



## Life Group Lesson – May 2021

# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THAT LAST

Bishop Ed Smith

### *INTRODUCTION TO LESSON*

**Life Group Lesson Objective:** *To understand the importance of building relationships that last, which honors God and brings increase to the Kingdom of God.*

**Life Group Leader Lesson Preparation:**

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’. There is no commandment greater than these.” (*Mark 12:30-31 NIV*)

I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. (*Psalms 139:14 NKJV*)

In order to build relationships that last, Jesus said we should love God and love other people. We must also know “who we are” in the sight of God so that we can have a godly, healthy self-esteem.

It is difficult to love others if we do not feel good about ourselves. We must embrace who we are as God sees us, “fearfully and wonderfully made.”

So, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. *Romans 12:2*. God loves us, and He expects us to love others, that we might build valued relationships.

“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” (*John 1:12 NIV*)

**Let’s believe God** for much healing and breakthrough in our relationships, in our personal lives, among our life groups and among our congregation. As we go through this lesson, please remember that this message applies to your spouse, children, coworkers, friends, associates, subordinates, bosses, etc.

## **WEEK 1 – Invite Someone to Join Your Life Group**

**Discussion Question:** What do you think God’s purpose is for asking us to love, forgive and be kind to one another? What is the value or benefit to us as individuals, if any?

The Life Group is a good place to build relationships that last.

### **The Fellowship of the Believers**

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship ... Acts 2:42 (NIV)

- Invite others to your Life Group.

### **Be purposeful about building lasting relationships.**

*Mother Teresa said that “the worst disease in today’s world is not leprosy or cancer: it is the feeling of being uncared for, unwanted, of being deserted and alone.”*

**People need people:** Everyone is going to need a group of people for different reasons in different ways. We all need to get connected. We all need people in our life, and we are going to need people someday. By attending a Life Group, we can learn the blessings that comes with giving and receiving.

What do you think of this quote from Larry Crabb: “When two people really connect, something is poured out of one and into the other that has the power to heal the soul of its deepest wounds and restore it to health. The one who receives, experiences the joy of being healed. And the one who give, knows even greater joy of being used to heal.” (Larry Crabb’s book, “Connecting”)

Seriously think about who you can invite to the Life Group, someone the group can build a relationship that lasts with and bring increase to the Kingdom of God... and do it.

- And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. *Galatians 4:6*
- Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so, shall ye be my disciples. *John 15:8*

### **Encourage one another:**

- But exhort one another daily while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. *Hebrews 3:13*

Describe some behaviors we should incorporate in having relationships that last. Give specific examples in some detail.

**Let's Remember:** Restoration, strengthening and adding of relationships is **not just all about us**, but what we can supply to someone else who needs what we can **provide them**.

### ACTION STEP

- Share one reason why you do not invite others, and how to overcome it.
- List 3 people whom you plan to invite to your next Life Group gathering.

## WEEK 2 – Building Relationships that Last through Listening

**Discussion Question:** How good are your listening skills?

*Think about what you might do to continue with gestures of love, kindness, encouragement, affirmation and generosity, no matter if there is a negative or lack of response.*

*Understand [this], my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear [a ready listener], slow to speak, slow to take offense and to get angry. James 1:19 (Amplified)*

*He that answereth a matter before he heareth (listening) it, it is (his) folly and (his) shame unto him. Proverbs 18:13 (AV)*

**Be Relatable.** Being able to relate to someone on a personal level can remove any added pressure or nervousness in making new contacts. It's easy to talk about common interests. Let's face it, we love to talk about ourselves, our families, possessions and hobbies; we love sharing memories that bring joy to our hearts. ***When people have the opportunity to engage in conversation where they share their passions with others the conversation becomes memorable.*** When you take part in conversation hoping to lay the foundation for a valuable relationship, you want that first conversation to be memorable.

Words from Maya Angelou:

*I have learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.*

**Group Discussion:** Why do you think people are reluctant to restore or build new relationships? What “kind of thinking” might be holding them back?

### **ACTION STEP**

This week reach out to one person you will seek to restore or encourage.

### **WEEK 3 – Trust – Value in Building Relationships that Last**

**Discussion Question:** Are you trustworthy? Can others rely and depend on you?

Share an example of a valued relationship in your life and what have you done to help it over the years. Please be specific and transparent.

*Naaman’s servants went to him and said, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed!’” So, he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy. Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, “Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Please accept now a gift from your servant.” 2 Kings 5:13-15 (NIV)*

- *Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding. Proverbs 3:5 (Amp)*
- *Ephesians 5:1 (Amp) says be ye imitators of God as dear children.*

- *Psalm 1:1 – Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

God's word tells us to **imitate him as dear children**, which means we can be trustworthy, dependable, relied upon to do or provide what is needed or right.

**Group Discussion:** What are some negative outcomes when people keep **retreating or running** from difficult relationships rather than seeking ways to restore and strengthen them? Especially as we get older in life.

### **ACTION STEP**

Who are you praying for and what scripture are you praying?

### **WEEK 4 – Scriptures for Building Relationships that Last**

**Discussion Question:** What specific areas in your life are you willing to grow or change to begin building valuable relationships?

Let each use our faith over the next 30 days to find at least one person in each category to reach and sow into:

- a) **To strengthen**
- b) **To restore a relationship**
- c) **To establish a new relationship**

Ask the Life Group to share how it went.

**Love** one another (John 13:35 – this command is mentioned 16 times)

**Be devoted** to one another (Romans 12:10)

**Honor** one another above **yourself** (Romans 12:10)

**Live in harmony with** one another (Romans 12:16)

**Build up** one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)

**Be likeminded towards** one another (Romans 15:5)

**Accept** one another (Romans 15:7)

**Admonish** one another (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16)

**Care for** one another (1 Corinthians 12:25)  
**Serve** one another (Galatians 5:13)  
**Bear** one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)  
**Forgive** one another (Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13)  
**Be patient with** one another (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13)  
**Be kind and compassionate** to one another (Ephesians 4:32)  
**Speak** to one another with **psalms, hymns and spiritual songs**.  
**Submit** to one another (Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5)  
**Consider** others **better than yourselves** (Philippians 2:3)  
**Look to the interests of** one another (Philippians 2:4)  
**Bear with** one another (Colossians 3:13)  
**Teach** one another (Colossians 3:16)  
**Comfort** one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18)  
**Encourage** one another (Hebrews 3:13)  
**Stir up** one another **to love and good works** (Hebrews 10:24)  
**Show hospitality** to one another (1 Peter 4:9)  
**Employ the gifts that God has given us for the benefit of** one another (1 Peter 4:10)  
**Clothe yourselves with humility towards** one another (1 Peter 5:5)  
**Pray** for one another (James 5:16)  
**Confess our faults** to one another (James 5:16)  
We are to do these things because we **belong** to one another (Romans 12:5; Ephesians 4:25).  
**Be a positive role model and have an overall positive impact on other people.**

### **ACTION STEP**

Broaden your community reach to invite 3 more people: relatives, neighbors, classmates, co-workers, people you do business with.