

Lesson 3

Christ and “Into-Me-You-See”

“I’ve learned in who I am to be content” (Phil 4:11).

“I am who I am by the grace of God” (I Cor. 15:10).

By way of review – Relationship is where two people *narrate their lives (relate) with one another*. That is, I willingly listen to someone speak freely about what they think, feel, believe, fear, hope, and desire. When two people “disconnect” and a relationship crumbles, it’s because the foundation of Christ “as my source” has been destroyed, and one other than God has become my idol, albeit my fallen, faulty idol.

To always hit “reset” when I’m in a relationship that’s gone south, I must learn to say to the one with whom I’m in relationship, *“You are neither the source nor the solution for the trouble or pain within me,”* and be willing to lovingly say, *“I am neither the source or the solution for the trouble or pain with you.”* When we have those two foundational principles present in relationship, then we are ready to move on to a third principle that becomes the source of *meaningful* a personal relationship with another person.

I. Intimacy is to relationship what milk is to butter; you really don’t have one without the other.

“Into-me-you-see” – transparency, letting your partner/friend see you as you really are – the good, bad, and the ugly, the freedom to share what is within you. The opposite of intimacy is pretension. Pretension is simply “into me you cannot see.” “Pretend” or “pre” – “tension” simply means that there is a tight wall before me that prevents someone from seeing in me. It is hiding what is really “in me.” A pretender never says what he really thinks, really feels, really desires, or really wants out of fear of the possible reaction of the one he loves. There are several things inhibit intimacy:

A. Fear that I will not be loved or accepted if I were truly known.

This fear begins to disappear when I understand the significance of my relationship with God.

B. Expectations that I place on the other person which go unmet

Why do I struggle with expectations? Because I believe we will be happier if our spouse is a certain way. It is a form of control and it leads to the very opposite of intimacy. When I expect or demand another person to be a certain way, I squelch intimacy in relationship.

C. Past hurts or painful experiences that cause me to be reserved

II. Pretension is natural, but intimacy is supernatural, so there’s a taste of heaven in intimacy.

Intimacy occurs by God’s grace by knowing who I am and throwing away all expectations.

1. Unmet expectations cause anger; a red flag that expectations have not been met.
2. Expectations cause your significant other to lie and hide.
3. Expectations hinder a spirit of freedom and spontaneity.

Intimacy is a gift reserved for covenant relationships or those with whom I wish to spend time.

Jesus had 12. Paul had his Timothy. We have our spouses, and hopefully other significant friends.

III. Though intimacy is a gift, it takes practice to develop the joy of intimacy.

How can you develop intimacy in a relationship with a significant other?

1. Keep your sharing focused on your own *thoughts* and *feelings*. (I feel; I think; I believe).
2. Each person is free to express his or her feelings without interruptions (feelings are amoral).
3. Learn to support one another, not “fix” one another; *affirmation, acceptance, approbation*.
4. Anonymity and confidentiality are basic requirements in establishing intimacy.
5. Offensive language has no place in a Christ-centered relationship (Hurt people, hurt people).