

Shhh

The Relationship Blueprint series week 1

by Chris Famisaran

Let's pray. Gracious Lord, as we begin a new series on the relationship blueprint. Lord, may it be a time of wonder, of journeying together, drawing closer together. And Lord above all, help us to be faithful believers who love and value relationships. In Jesus name, amen.

Over the years, as I've observed and been here, one of the values that we place here at the daily church is that of relationships. And relationships are paramount. When you look to Scripture. From the very beginning of the book of Genesis, God created Adam and Eve because he wanted to be in relationship with them, to have community. What is the last picture, the last chapter of the book of Revelation? God is with God's people in community. And some people just ask, well, okay, yeah, I know I'm supposed to make friends. How am I supposed to make relationships? Have relationships? And so over the next six weeks, we're going to be talking about the different aspects of relationships, of listening, of caring, of respecting, of trusting, of influencing and ultimately leading and culminating into leading. As a leader, you need to be able to have all of these characteristics. And we begin with the first one of listening.

Have you ever felt unheard? It can be frustrating, right? When we're listened to, how do you feel? Appreciated? Maybe. Maybe being valued? You're respected, you're loved. Maybe you feel validated, you feel worthy. Maybe you feel significant, you feel seen, you feel known. When you're not listened to, how do you feel? Maybe disrespected? Unworthy? You're an outcast. What is it like to be felt? Like you're being ignored. Sometimes it can feel lonely. You feel maybe you're unworthy, maybe. Maybe you feel insignificant, you feel unloved or even maybe rejected. Seth Horowitz pointed out in an article a number of years ago that hearing is a vastly underrated sense. Studies have shown that visual recognition requires a significant fraction of a second per event. But hearing is quantitatively. It's a faster sense. You can pick up on

things much faster. You can. You can. Perhaps as you're driving by, maybe you could see something out of the corner of your eye. But there's no distinction that when you hear that, you don't need to look, you only need to hear. Sometimes it's 10 times faster than actually trying to see and look. Startle. You'll hear a startle. And I apologize if I startled you, but there's this chain of neurons from your ears to your spine that hears that noise, converts it to this defensive response to where in mere tenth of a second, you might jump. Now, hearing, in short, it can be easy. It's a lifeline. It's your alarm system. It's great to hear because it can ward you off from danger. Hearing beautiful music is a pleasurable experience. Hearing your alarm system, not always fun.

But hearing also sometimes requires skill. You have to be intentional when you are listening. Listening is a skill that we're in danger also of losing, especially in this digital age that we have grown into. Listening. Listening is important in every relationship, particularly, I think, in your marriage. And I'm going to put a disclaimer here. Everything I'm about to say, I just want to recognize I'm a work in progress. Okay, honey? Oh, you laugh, but it's true. Leadership, it's important that we listen. We want to be heard. We want to be validated. When we look to the life of Jesus, did Jesus listen to the people? I think of the 10 lepers who were crying out, Jesus, help us, heal us. How many times did Jesus say, hey, Jesus, can you come by over here? I think of Jairus, whose daughter was sick. How many times did people stop Jesus in his tracks? I think of the time where in the end of Luke chapter 24, he's with the two disciples as well. They don't recognize who he is, but he listens to the their story. If we have time, we'll get into that today.

One story, though, that I find that is very intriguing and we're going to kick our small group series off is the woman at the well. And I know we have studied this several times, but I think it's key. It's a good reminder and how Jesus shows how we can listen. So let's go to John chapter four. Okay, let's go to John chapter four. And by the way, I know sometimes there will be weeks where we're going to talk about the specific study section in the small groups. And then other times, because there's so much that we can learn, we're going to use different stories. So it won't be story for story necessarily, but I hope and pray that this series will be very impactful and hopefully maybe even life changing. All right, John, chapter four. We all there? Amen. Okay.

Starting at verse one, it said, now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John. Oh, people are counting, People are comparing. All right. Although in fact, it wasn't Jesus who actually baptized, who was doing the baptisms? His disciples. Okay, now he leaves Judea and he went back once more to Galilee. And in verse four, he said now he had to go through Samaria. He could have taken the long route all the way around as what people normally did at the time. But no, Jesus was intentional.

