



## Oneness in Christ Lesson 10 4Q 2018 Unity and Broken Relationships

Dr. Tim Jennings

What is the basis of healthy relationships? Love and trust

How do you define each of these?

**Love**—the principle of other-centered motivation—the concern, care, regard, desire for the health, welfare, beneficence of the other.

So how does love function?

Does love always give what another person wants?

Does love always avoid actions that cause pain?

Love does what is in the best interest of the other—given the context, the understood impact, the opportunity and position one holds in the other person's life.

How do you define trust?

**Trust** – Confidence in another without fear or doubt.

Upon what is trust based?

I propose there are four elements necessary for one to experience healthy trust or faith in another:

1. The other person genuinely loves you more than self, and would sacrifice self for you. Thus, they will not betray you or turn on you or become your enemy. Does God meet this criteria? Yes! (How deeply is trust in God undermined because legal theologies put God in the role of the one from whom we must be protected?)
  - a. why is this quality alone not enough to establish trust? Your 6 y/o child may have this love for you and if you were in danger run into harm's way without a thought for self to save you. But if you tell a 6 y/o not to take a piece of candy in the bowl, or to wait their turn do you have complete trust it will happen or does the child need supervision and oversight? So, in addition to love we need #2...
2. The other person has demonstrated mature self-governance, the ability to be reliable and consistent in carrying out what they have said they will do. Does God meet this criteria? Yes!
  - a. Why is love for you and self-governance not enough to establish trust? Could a person genuinely love you, and have good self-control, but misunderstand God's law and design for relationships and seek to control you, rule you, dominate you, discipline you



- believing, with all sincerity, that you are not supposed to be an equal in the relationship but a subordinate? So in addition to love and self-governance trust requires #3
3. The other person possesses genuine wisdom or understanding of how reality actually works and operates in harmony with design law, or at least has a mindset that is eagerly grow with new insights. Does God possess this criteria? Yes!
    - a. These first three together constitute someone who is genuinely trustworthy. Does finding a person with these three attributes result in a trust relationship or is something else required?
  4. You come to actually know that other person for yourself and thus experience 1,2 and 3 for yourself—and you choose to trust.

What undermines our ability to trust someone who is trustworthy?

- Some people are so wounded, so hurt, so fearful because of past betrayals that even when dealing with someone who has demonstrated trustworthiness they still don't trust because of fear.
- A second reason is doubting or distrusting our own judgment—having trusted someone in the past and been burned, one not only lives in fear of others, but some live in fear that they themselves can't tell who to trust.
- Being so hard-hearted, selfish, and untrustworthy that one sees everyone else like themselves and doesn't trust.
- other reasons?

So healthy relationships are designed by God to operate on love and trust. But love and trust are attributes of living beings and thus we could say, healthy relationships **require healthy people—and healthy people love others more than self, have self-governance and are wise in God's design laws for life.**

With this in mind let's turn to the lesson and consider the issues there:

## WEDNESDAY

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Read first paragraph, "What is forgiveness?" If someone has been wronged, can they experience healing of their heart and mind without forgiving the wrongdoer?

If a person who has been wronged forgives the wrongdoer, who always gets changed by the experience of forgiving the wrongdoer?

If a person who has been wronged refuses to forgive, who always gets more injury?

If forgiveness is a requirement to heal after being wronged, what prevents so many people from doing it?



Believing lies or misunderstanding what forgiveness is and what it means.

Let's examine some myths of forgiveness:

- Kate
  - Depressed, anxious, upset, distraught
  - She was being pressured, she didn't know what to do

### **Myth # 1 Forgiveness means restored Trust.**

- Trust is restored when the offender is changed to be trustworthy AND the offended forgives
- Three types of distrust –
  - malevolent/selfish person who is out to harm/for themselves
  - child who means well but too immature to handle responsibilities
    - The adult who worries what others will think, afraid of conflict, who won't stand up for what they themselves know is right
  - The unwise person who applies the wrong principles thinking they are doing right.
- Kate's husband was the second, he, in the moment of confrontation, was sorry he hurt Kate, and meant it when he said he would never do it again, would most likely pass a lie detector, but he was not mature, was not practiced in standing up to his own feelings and thus was untrustworthy even though he sincerely wanted to be -

