



GroveGROUPS Sermon Guide

Can You Relate ~W1 “Breaking Through the Shallow Waters” ~ Bill Clark ~ 9/11/22

OVERVIEW

We currently live in a culture where we can “get connected” with just a couple of taps on a screen. If history, information, answers, knowledge and even friendships can all be found and achieved in seconds, then why are we the loneliest we’ve ever been? Statistics show us that 1 in every 3 people, when asked if they have a real friend, answer “no.” Those who range in age from 10 to 25 are now considered the loneliest generation, and 53% of Americans eat their meals alone. Can you relate to these stats? In this series we will tackle six barriers we all face when trying to experience authentic connections. Our hope in doing this series is to identify the things that keep us from connecting face-to-face, knock those barriers down completely and experience life changing relationships together!

ICEBREAKER

Who was your best friend as a child or teenager? Are you still friends with them today? Why or why not?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. READ these to the group:
 - 1 out of 3 people say they don’t have a friend. ([Find Your People](#) by Jennie Allen.)
 - For the first time ever Gen Z (10-25 year olds) are the loneliest generation.
 - 53% of all meals are eaten at a table for one in the United States. ([Embrace the Table](#) by Dr. PJ Dunn.)
2. What is your response? Did it shock you? Do you believe what we just heard?
3. READ Philippians 4:14-23 and Philippians 2:25-30.
4. What needs did Epaphroditus meet for Paul in these verses? Do you think Paul was able to meet the needs of Epaphroditus too?
5. In this week’s video Bill and Missy share experiences of snorkeling out into deep waters. Can you relate to their experience with an experience of your own? Is there a time where you have had a friend guide you to doing something new?
6. Evaluate the relationships you have. Is there someone you would consider a “best friend?” Is that person someone you could consider going into deeper waters with? What could a next step with that relationship look like this week?
7. Take time to pray as a group. Ask God to help this group develop true, authentic relationships with each other.

SERMON QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Somewhere along the way, the way human beings relate has shifted in such a way that you can be super connected and accessible like never before in human history, yet super alone and isolated.”

EXTRA CREDIT

MONDAY/TUESDAY

READ John 13:33-34.

Does the world know you’re a follower of Jesus by the way you love others through relationships? What next step could you take today that could deepen a relationship in your life?

WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY

READ Philippians 2:1-5

Read these verses again and if you’re able, highlight or underline characteristics Paul gives us that show us how to love like Jesus loves. Are any of these characteristics more of a challenge for you than others?

FRIDAY/SATURDAY

READ 1 Thessalonians 3:10-12.

Paul’s life and ministry relied heavily on true authentic relationships with others. People helped him get through hard times with their encouragement, their physical gifts or with the way they loved each other. This weekend, meet someone else’s need even if it cost you time and energy but don’t stop there! Challenge yourself to share a need you have with someone in your life. They may not be able to meet that need, but allow them to listen, pray for you and encourage you in the struggle.

NEXT STEPS

Answer these questions honestly to yourself:

1. Am I truly known by someone?
2. Am I currently seeking to truly know someone?
3. Am I settling for shallow waters in my relationships?
4. Is there someone in my life I could wade into deeper waters with?

If you answered yes to question number 4 take a minute to pray that God will open the door and give you courage to take the next step in that relationship. Maybe invite that person to have coffee or send an encouraging text. Waiting for them to make the next move may just keep you right where you are now. Is that enough for you?