Okay, so verse five. So he came into a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. And Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon when a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, will you give me a drink? Yes. A very simple question. Hey, I'm kind of thirsty. Can I please have drink of water? His other disciples had gone into town to get some food so that they could quench their appetite. But in verse nine, the woman says, Samaritan woman, by the way, says, you're a Jew and I'm a Samaritan. How can you ask me for a drink? Because Jews do not associate with Samaritans. Samaritan woman is pointing out something very obvious, something that we may not necessarily understand right away, but those of you who know the story know that the Jewish people and the Samaritans do they have a loving working relationship. It's quite the opposite. Okay. They don't trust each other. If you go back in history, you'll understand that the Samaritans were actually part of the Jewish faith until they were taken away. And then they were allowed to come back. But by the time when they were gone, they'd been influenced by other cultures, and so they still believed God, but they'd intermarried and mingled with people outside of those of the Jewish faith. And then when they come back, they're not accepted as equal. They're only partial believers. But as you'll see, this woman shows extreme. Not extreme, but a conscious, a clear faith in God.

Let's go now to verse 10. So he says, she points out, you're asking me for a drink of water. You know we're not supposed to talk to each other. By the way, what time of day is it? It's noon. Should she have even been out there? No. Okay. And also, not only was a Jew and a Samaritan talking, they were conversing. Jesus should not have been talking to a woman. She should not

have been talking to him. Okay. Unless her husband was with her. But we'll get into that. All right, so verse 10. If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. The woman said, sir, you have nothing to draw and the well is deep. She's kind of like, ding, duh. Where can you get this living water? She's thinking literal, and he's thinking spiritual. Are you greater than our Father? Who? Okay, who's Jacob? Come on. Who's Jacob? Son of Abraham. All right, wait. All right, so he was what we considered somebody that they look, both the Jews and Samaritans look back. Okay. Looking back to their forefathers or ancestors was something that was good, right? Especially like Abraham. They look back to the people who had faith before. And this was Jacob's well. Jesus says, sorry, are you greater than our Father Jacob, who gave us the well and drink from it himself, as did all of his sons and his livestock. Jesus answered, everyone who drinks this water will be what? Thirsty again? Okay. You ever been on a hot day, no matter how much water you drink, it's still not enough. But whoever drinks of this water, I will never, will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will be an eternal will. Come up in a spring of water welling up to eternal life. This water never stops.

In verse 15, she says, sir, give me this water so that I will not get thirsty and have to keep coming back to draw the water. It seems realistic, right? Hey, I don't want to. I want a plumbing supply of water so I don't have to leave my house. And it can be there all the time. Right? Makes sense. And then he says, Jesus says, go call your husband and come back. You know the story, what I'm alluding to. And she says, I have no husband. And Jesus said to her, you're right when you say you have no husband. In fact, the fact is you have how many husbands? Five. Okay. And the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true. Ooh. Jesus is digging here a little bit. The woman said, sir, I can see that you are a prophet. She'd never met him before, and yet he can tell about her life. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain. But you Jews claim where we must worship is in Jerusalem. And here Jesus said something wonderful. He says, woman. And that's not like woman. It's a term of endearment. It says woman. Believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father. Neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you don't know. Ye worship, but we do know, for

salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming, and has now Come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the spirit and in truth. For they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the spirit and in truth. Because Jesus is already projecting, already a time where things are going to look different. No longer will they have to necessarily go to the temple. Things are going to change.