### **Myth # 2 Forgiveness comes after the offender says they are sorry**

- Bob was angry, bitter, hurt, resentful – his sister had come over, brought beer, gotten him drunk and then stolen his rare coin collection he had started since childhood – She took the coins and left the state and sold them to buy drugs– Bob was angry
  - Had problems in relationships
  - Was irritable, flew off the handle and refused to forgive until his sister came back and asked his forgiveness
- God's kindness leads you to repentance Romans 2:4
- When Adam sinned what happened?
  - Adam ran and hid because he was afraid, why?
  - Was God his enemy?
  - Was God out to injure him?
  - Was there any resource other than God to help Adam after he sinned?
  - Then why did Adam run?
  - Because he didn't trust God and was therefore afraid
  - What did God do?
  - God ran after Adam – Why?
  - To heal and restore their friendship
  - God has been running after mankind ever since!
  - When God ran after Adam had God already forgiven Adam or was God unforgiving toward Adam and something needed to be done to God to get God to forgive?



- What came first God's forgiveness or man's repentance?
  - But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8
  - Did Christ die to get God to forgive us?
  - This is another lie of the penal substitutionary theology that Jesus had to die to pay a legal penalty or else God could not forgive us.
  - Some Bible translations actually translate this lie into Heb 9:22 as, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin." It should be "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin."
  - What is the difference? If you have cancer do you want to be forgiven or want the cancer to go into remission?
  - Without Jesus' sacrifice sin in humanity would not remit, we could not be healed, saved, restored to God's original ideal.
- Another distortion contributing to myth #2
  - Forgiveness is a legal process that requires payment or appeasement
  - This occurs from accepting the lie about God's law
  - Consider the contradictions the false legal view creates, which damages the minds of people because they stop thinking:
    - Many people believe that Jesus came to die in order to pay our legal debt, to pay for our sins AND also that God forgives us our debts as we forgive our debtors
  - can you "forgive" the debt and also "collect" the debt?
    - If you collect it, have you forgiven it?
    - If you forgive it, do you also collect it? If you owed someone \$100 and you couldn't pay and the person demands money from another so your brother steps up and pays the \$100 can that person then look to you and say, "now that I have been paid and you no longer owe me I forgive your debt"?
    - Interestingly, many Christians claim God forgives our debts but also demands the payment of the innocent life of His Son to pay for our debts. It seems it is one or the other – I choose what
      - God said to Moses "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness." Exodus 34:6
      - Or what Paul says, "that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them." 2 Cor 5:19
      - Love keeps no record of wrongs 1Cor 13:5

### **Myth # 3 Forgiveness equals salvation**

- Comes from believing that the problem with sin is God rather than our condition – and thus if we get God to forgive we are okay –
- This misdiagnoses the problem as a problem with God rather than realizing the truth, the problem is with us
- Consider those who put Christ on the cross—did God the Son forgive them? Were they then



saved?

- Salvation = Healing
- Salvation = Reconciliation
- Reconciliation requires forgiveness AND repentance—a change in the heart of the wrongdoer from untrustworthy to trustworthy
- Forgiveness alone is useless
- If you child disobeyed your instructions to never mess with the household cleaners under the sink and somehow disobeyed and drank some of the poison—would you forgive your child? Would your forgiveness be all that is required to save them?
- If a serial killer, a Ted Bundy or Son of Sam were alive and legally pardoned by the president and set free from prison, would you want them as your next-door neighbor? What if someone truly loved them and offered to pay their legal penalty and was executed in their place, would you want them as your neighbor? Why not?

#### **Myth # 4 Forgiveness leads to greater vulnerability.**

- Sheila came to see me with a long history of depression, mood instability, anxiety, sleep problems, inability to relax, panic, nightmares, inability to trust and fear of getting hurt.
  - She reported she had been raped in college and was filled with incredible amount of rage and anger.
  - As therapy progressed we discussed forgiving, *in her heart*, the man who had raped her.
  - But she said she would never forgive him because the anger made her feel strong, the rage made her feel powerful and she would be ready, like a poised lion, the next time anyone tried to hurt her.
- She believed the myth that forgiveness leads to greater vulnerability
- Sunburn analogy—if you had a bad sunburn and
  - your 3 y/o child jumped on your back to play what do you do?
  - If you loving spouse gives you a big bear hug what do you do?
  - if someone slaps your back what do you do?
  - When you are sunburned you lose the ability to tell the difference between touches of play, touches of love, and touches of aggression—everything hurts and you push everyone away
  - Is the best strategy when burned to figure out how no one ever gets close enough to touch you again, or heal the burn?
- Is the myth true? Would forgiving him mean she would take less precautions, leave doors unlocked, walk alone at night?
- Forgiveness is the means of healing ourselves and does not cause one to be less cautious in the future



