

Lesson 1

15 Words that Can Save a Relationship

In our first lesson, we focused on the root word of relationship (“relate”) which means “to narrate.” The major point was “healthy relationships occur when people are willing listeners for each other’s story.” When I want others to focus on only “the narration of my story,” there’s a disconnection in relationship. In this lesson, Rachelle and I will show you a principle that - when applied - will transform a relationship.

“My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory” (Philippians 4:19).

Jesus is our Creator, Source, Sustainer, our Everything. He meets every need you and I have in this life. We say Amen to this, so why do we live as if another person is our source and solution for what ails us? The most difficult journey in life is the 18 inches trip from the head to the heart; from thinking to feeling. Rachelle and I have come up with an exercise that helps us in our relationships, and should help you too. When we find ourselves in relational pain or distress, we say fifteen words to ourselves and each other.

15 Words – “You are neither the source nor the solution for the problem or pain within me.”

1. This statement admits to others I’m struggling.
2. This statement takes the blame off of you for my struggles within.
3. This statement helps me see what the real issues are.
4. This statement turns me to Jesus Christ as my Source in life.

I first wrote these 15 Words on a website I operate called Istorica Ministries, and people reacted angrily. We are so accustomed to blaming, shaming and gaming others we don’t like taking responsibility. It’s difficult for someone in the dark to understand how these 15 Words actually heal relationships. But when you walk into a dark room you don’t understand how electricity works, but that doesn’t keep you from flipping the switch. One doesn’t have to understand how light works to enjoy its effects.

So too, these words are a panacea for broken relationships. You may not understand how they work, but don’t let it stop you from saying them. Most relationships spiral downward because one person points the finger - “You’re the problem!” “If you would only...” “You never...” “You...you...you.”

In relationships built on covenant and commitment, this principle is absolutely essential.

Acquaintances and surface friendships are built on enjoyment. Real connection and relationship is built on love. If you ever want to know the difference between enjoyment and love, look at I Corinthians 13. There’s no doubt that the actions of the one you love can be hurtful or painful; but the Apostle Paul said, “I have learned to be content (i.e. “self-sufficient”) in who I am” (Philippians 4:11).

Many English translations wrongly translate Philippians 4:11 as “I have learned to be content in whatever state (or circumstances) I am”, but the words “state” or “circumstances” are not in the original. Paul learned to be self-satisfied in who he was in Christ.

The early Christians sang while being burned at the stake. Why? *They had learned how to find self-satisfaction and contentment regardless of their circumstances*