And here, verse 25 is indicative. The woman said, I know that Messiah, also called Christ, is coming, and when he comes, he will explain everything to us. And then Jesus declared, I the one speaking to you, I am he. What a beautiful interaction. I love how Jesus reaches out to this woman and disregards all of the cultural and social norms at that time because he was being very intentional. He takes time, he listens. But he also asks some interesting, rather pointed questions. Those of you who've probably read this story know that this woman has. Has lived a very challenging life. She's had five husbands and the guy she is with, not her husband. And we automatically assume and judge her for this aspect. Amen. Let's be real. Okay, but ask you this. More than likely, my question is, well, I wonder, does she have a family that she can lean on to? If not, where's the community responsibility? Where is it that. Why are they not helping her out? We don't know the whole story, but we know that Jesus takes time and he listens to her and he asks questions, earnest questions, that at that point they developed a bond. And when he reveals to her who he is, I am the Messiah, does she just say, whoa, like Keanu Reeves, whoa? Or does she do something? If you continue to read the story, as the disciples, they returned. Hey, it was like they're asking, why are you talking to this woman?

Verse 28. Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah? They came out of town and made their way toward him. What did this woman become? She became an evangelist. And how did she evangelize to the people? She told her story of how God reached out to her. You all have a story of how God met you or you met God. I'm sorry. We all have that story. And some of the stories that we have, some of us have amazing, awesome, cool stories. And some of us, like myself, I feel like my story is kind of. It's just. It's plain, it's vanilla, it's not exciting, it's boring. I grew up in the

church, blah, blah, blah. There's a story for you. We all have our own story of how we met God. And this woman becomes a very successful evangelist. Beautiful. When it comes to relationships, there are some things that we just. We have to be mindful of. Now. One of the things about relationships is you have to listen. The importance of listening. Key. What are some of the. What are some of the barriers to listening? You can be distracted. You know that square little box that's in your pocket or in your bag? Can that be a distraction? Absolutely. I was doing premarital counseling. I was going. I was a facilitator for it. And in the process, we asked, okay, well, what's. Sometimes, you know, there's going to be conflict resolution and what are. What is something that we can talk about to help resolve. And the soon to be wife said, I want you to put your phone down at dinner. Oh, how many of us do that? Okay. For her, it was an issue because he was not listening to her. She wanted to talk. She wanted to know how was your day going and everything. And he just wants to sit in peace and scroll, looking up the news or whatever. Okay.

Other barriers, maybe prior interactions with that particular individual that you're going to talk to did not go well. Have you ever disagreed with somebody? Have you ever got angry with somebody? Has somebody hurt you and you still remember and you still have that little vendetta and you don't want to be peaceful to that person. You harbor anger and frustration and contempt and pettiness and sometimes our preconceived ideas. Another way of saying, fancy way of saying, sometimes when you're prejudiced, okay, Clouds your judgment. And sometimes the last time, the last thing, you don't care. Let's be honest. There's some times where we just, we feel like we do not care. But as followers of Jesus, we have to care.

Healthy communication requires humility. Okay. Throw your ego out the door. It also requires honesty. It requires an open mind and actively listening. Not just like carrying one thing going in the ear and then going out, passes through the brain and goes out the other. We don't forget. And being assertive. Being assertive. When we hear the word assertive, what do we. What do we instantly think of? Maybe being forceful or demanding. Right. That's not what I'm talking about. Okay. And we'll get to that in a second. Okay. Healthy communication and listening, though sometimes when we're talking, we're trying to work through a solution, a situation. Sometimes we have to be assertive with what

we think or what we want. It doesn't necessarily mean what we get. But let's work together now.