### Myth # 5 Forgiveness means forgetting

- Does forgiveness mean forgetting?
- "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more." Isa 43:25
- "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." Heb 8:12
- What do these texts mean?
- Do they mean, as the legal proponents claim, that when we confess our sins they are erased out of the books of heaven and the memories of all the sinless and saved so in heaven no one will know our sinful past?
- Can our angels read our Bibles?
  - David, Bathsheba, Solomon, Uriah
    - Will they know each other? Will they know how it came to be?
    - Will it matter at that point in time?
    - Why not?
  - Imagine being nominated to serve in children's department and someone says, "before you nominate them, I think it is important the committee know that they had a bad viral infection when they were a child and vomited on their mother's couch and had diarrhea all over the carpet. What would the committee say?"
    - "Why are you telling us this?"
    - "Because it was gross, disgusting, ugly"
    - That may be historically true, but what is the only question that matters?
    - "Are they sick today?"
    - "Well, no."
    - then it doesn't matter.
    - When we get to heaven we may have a history of sin-sickness that is disgusting and gross, but the only question that matters is—are we still sin-sick or have we experienced healing of heart and mind to be like Jesus!
    - And if the answer is yes, there is no need to erase the memories or the historical records because they enhance our love and appreciation for God!
  - Mary Magdalene anoints Jesus feet
    - "those forgiven much love much"
    - If God were to wipe out memory we would lose so much of our appreciation and love for God.
- So how do we understand those texts about not remembering?
- Analogy of child who fibbed and you as the parent forgave and intervened with discipline and your child repented and there was reconciliation with hugs and kisses
  - When your child comes home from school the next day do you think "here comes that little liar..."
  - No! as far as the relationship is concerned it is forgiven—but do you have amnesia of



what happened?

- One can safely “forget” ONLY when reconciliation has occurred
- Why do people hope for memory erasure?
  - Misconceptions about God

**Myth # 6 Forgiveness means the offender gets away with it.**

- Cherie was bitter, angry with a lifelong history of mood problems, irritability, anxiety, relationship problems, inability to relax, chronic feelings of emptiness, loneliness, worthlessness, inability to trust, always afraid of getting exploited
  - She reported she was molested from ages 5-12 by her uncle, but she never told, he was never caught, he was never punished
  - She refused to forgive because he was never caught therefore forgiving would be like he got away with it
  - Cherie was going to hold him accountable
  - Misunderstands nature of sin
  - Sin always damages the sinner

**SUNDAY**

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Read first three paragraphs, “Paul and Barnabas...” Was the problem that Paul was unwilling to forgive John Mark? No!

What was the problem? That Paul didn’t trust John Mark—why? Was it because John Mark didn’t love others? Or was it because John Mark demonstrated a lack of maturity to handle the responsibility?

Did Paul’s lack of confidence or trust in John Mark mean Paul didn’t care for him or wasn’t his friend?

What is the old saying, “Friends don’t let friends drive drunk.” So, from Paul’s perspective could he not want to avoid putting John Mark in position to fail again?

What was different about Barnabas’s attitude toward John Mark? Could it be that both Paul and Barnabas assessed John Mark similarly, as one who wanted to fulfill God’s calling, but one who was not ready for the responsibility, i.e. an intern still in training—and Paul was wanting a fully equipped partner and Barnabas was willing to take on a trainee who needed more encouragement and supervision?

So, could we have Paul’s objections be based upon his objective assessment of John Mark’s abilities and have nothing to do with an unwillingness to forgive?



## MONDAY

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The lesson focuses on Onesimus and Philemon. Both believers in Jesus, Onesimus was a slave who ran away from his owner Philemon.

What action did Paul take and why?

Why did Paul send Onesimus back to his slave owner?

How did Paul do it?

Why didn't Paul start an underground railroad for runaway slaves?

Why didn't Paul speak out more against slavery?

Read third paragraph, "At first glance..." If a slave owner comes to love his slave as much as his own son, what will happen?

Did anyone see the movie Ben Hur? Remember Charlton Heston played Ben Hur who was a slave to a proconsul of Rome and the proconsul came to love him like a son and set him free and adopted him as a son making him his heir.

Which approach would have the best impact in resolving, not only slavery, but all divisions between people, working politically to overthrow the system of government that sponsored slavery (the Spartacus approach) or working to bring the love of God into the hearts of all people—the Pauline approach?

