leniency, I have encouraged you to seek an honorable life. If my generosity will help you mature into a responsible, honest man whose graciousness is a source of pride to your loved ones in your community, then I will truly be gratified and my suffering will not have been in vain. Brian, prove me right. A lot of forgiveness now in our lives. Sometimes we don't have a flying turkey headed towards our face. But maybe somebody said something that is truly unkind and we remember that. Maybe there's a co worker who's trying to influence upper management saying, you're doing a horrible job and yet you've only done the right thing. But they're scared because they might try to overtake your position. The obnoxious neighbor, the difficult family member. Caring and compassion also sometimes requires us to forgive. And the forgiveness, again is not just for that person, it's for yourself as well. Because when you can forgive others, that anger, that grief will ebb away and you don't have to hold on to that poison.

The last thing is take action. Just like the four men who carried their friend to Jesus. Take action. Don't be afraid. Unfortunately, sometimes helping others, being compassionate, being caring is often, oftentimes misunderstood. The teachers of the law, what was their response when they had just seen true care and compassion? That's not what you're supposed to do. How is this guy supposed to forgive sins? You look at other stories where Jesus does wonderful, beautiful miracles. Lazarus was raised from the dead, and yet what did the critics say? You're not supposed to do that or it's Sabbath. Sometimes

doing the right thing and being caring and compassionate is not always going to be understood by everybody.

Does anybody have a 2:00am friend? You know what I mean by a 2:00am friend? Somebody can call at 2:00am and no matter what, they will pick up. I have one or two individuals in my life who at 2am I can call and if need be, they will listen or they'll come over. The others, they've got their silent notifications on. So they're not going to listen to me. I'm kidding. I still love you guys. Do you have somebody in your life who, if you reach out to them, they will listen? They will take that call. And if you don't, my encouragement to you, be that person. Develop friendships, develop relationships. Be somebody that can be trusting, who has concern, who has empathy, who loves, who listens, who takes action, who is encouraging? It's not always easy. Relationships have their challenges, but by God's grace, as you grow, I don't want to say you put in the effort, but relationships, they're not always easy. They can be challenging.

Marriage. Those of you who've been married a while, is it easy? It can be challenging, right but as we communicate love and respect and learn and accept and say I'm sorry, relationships will grow. All right. So being compassionate is sometimes misunderstood.

Dieter Uchtdorf wrote, let our hearts be stretched out in compassion towards others, for everyone is walking his or her own difficult path. Concern that I see is that there are many people who are struggling. The mental health challenges that we're seeing, especially young people, has gone through the roof. And we don't know what everybody's story is. We don't always know why people struggle, because we're afraid to say that there is something wrong. May you and your relationships have courage and say, hey, I am here. And if you're afraid, have resources to say, hey, I may not be equipped, but let's find someone who can help you. All it takes is to listen. All it takes is a smile. All it takes is a word of encouragement. It might be forgiveness, but take action. So reflection based on the five waves of being compassionate. What is your biggest strength and also what is an area that you feel is a weakness that you can develop or grow in?

Okay, the five things that we focused on today. What is your biggest strength and also the weakness that you can grow and develop? This week, I want you to practice one act of kindness every day this week, I want you to practice one act of kindness every day this week. And just as we talked about last week, continue to have conversations, continue to listen to others with intent and have earnest conversations, Continue to grow together. Amen.

Father in heaven, thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to gather together again once more. And as we talk about relationships, Lord, as we listen. And now, Lord, help us to better be better equipped to care and to be compassionate, to be as one united family, all for one. Watch over us until we meet again next time in Jesus name, Amen.

Grace and peace, everybody.