

Lesson One

Moving from Fantasy to Reality

"If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3).

Before we begin, let's talk briefly about what to expect in this series. 1. We'll be talking about principles that help us in relationships, principles which apply to all relationships, not just marriage. 2. Grace takes us where we are; it never showers regret on where we've been. 3. We all speak as learners, not masters.

Definition: A healthy *relationship* is when two individuals *relate to one another* in a healthy manner.

The word *relate* means "to narrate."

A relationship at its core, is *"the narration of one's story."* When you know how someone feels, what someone thinks, where someone struggles and love like Jesus loves, there's a healthy relationship. *Narration is telling one's story to a willing listener and listening to one's story by a transparent teller.*

A relationship crumbles because the foundations of that relationship are destroyed.

In Psalm 11 David is surrounded by the enemy. He is "tempted" to "flee like a bird to my mountain." But "in the Lord I will take refuge" for "when the foundations are destroyed, what can I do?" (v. 3). What is the mountain of your creation that causes you to leave relationships (shut down, cease to relate to, turn your back on, or reject another person)? *Disconnection is the death of a relationship.*

When I want you to only focus on me and *the narration of my story*, I am disconnected from you. I don't relate well to you when all I care about is my story. I can say I am listening, but am I *hearing*? If I'm only concerned that *I'm heard*, the foundation of my relationship begins to crumble. People full of love are *connected* people. People who love are *more interested* in another's story. The root of a real relationship is being *present* with another person and intentionally *creating a safe environment* where one can take risks and reveal thoughts, feelings, and dreams without rejection.

There are reasons why I become disengaged, and my relationships begin to crumble.

There are always *two foundations* in any relationship, *two stories*. Am I very interested in your story? Let's identify a few odorous toxins that eat away at the foundations of our relationships with others.

My Fantasies – I always had an image of what the other person should be and I am disappointed.

My Fears – I can't handle the pain of reality, so I'll flee to a hiding place of my own creation.

My Faults – There's no way I can risk being seen as imperfect, and I can't accept your weaknesses.

My Faith – is not in Christ and His performance, it's in my and another person's performance.

Relating to Jesus well is the primary source for relating well with others.

In the 10 Commandments, the first four are about relationship with God, and the last six with men. You and I will never relate well with one another until we relate well with the One who created us. Throughout this series we'll point you to the God of all grace: *For graced people live gracious lives.* We encourage us all to move from fantasy land to reality. Any healthy relationship requires work.