Because the Bible writers didn't act politically, didn't seek to change the laws of Rome, does that mean they endorsed, supported, condoned, or in any way approved of slavery? Absolutely not!

If there are Christians today who don't act politically, don't want to use the church's energy to get politicians elected, or judges appointed, does that mean they endorse the way the government functions?

## TUESDAY

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The lesson points out that God gives different people different abilities and spiritual gifts for the benefit of the entire body of believers.

How does Satan exploit our differences to incite division?

- Comparing ourselves to others and inciting jealousy and envy
- Inciting fear of those that are different—fear they will dethrone us from the position in which



we believe we deserve to be:

- Why race distinctions cause division—we don't see the other as equal
- Why men dominate women and don't want them to occupy positions of leadership and authority—fear
- Fear causes people to make decisions, not based on ability, competencies, character, but on color of skin or gender and whenever we do this we undermine the health, vibrancy, wellbeing of the organization. Thus, the church suffers when we make ordination gender based, rather than based on the gifting of the Holy Spirit.
- Did anyone see the movie *The Imitation Game*? It was a true story about Alan Turing who, during WWII built the first computer that was able to decode the German Enigma machine and it is estimated shortened the war by 2 years and saved 14 million lives. He went on to work on further computer developments after the war, but in 1952 was prosecuted for homosexual acts and accepted chemical castration instead of imprisonment. He died in 1954 from cyanide poisoning deemed suicide.
  - Why could people not recognize Turing for his gifts, abilities. how he treated others, his honesty, integrity?
  - What has humanity missed out on because his genius was lost?

What about the church—what does the church miss out on because we have bigotry, biases, and fears that cause us to reject others with mature character with gifts that could benefit the church?

## **THURSDAY**

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The lesson focuses us on resolving conflict in the church and points us to Jesus's counsel in Matthew 18:15-17:

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. <sup>16</sup> But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ <sup>17</sup> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. NIV

What do you hear? How is this to be applied? To whom is it to be applied?

Is it to be applied to people that are members of the same organization, i.e. church, but with whom we have no personal relationship?

- You hear a rumor that a person in the church has done a certain sin; you have only seen this person on an occasion, and you have no relationship with this person. Should you go to this person and talk to them about the rumor?
  - Does Jesus' counsel apply to this? Why or why not?
  - Have you been sinned against, even if this is true?
  - Do you have a standing that your approach will likely be beneficial?
  - Should you go to church leadership with the rumor?



I have had experiences like this people who belong to the same organization but who have no relationship with me, hear a rumor. They don't know me; they haven't spent time with me; they haven't sat down to talk with me, but they have felt it their responsibility to either tell me how they thought I was wrong, or write letters, or put out public statements, or go to church authorities seeking some action against me.

Some have reached out, had a brief conversation, in order to tick off the first requirement of Jesus's instruction and be able to say that they went to me, and then went on to go throughout the church spreading their concerns about me.

Is that what Jesus meant?

One of the founders of the SDA church gave this counsel, do you agree?

I have seen the great sacrifice which Jesus made to redeem man. He did not consider His own life too dear to sacrifice. Said Jesus: "Love one another, as I have loved you." **Do you feel, when a brother errs, that you could give your life to save him? If you feel thus, you can approach him and affect his heart; you are just the one to visit that brother. But it is a lamentable fact that many who profess to be brethren, are not willing to sacrifice any of their opinions or their judgment to save a brother. There is but little love for one another. A selfish spirit is manifested.** {1T 166.2}

Has this been your experience?

Do you see again how the two law lenses change how we understand and apply Scripture? If we read through the imperial/imposed law lens then we see rules that must be followed, a checklist that keeps us out of legal trouble as we seek to eradicate sin in others.

But when we see through design law we realize God's instructions are all designed to heal hearts and minds and bring us back into the unity of love and trust with Him and each other. Therefore, if we apply God's methods we don't take actions that would injure or harm another.

Are we willing to put things in the best light or do we misconstrue them?

**If a brother differ with you on some points of truth, do not stoop to ridicule, do not place him in a false light, or misconstrue his words, making sport of them; do not misinterpret his words and wrest them of their true meaning. This is not conscientious argument. Do not present him before others as a heretic, when you have not with him investigated his positions,** taking the Scriptures text by text in the spirit of Christ to show him what is truth. You do not yourself really know the evidence he has for his faith, and you cannot really clearly define your own position. Take your Bible, and in a kindly spirit weigh every argument that he presents and show him by the Scriptures if he is in error. When you do this without unkind



feelings, you will do only that which is your duty and the duty of every minister of Jesus Christ.-- Letter 21, 1888. {CW 50.2}

This week I received an email from an online listener who found on another website a rebuttal of my presentation on homosexuality.