Active listening requires our full attention, and sometimes it asks earnest questions. Have you ever tried to figure out where you want to go to dinner? Somebody will ask, what do you want to go for dinner? I don't know. What do you want to do? Anything. I will go anywhere because I want to make you happy. Guys, how many of you fall into that trap? And, ladies, what do you really want? You want us to know, or you want us to put some thought into it? Right. You want us to think about it because it's important to you? I would say let's flip this around. At one point, you know, I wanted to go to Red Robin, okay? I love Red Robin because they have unlimited fries. Do you know that Islands, they don't do unlimited fries anymore? I know. I'm so disappointed, because I love that place, too. But I love Red Robin's because it was the first place that Lisa and I went to have on a date. We went to the Red Robin on McKinley in Corona. And so I've always had a soft spot for Red Robin. I'm not trying to relive the past, but it's a place in my heart that I want to experience not only getting free fries, but also it was a reminder of a fun and good time in our life, something totally new. I knew I loved my wife. I wanted to be with her. What would that look like? And going back and thinking about going to Red Robin, it's a soft spot in my heart. Right? And so sometimes, you know, when we're trying to think about, figure out, like, hey, what do you want to do? Or maybe it's your anniversary and you're trying to figure out, what do you want to do for your anniversary? Maybe one of you wants to go to the beach, and maybe somebody else wants to go to the mountains to have a ski trip. You're thinking beach, mountains. It's Southern California. Okay? Work with me, all right? This is not Montana and Hawaii, all right? So it's a little more realistic for us. And maybe you'll decide, hey, I would love to go to the beach because it's where we got married and this and that, and it's a soft spot in my heart. Or somebody could say, hey, well, I want to go to the mountains, because. Pick your. Pick your reasons why you would like to go to the mountains. As we listen, though, are we fully engaging or are we just listening to hear and then waiting to respond? How many of us actually really take the time to just stop and really, truly try to understand one another.

Okay. Communication. What they're saying? Why is it more important? Why is it important to them? And how does it make them feel? Thank you. By the way, Pilar and Philip, excellent job. Appreciate what you did, because it helps to. It helps us to understand that we want to be heard. We want to be validated, both men and women. And when we're not heard, when we're not listened to or maybe what we say is not kept in confidence. When that trust is broken, do you want to continue to bear your soul, or do you bring it and you hide it and hold it in and maybe sometimes become a volcano, and then eventually you'll blow up because the trust is not there. Or maybe resentment.

Communication is more than words pieced together in a sentence. I love technology. I love being able to call anybody around the world. I love being able to go on a FaceTime or a Zoom call. Okay. I love being able to text my brother and sisters something. I'm gonna. As soon as we're done. I forgot it's the first of the month. Y'all play this game. Rabbit, Rabbit. Hopefully they haven't gotten me yet, but my sister started it, and we're gonna continue it. It's the first of the month. It's a game that we love to play, but then there's also. There's nothing that can compare, though, talking to somebody face to face, because you can be talking to somebody on a blank screen or talking to the phone, but you don't know what face they're making. You don't know if they're just trying to hold back their anger. You don't know if they look anxious. There's so much to be said. Communication is really like, what's their body language? What are they saying? Or maybe what are they not saying? And if we're truly taking time, if we're truly listening, we can understand that better, and we can better understand one another.

If we fail to listen, we will create resentment and an inability to influence, whether it's with your spouse, it's with your children, your boss, your neighbor, Unless you take time. And when I say listen, listen, and maybe follow up with an earnest question or just say, hey, I just want to make sure I'm hearing you right. Is it fair to say that this is what you are thinking? And also when you are able to let them know, is this. Just making sure you write, Is this important to you? And then this is because this how it makes you feel. Oh, now you may not agree, but when somebody is heard, when they feel validated, they're much more willing to want to work with you. Phil Thune Jr. Said, if you talk to people who you disagree with, you're exposing yourself to other possible

points of view and potentially eye opening experiences. One of the frustrations that I have, I've had for some time is just an inability for people just to simply stop and try to actually listen, not wait for their time to talk back. How much better would our world be if we really, truly just stopped, did not interrupt one another and gave somebody the opportunity to actually say what they want to say, why it's important to them, think about it and then be able to respond. And the person who spoke took the time to also listen and try to understand. I think our world would be in a lot better place, but we're not there right now. Amen. So I am pleading and encouraging you as followers of Jesus and Downey, may we take the time to truly listen. And I know this is. Sometimes it's not easy, especially if somebody has got you worked up. Right? Take a pause. Truly try to understand people I disagree with. I genuinely want to understand. How is it that you came to your conclusion? Why do you think that way? Again, while we may not agree on everything, I think this world, I think we can probably, it's fair to say that we probably are more aligned in the majority of what we think. And there's things that we may disagree with, but I don't think the ends are as far apart as we think they are.

