

The Art of Loving Well

"Make Love Your Aim"

God's Word: Luke 10:27; John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:11-24, 4:7-12; Galatians 5:6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-14:1

Teacher: Timothy Johns

1. Where we are in Church history as it pertains to love: First Great Reformation 500 years ago was about gospel content. The Second Great Reformation just starting is about gospel context. It is a Reformation about loving people well. New Wine in New Wineskins. The Trinitarian Wineskin is loving unified Family made up of Jesus Tribes. God is putting this ongoing Jesus Movement in Jesus Tribes. The information of the gospel is being upgraded to the incarnation of the gospel – Jesus' Family loving well. It is the quality of our love that will most impact the world. Jesus Movement in Jesus Tribes.
2. Embracing your kingdom mandate – to love well. Have you decided that loving well is your purpose in life?
3. Love is relational. We mature in love from infancy to elder. The flow of love: Down, Up, In, Out
4. God has created us for love and therefore has "hardwired" our brains for "hesed" sticky bonded covenant love. We must be whole brained. The challenge is to relocate and to improve our relational competency in the right front part of brain.
5. Three general relational categories: 1. God, 2. Family (natural & spiritual), 3. Neighbor (even including our enemies)
6. Evaluate everything you think, feel, and do through these questions: a.) Who am I loving right now?, b. How is this loving?, c. How can I grow in love with God, my family, and neighbors? Ask these questions when spending money, time, energy. Is love your highest priority? Prophetic brother who had an encounter with Jesus heard Him ask this question while in heaven, "Did you learn to love?" Stop loving the "world". 1 John 2:15-17
7. **Practical applications:**
 - A. Turn on your relational circuits and keep them on. Stay relational all the time, with everyone. This does include knowing how to soothe or rest yourself. Keeping your relational circuits open doesn't necessarily mean you are interacting with people all the time. It involves being relationally switched, open, and willing to connect.

Indicators your relational circuits are closed: I just want to make a problem, person or feeling stop and go away. My mind is "locked onto" something upsetting. I think, say, repeat a word, phrase, cliché or thought that is negative, insulting or profane. I feel like screaming, name-calling or threatening (or I do). I strongly want to retaliate. I determine the only acceptable response that someone else can give me. I just want to get away, or fight or I freeze. I become aggressive in the way I interrogate, judge and fix others. Interrogate – I ask aggressive questions about my hunch or fear of what someone is thinking, doing or feeling while looking for a particular response. Judge – I use my questions to expose the things I disapprove or will use to prove myself right or win. Fix – I already know what I want them to do or say and use my questions (talking with them) to get my way or reach my goal. I feel like it is their fault if they get hurt. (They asked for it.

They should just get out of my way. They should have thought of that!) I don't feel like listening to what others are feelings, saying or going to say. When others are talking, I am already figuring out what to say before they even finish. I don't want to make eye contact. I would rather just handle problems myself. People are a bother and/or get in my way.

Indicators your relational circuits are open: I can be respectful. I am aware and interested in their point of view. I am open to understanding what they are feeling right now. I am aware of my own feelings and responses without having to blurt them out. I can join in give-and-take both verbally and nonverbally. I can help them make their points more clearly understandable. They will agree with my description because it does not make them look stupid. I can understand and accept it if they make a choice I do not like. Do my good memories of them seem important right now? Do I feel connected to _____ (someone I usually like)? Do I feel a desire to be connected to _____ (someone I usually like)? Do I experience him/her as a relational being? Am I aware of his/her care for me? Do I feel compassion about what he/she's thinking and feeling? Am I open to share their distressing feelings with them to help them return to joy? Do I perceive the presence of _____ (someone I usually like) as a resource? Am I experiencing joy in being with him/her?

- B. Face Time and Immanuel Lifestyle. Face Time is all about abiding relationally with God. (John 15) It involves "seeing" and "hearing" with our heart, spirit, right brain. (Eph. 1:15-22) Practice using the physiology designed for relational love – the right frontal cortex. This means exercising your golden memories, sanctified imagination, interactive gratitude. Begin incorporating these prayers about loving well: a.) Philippians 1:8-11, b.) Ephesians 3:14-21, c.) Ephesians 1:15-22.
- C. Simplify and streamline your life to free up your heart, time, money and energy so that you can love well. Evaluate your expenditures and priorities in light of our mandate to love.
- D. Unload your burdens onto God, so that his "yoke is easy and burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). Come into the "rest of faith" (Heb. 4:1-10).
- E. Learn and practice Immanuel Healing/Inner-healing. Ask God to identify all the traumas that affecting your ability to love. Also ask the Holy Spirit to reveal all inner-vows you have made as a result of pain and trauma. See and experience Jesus where you experienced the traumas of omission, and the traumas of commission.
- F. Become relationally and consistently connected with a DNA Group, a Missional Kingdom Family (micro-church family), a larger congregation, and a Jesus Tribe.
- G. Become familiar with and start practicing the relational concepts and practical love skills presented by The Life Model. Resources: "Rare Leadership" by Jim Wilder & Marcus Warner, "Thinking Biblically About The Life Model" by Michael Sullivant, "Micro-Church Families On Mission" by Timothy Johns.