The rebuttal said:

*Dr Jennings calls out the Christian community for “a lot of ignorance and a lot of misinformation.” He believes that “We have to start with facts, we have to start with truth.” He asks, “Are you willing to look at evidence and facts or do you want to hold beliefs that are refuted by evidence, facts, and truth?”*

*But when he goes into these ‘facts’, we find that they don’t prove what he thinks they prove. Most of his arguments involve very rare abnormalities.*

*First, he brings out Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, where a person is genetically male (XY), but has no testosterone receptors, so the child develops to look outwardly female (but lacks a uterus and ovaries). **Dr Jennings makes the first of many errors in his video when he says that all babies begin as females, and hormones, particularly testosterone, cause the baby to masculinize.** At fertilization, every individual is either genetically female (XX) or male (XY) (yes—there are a handful of intersex chromosomal conditions, most commonly Klinefelter’s—but these are rare), and the baby develops as a female or a male according to the genetics. Dr Jennings inadvertently acknowledges this when he says that the male baby has testes even with AIS.*

This is an example of not reaching out to understand and not being honest with what was presented, but misconstruing what was said and putting it in a false light.

Any honest person would realize that I was speaking of the physical, what is called phenotypical, with female external genitalia and the tissue that internally that would become uterus and fallopian tubes. Yet, they distort what I have said, attempting to suggest I am in error, because they don’t like the conclusions. Whoever wrote this didn’t contact me to clarify what I meant.

## **FRIDAY**

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Read question 3, “If we look at our church...” What is the greatest thing holding the church back?

I would suggest it is doctrinal, one specific doctrine, clinging to the false law lens, the lie that God’s law functions like human law, the infection of penal substitution theology with all its corruption.

Why? Because of the design law—by beholding we are changed. So, when we cling to the false law lens, and believe God functions like a dictator, who imposes rules and punishes rule breakers, we



become like that God.

This leads to rules based religion, needing to police the system to ensure all members are keeping the right rules and teaching in the right way.

From the book, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*:

The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, **they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey**. All this turns the mind away from God to self. **His love dies out of the heart**, and with it perishes love for his fellow men. **A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard**. The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and **causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies**. {MB 123.1}

It all stems from what type of law do you believe God's government operates upon—design law, or laws like humans make, imposed rules.

- **The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God**. Upon this battle we are now entering,—a **battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition**. {GC88 582.2}
- **There is no such thing as weakening or strengthening the law of Jehovah**. As it has been, so it is. It always has been, and always will be, holy, just, and good, complete in itself. It cannot be repealed or changed. [what kind of law is this? It is design law] To "honor" or "dishonor" it is but the speech of men. {PK 625.1}

**Between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah will come the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error**. [What kind of laws do men enact? Imposed law, but God's law is design law. The final conflict will be over this issue, and upon what type of law does penal substitution theology rest? Imposed law! It is a lie that has infected Christianity and God is waiting for a people to cast it off] **Upon this battle we are now entering--a battle not between rival churches contending for the supremacy, but between the religion of the Bible and the religions of fable and tradition...**[We are not in a battle between rival churches? How much of SDA eschatology has pitted the SDA church against the Roman and other Sunday keeping churches? Such a construct is a lie, we are not battling against other churches, but against the pagan god constructs that operate upon imposed law, inflict imposed punishments and require propitiation with a human sacrifice. **This is most prominently manifested in Penal Substitution Theology**. We must reject this legal fraud and come back and worship Him who made the heavens...] {PK 625.2}



## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**December 1, 2018:** Aging Brain seminar in Arlington, TX at the LoneStar Auditorium on the UT Arlington campus, 9am-4:30pm, preregister@[tiny.cc/BriainRegistration](http://tiny.cc/BriainRegistration)

**January 4-6, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking for the Florida Conference of SDA Women's Convention in Orlando, FL.

**February 2-3, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

**February 22-March 9, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be in Australia speaking in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Avondale, Sydney, Livingston, Perth, and Melbourne.

**April 3-6, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Sophia Bulgaria.

### **Mental Health Matters**

*Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing*

*In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church*

#### **The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018**

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!