So take time to listen and when conflict arises and it will happen, it's part of life. And in some respects conflict is actually not a bad thing. Right? Because if you never disagree with somebody, how do you grow? You know, my wife and I are, in some ways we have similar beliefs and yet there's also some things that I think we also disagree on. Do you agree with everything that your friends agree with? Okay, good, because if you did, I'll tell you, you need more friends. We don't grow unless we're challenged. And so my plea to you is, learn from others. Doesn't mean you have to accept it, but where conflict arises, then though, where you're challenged, follow Matthew 18. And just to summarize that, what does that mean? You know, just let's go there real quick. Let's go to Matthew 18 starting at verse 15. I know we've gone through it a bit, but it's always a good reminder okay, Matthew 18, it says if a brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault. Just between the two of you, if somebody has said something about you, they're talking smack or whatever, or they're saying you did a crummy job or whatever. Should we tell everybody how that person said stuff? Should we blast them on Instagram? No, go to them and talk about, hey, I heard this, and I just want to clarify. Make sure, are we on the same

page? And if not, how do we resolve this? And I've said something that I didn't. I got misinformation, and I'm glad somebody came and said, hey. They gave me the courtesy to say, hey, here's what I've heard. I want to make you aware. And then afterwards, I felt sheepish, but I'm glad that person came to me instead of blasting me out on the Internet and all my friends and whatever. Okay? So take the time. Not only will you help save that person, when you keep things between you two, there's that level of respect that you have. Now, let's say you're disagreeing and you cannot come to a conclusion. What does it say? Bring sorry if you don't listen, take one or two others along so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. Sometimes it's good to have a third person who can be objective, who's not tied to the problem and can see. Because when you're super passionate about something, is it hard to look outside and look for new ideas or be open? It can be challenging, right? And if that doesn't work, if they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church. And if they refuse to listen, then treat them as a pagan or a tax collector. Jesus, you're so rude. Is he, though? No, that's not what he's saying. We sometimes say, well, treat him as a pagan or as a tax collector. Ostracize them, kick them out, be rude to them. No, what Jesus is saying, treat them as if they don't know anything. And start from the very beginning. Build the box up. Another way of showing love, care and compassion.

So, my friends, this week, what are the barriers to listening that you personally struggle with? Okay. What are the barriers that you struggle with when it comes to listening? This week, I want you to have a conversation with someone that you are close to and someone that you are at odds with. Okay? This week so far, I want you to put your active listening skills. Listen to them, truly understand, don't say anything, don't interrupt them. And where you don't understand, ask clarifying questions, maybe say, hey, just want to make sure from understanding you, this is what you're thinking, how it makes you feel. Put your active listening skills to work to better understand them and where they are coming from. And I guarantee you, my friends, if you do this with love and compassion and empathy, your relationship, it should change. I'm not going to guarantee because there are some people who have that anger and maybe hatred or pettiness that they're never going to want to

change. But people who you're at odds with take the time to listen. And I hope and pray that it will help start to reconcile and repair the relationship. But also find somebody that you're close to. Could be your spouse, could be your kid, could be your neighbor, could be your best friend. Listen to them, find something new about them that you did not know about and why they are so passionate about that. Can we do that this week? All right.

Next week we're going to talk about caring for others.

Let's go ahead and pray. Father in heaven, Lord, as we begin this new series and as we discuss in our small groups this week, Lord, open our eyes to how we can understand and better listen to others. Give us opportunities, Lord. And sometimes, Lord, we know that there are people who tend to rile us, maybe frustrate us. Help us, Lord, to take a deep breath, let it out slowly and help us to ask those questions to help better understand them. Not necessarily to try to prove them wrong, but just to better understand one another. And I pray that, Lord, relationships will be reconciled with and be repaired, but also not just that, Lord. Our relationships will be greatly enhanced, especially with those who we love. Thank you, Lord. Continue to watch over us, be with us until we meet again next week. In Jesus name, amen.

Grace and peace, everyone.