

# What “Person to Person” Looks Like

John 17:17 – 21

## I. Intro

- A. Continuing look at close/intimate spiritually focused relationships (appreciation to Billy and Scott)
- B. Two weeks ago, looked at “why” for these relationships – refresh memories
  - i. In the context of communion (*koinonia*) – the Lord not only desires to be in *koinonia* (personal/intimate) relationship with us, but also desires we be in *koinonia* relationship with each other
  - ii. 3 “Why’s”
    - a) **1** – Show the world a true/realistic picture of who Christ is we must go beyond ordinary relationships
    - b) **2** – For genuine/measurable spiritual growth in a person’s life to take place requires *koinonia* relationships
    - c) **3** – Christianity isn’t a “solo” act; real Christianity is about close/deep/personal/spiritually focused/communion (*koinonia*) relationships with other believers and with God
- C. Today, look at “what” this *koinonia* relationship is and “what” it isn’t; what the current relationship experience looks like among believers, and what a new *koinonia* relationship experience, based on God’s Word and God’s intended design, is supposed to look like; next week – “where” this relationship is best developed/nurtured

## II. Current Experience

- A. The way we think/define certain things is based on our experiencing those things; example – saying something is “delicious” is based on what we’ve determined in our mind the meaning of the word “delicious” means based on our past experiences
- B. **Illustration:** Friend’s statement, “*The best ? I’ve ever had*”
- C. Each person’s definition of “delicious” differs because each person’s past experiences and conclusions of what’s delicious and what’s not are different
- D. **Question:** What does this have to do with *koinonia* relationships? **Ans:** Our spiritual relationships within the body of Christ have been defined by our experiences in the church culture; unfortunately, the church’s record of producing/cultivating the depth of relationship (*koinonia*) that God intended for us to experience isn’t real good
- E. Reason – culture of the world, and changes that have taken place in that culture throughout history, have affected the church

- F. Industrial revolution – mass-production; 70’s and 80’s – more is better, or bigger is better; last 40-45 years (majority of my lifetime) technology – faster-paced/instant results through microwaving, real-time communication through texting, instant messaging – ever evolving advances on real-time communication through Facetime, Zoom, Skype, etc.
- G. The way the church operates today has been swayed/impacted and shaped by these cultural changes, whether consciously or subconsciously; how?
  - i. Bigger is better, or even more is better (number driven programs/ministries) instead of Gospel/spiritual growth driven programs/ministries
  - ii. Mass production of spiritual transformation that’s artificial; get ‘em in the church, down the aisle, and dunked and that’s the end of the church’s responsibility
- H. Stopped way short of being intentional about creating/continually cultivating environments within the church where close, one-on-one (person to person), deep, spiritually focused, *koinonia* relationships can develop; type of relationship between Paul/Timothy, between God the Father and God the Son almost nonexistent in church culture today
- I. [SLIDE] Allowed ourselves (the people of Christ’s church – His body) to settle for casual relationships at a superficial level; [SLIDE] worship services, Bible studies in Sunday School – even in small groups, can’t fully produce the spiritual transformation that takes place in person-to-person relationships
- J. Why it’s so important that a real transformation takes place in today’s church culture to understand and return back to the true definition of *koinonia* relationships, fostering the experiences that build those relationships, which was God’s original design for the people of God all along

### III. New *Koinonia* Experience

- A. Not really new, it’s what has always been the plan
- B. (Some thinking I haven’t read scripture passage yet – hold on)
- C. We all agree that when it comes to spiritual matters many times we get off track; Jesus understood this and the need to redefine people’s thinking; many times Jesus used phrase, especially in His Sermon on the Mount – “*You have heard it said ... but I say to you*”
- D. Jesus knows how people’s experiences and culture forms/shapes their thinking and definitions

- E. Place to begin with redefining this relational experience is turning to God's Truth – His written Word He has given us; Here's today's passage, excerpt from passage read two weeks ago – **READ John 17:17 – 21**
- F. Two particular words that Jesus uses here that redefine what we as His church have come to define/accept as spiritual relationships based on our experiences formed by this culture
- G. The words of Jesus (**v. 21**) ... *that they may all be one*, interpreted to mean "mass unity" or unity within a group (those certainly important), but it's not what Jesus really meant, not the kind of relationship he was defining
- H. Passage referred to other week - Ecclesiastes 4:9 (ESV)  
<sup>9</sup>**Two** are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. (Notice word "two", doesn't say "two or more", intentionally is "two" and only "two" – often used in weddings)
- I. If Jesus had only prayed ... *that they may all be one* and stopped there, He could've meant unity within groups – but, two particular very important words undoubtedly indicate what Jesus is speaking about – call these two words *clarifiers* – "just as"
- J. **Illustration:** Father telling his son to paint neatly; what Jesus says – **REFER v. 21** (underline two words to remember what Jesus means whenever looking back)
- K. [**SLIDE**] The relationship Jesus the Son had with His heavenly Father was close, not casual; it was between two – person to person – not a group; it was a spiritually focused/*koinonia* relationship not just a social one; it was long-term/everlasting, not one of convenience/season
- L. Theirs is the perfect example of the new/true *koinonia* relationship experience

#### IV. Close

- A. If Jesus' prayer referred to this kind of relational depth across the whole body of Christ (in community instead of individuals) then we've either failed miserably because of the cultural impact of the world, or we've misunderstood His definition
- B. It should not surprise us that the type of real relationship Jesus was praying for is impossible to have with everybody
- C. [**SLIDE**] Final point – Nobody can have this kind of *koinonia* relationship with everybody, but everybody can have a *koinonia* relationship with somebody
- D. First and foremost, Jesus desires this kind of person-to-person relationship with you – literally for you and He to be one together – *JUST AS [He] is in the Father, and the Father is in [Him], that [you] may be in [Them]*
- E. As simple as A B C – admit, believe, confess