

RELATIONSHIPS THAT REFLECT THE GLORY OF GOD

*“By this all men will know that you are my disciples,
if you love one another.” John 13:35*

RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

**“On the last day, Jesus will not ask about our IQ, social status, health, or wealth. He will ask how our relationships were. And the chief characteristic of a good relationship is love.”
Alfred Poirier**

“If you are offering your gift at the altar and remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift at the altar, first go and be reconciled, then come and offer your gift.” Matthew 5:23-24

WE ARE NOT CALLED TO BE LOVED—BUT TO LOVE

**(Because the covenant is corporate) “Even when people in the church fail us, our Savior calls us to love His bride and to pursue her peace and purity.”
WIC Biblical Foundations for Womanhood, “Paul’s Letters to Maturing Churches”**

- Difficult people? Destroy ‘em (Romans 12)
- By resting in God’s love, his grace enables us to love others (John 15:9-13, 1 Peter 4:8, John 13:3-5).

“Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Excerpts from Romans 12

ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER & CHANGE TO SERVE OTHERS

“The outworking of God’s grace in us is demonstrated in relationships. “How good and pleasant it is when brothers [and sisters] live together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1) But it is not always the easy thing to do! Again the answer is grace—God’s grace that liberates us to be a servant.” Susan Hunt

- Grow in humility and love by *delighting in the differences among God’s people and setting aside self to serve others* (1 Thessalonians 5:14, Romans 15:2-3a, Colossians 4:6).
- Not “Jesus Plus Anything”—*just Jesus*.

“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” Romans 15:7

DEVELOP REDEMPTIVE FRIENDSHIPS

“Friendships of *shalom* provide safe harbors for our hearts when the storms of life come. True friendship is a reflection and foretaste of heaven.” (pp. 122-123 of *Peacemaking Women*)

- You don’t find a friend—you grow a friend.
- Don’t forget the *three qualities of God’s character that are essential ingredients for lasting change—grace, truth, and redemptive time!*
- This is *all* “beyond our abilities and into the realm of grace” (Susan Hunt).

“My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love ... in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Colossians 2:2-3

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. If you had to describe most of your relationships, what words would you use? Shallow Nonexistent Superficial Uncomfortable Conflicted Unpleasant Gracious Entertaining Redemptive God-centered Genuine Safe Other: _____
2. Would you describe yourself more as a “relational person” or a “task-oriented” person? How much of a priority are your relationships and friendships? Read Leviticus 19:18. What does it mean to “love your neighbor as yourself”? In what ways are you successful and in what ways do you fail to love others this way?
3. The nature of our Triune God provides a clear pattern for our relationships. Within the eternal fellowship of the holy Trinity, God loves and delights in himself (Luke 3:22), trusts himself (Matt. 26:39), and knows himself intimately (John 7:28-29). How do you see these qualities reflected in your own relationships?
4. Describe the type of friend that you are attracted to. Why are some people unattractive and unappealing to you? Are any of the things you dislike in people the very same weaknesses and sins *you* struggle with? Meditate on all of Romans 12. How is God calling you to demonstrate sincere love and self-sacrifice in your relationships?
5. Do you breathe grace through your words? What is the nature of your speech? Read Ephesians 4:29. How do you fail to meet this standard? In what ways would your relationships change if *every* word you *ever* spoke met God’s standard for your speech as summarized in Ephesians 4:29?

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

(LIMITED NUMBER OF DISCOUNTED COPIES MAY BE AVAILABLE AT THIS EVENT):

- Tara Barthel, *Peacemaking Women—Biblical Hope for Resolving Conflict* (book); *Living the Gospel in Relationships* (eight-part video series); various teaching CDs (including *Biblical Hope (& Help!) For Women with Powerful Personalities* and *Relationships That Reflect the Glory of God*).
- Paul David Tripp, *How People Change*
- Paul David Tripp, *Relationships—A Mess Worth Making & War of Words: Getting to the Heart of Your Communication Struggles*
- Edward T. Welch, *When People Are Big and God Is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man*
- Patricia Miller, *Quick Scripture Reference for Counseling Women*

Thank you so very much for the privilege of serving you at this event! I count it a great honor to learn with you and I hope that we will stay in touch:

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Tara Klena Barthel (www.tarabarthel.com) formerly served as the Director of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, a division of Peacemaker Ministries. As such, she oversaw the delivery of all conciliation services and advanced conciliator training. Currently, she serves her family as a homemaker while regularly mediating, speaking, and writing on biblical peacemaking. Baker Book House Co. published her first book in 2005: *Peacemaking Women—Biblical Hope for Resolving Conflict* and her first video series was released by Peacemaker Ministries in 2007: *The Peacemaking Church Women's Study—Living the Gospel in Relationships*. Prior to joining the staff of Peacemaker Ministries, Tara worked as an attorney and business consultant in Chicago. Tara, Fred, and their daughters Sophia and Ella are members of Rocky Mountain Community Church (PCA).