



FIXER UPPER

WEEK 3: Encouragement

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Fixer-Upper is a popular TV series starring Chip and Joanna Gaines, who take broken-down old houses and transform them into beautiful homes. We are using the TV series as a means of talking through the potential for God to transform even our most challenging relationships into something beyond what we might have ever imagined possible. Our approach is to do a “deep dive” into a few core Biblical values, each of which has the capacity to radically change the way we interact with our spouses, children, parents, friends, neighbors and co-workers. In this series, we will be demo-ing some old attitudes and behaviors in order to make room for the good work God wants to do in our lives.

RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT COMMITMENT IS TEMPORARY PARTNERSHIP...

Mark 8: 27-33 (NIV) ²⁷ Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?” ²⁸ They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” ²⁹ “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.” ³⁰ Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. ³¹ He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

It can be easy to define and form our relationships by a common purpose: coworkers collaborating towards a common goal at work, teammates on a football team looking to win, “liking/following” certain figures and movements on Facebook. Collaboration and cooperation is all good and necessary, but understanding that partnership isn’t the same as relationship is a foundational building block of the kingdom. In partnership, when one party stops adding value to the relationship, the relationship is dissolved. When the cost starts to outweigh the perceived value of the relationship, the partnership is dissolved. Partnerships in themselves are not bad; they can come and go based on common needs and goals, but we need to know when to be in partnership and when to be in relationship.

Crowds followed Jesus for various reasons, to the extent that Jesus lived up to their expectations and needs. Many “un-friended and un-followed” Jesus when it became clear that they did not want the same things (read **John 6:66**). Still, a group of 12 stayed close, three even closer (Peter, John and James). They witnessed the divine nature of Jesus. You can see that true relationship is modeled in Jesus’

commitment to Peter. Peter's triple betrayal of Jesus did not dissolve the relationship. Instead, Jesus pursued him, reconciled with him, and even commissioned him.

DISCUSS/JOURNAL:

Freddy suggests that we need to know when to be in partnership and when to be in relationship and not confuse the two. Make a list of partnerships and a list of relationships. Take a step back and assess if you need or want to move some of the items from one list to the other.

Define commitment. What does this really look like in real life? Give some examples.

Are these commitment behaviors aligned with your relationships?

RELATIONSHIP REQUIRES WORK...

Luke 22: 54-62 (NIV) ⁵⁴ Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. ⁵⁵ And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. ⁵⁶ A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." ⁵⁷ But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. ⁵⁸ A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. ⁵⁹ About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." ⁶⁰ Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. ⁶¹ The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." ⁶² And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Even in a covenant relationship, ongoing commitment is necessary to withstand the bumps and unexpected circumstances of life. Rarely do people decide, "today I'm going to hurt our family", "today is the day I'm going to ruin our marriage", or "today I'm going to alienate myself from my children". Instead, we find ourselves in situations that we didn't anticipate or we over-estimate our own strength. We might even think we are exempt from certain situations; that it would never happen to us. Complacency, even neglect can settle in. We assume that what happened "over there" won't happen to us or challenge us. We over-assume that we can handle whatever comes our way. We see in Peter his absolute confidence in his loyalty and dedication to Christ (read **Luke 22:33**). We also observe that Peter, "the rock" (read **Matthew 16:8**), was susceptible to betrayal. We need to demolish the mindset of throwing away our relationships when relationships become too painful. Jesus didn't throw away Peter. Jesus didn't throw away you or me. Jesus weighed the cost of all the hurt and still he willingly bore our sins on the cross.

DISCUSS/JOURNAL:

Have you heard our culture described as having a "throw away" mindset? What does this mean? Has it seeped into how we manage our relationships that were meant to last?

Take a few minutes to think about the covenant relationships in your life. Where or who are you taking for granted, perhaps even neglecting?

If Jesus is on your list from above, how does he respond to you? What is His commitment to you?

SUPER GLUE...

Mark 16:7 (NIV) 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

John 21:15-17 (NIV) ¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." ¹⁷ The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep.

Freddy called Jesus the super glue of relationships. Perhaps not the most glamorous image for the King of kings but for anyone who has accidentally super glued their fingers together, you can appreciate the analogy. Jesus is the bond that holds us together: His grace, His forgiveness and mercy, His humility. There comes a point where we have to decide there has to be more to a relationship than you and me; there has to be something bigger, something stronger than either one; something or someone who has the power to transform us into something entirely new. When Jesus restored Peter, it wasn't back to business as usual. The Peter that was afraid of public opinion, now boldly proclaimed the good news in front of thousands. Relationship + commitment = transformed life.

DISCUSS/JOURNAL:

How does the grace of Jesus go past and exceed forgiveness and reconciliation?

For anyone walking through a tough situation of hurt and betrayal, can you take a look at the situation through the cross?

If you know anyone going through tough situations, how can you love on them?

ACTIVATION

Lamentations 3:22-23 tells us that His mercies are new every day. **Matthew 10:8** tells us that we have freely received; therefore, freely give. God commits to us daily. Let us commit to our relationship to Him and others daily.

ENCOURAGEMENT

May the truth of God's commitment to you transform your relationships.

Lauren Daigle's "Loyal": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXKG-ooExGs>:

"Your love is loyal More faithful than the rising sun This grace for me I can't outrun Your love is, Your love is Your love is loyal You are always there for me You listen every time I speak You look

into my eyes You see the things I hide And say that You will never leave Your promises I can not break And I know You will never change.”

PROVIDE US WITH FEEDBACK

We are excited about the potential these studies have to help each of us process the weekend message at a deeper level, and to see God change our lives in significant ways. In order to make these guides as helpful as possible, we would love to hear which elements are most helpful, which are least helpful, as well as any other comments, questions or suggestions. Feel free to send your feedback directly to Jon Holmberg at jonholmberg@gmail.com.

Has God been prompting you to lean out over your ski's a bit? Have you had a desire to write, but not sure how to start to scratch that kind of itch? This may be your chance. We are currently looking to expand our team of writers. If you have experience, or no experience, writing studies or devotionals... it's not a big deal – Let God guide your fingers. If you would like to investigate this a bit more please contact me at jonholmberg@gmail.com.

REFERENCES