

The Relationships of a Woman





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Today we celebrate Mothers Day but we want to take it one step further and celebrate womanhood encouraging and lifting up all women. We recognise that for some of us celebrating Mother's Day can bring a sense of pain and sadness for many different reasons.

Now I am also acutely aware that the subject of a woman and her relationships *can be* very sensitive and I want to assure you that my desire today is to encourage you all and not to discourage you.

In Genesis 1 God created man in His image. He created him and put him in charge of the birds of the air and the fish of the sea and all the living creatures and the land on which they roam. Man was created to have a relationship with God and to work the land to care for the world that God had made for him to live in.

When God created woman He created her to be a helper, a mate for man. She was created to be in *relationship* with both God and man and that is a huge difference. We are wired to be in *relationship*.

In our 'Faith at work' series we learnt about men getting their identity from their work. Well I believe that women get their identity from their *relationships*.

As women - we were made to be *in relationship*, men were largely made *to work* – and it is from these areas that we largely gain our sense of self worth and identity.

What I am saying is as a general rule women are hard wired differently to men and this is just *one* aspect of that.

Why do you think teenage girls have to take their friends with them to the toilet? Because they are all about *relationships*.

They gain their identity and confidence by their relationships with other women *and men!*

Why do you think women watch daytime soap operas and buy magazines? Because they are all about relationships.

In the 'Faith at work' series we also learnt about the temptation for women of wanting to dominate – and how this is expressed in the opening book of the Bible – with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Now I am not wanting to explain this away - and in fact as a woman I believe it to actually be true.

You see I believe that because as women we get our identity from our relationships, we want our relationships to succeed.

Therefore we at times want to control or manipulate our relationships to make them appear successful.

We believe if our relationships are failing then we are a failure.

So *sometimes* we try to dominate and control others to make our relationship with them successful.

So today I want to talk to you about the relationships that we as women have in our lives. I want you to go away from here today encouraged about your relationships with others and with God.

I want to show you how you can have your relationship tank filled up.

How each relationship although it has unique characteristics, those characteristics can be filled in *other* relationships too.

And how Gods love for us and His relationship with us can be seen and experienced in and through *all* our other relationships.

Men there will be a lot for you to listen to today as well.

Women and their dads

Let's start with women and their dads – because *all* of us have had a father.

The relationship between a woman and her Dad is a question. It asks “*Who am I and Am I enough?*”

Am I *pretty* enough, *sweet* enough, *sexy* enough, *intelligent* enough or *adventurous* enough?

Women *first* learn who they are from their relationship with their Dad.

They learn who they are in God, who they are in relation to the world they live in and who they are in relation to the people in their lives.

They *first* measure the things they do and see the reaction from their Dad.

The way a woman *perceives* her relationship with her Dad will affect the way she feels about herself, God and her other relationships.

Now hear what I am saying here.

The way a woman *perceives* her relationship with her Dad will affect the way she feels about herself, God and her other relationships.

Being a Dad is a *huge* responsibility.

We see God, our heavenly father through the same coloured glasses as we see our earthly father.

Now if we got the *impression* that we were not good enough from our Dad when we were little girls then we will struggle to accept that we are *enough* for our heavenly Father.

This starts happening the day we are born and in reality continues till we die.

Sadly as children we are good receptors but poor interpreters.

It has to be perfectly clear how a Dad feels about his daughter or about his son for that matter.

Now I am going to take a big risk here and say that many men do *not* express their feelings very well.

Note that I said *many* and not all.

So there are often young girls, young women and even older women that have *no idea* what their earthly fathers think of them.

He may love, accept and care very deeply for his daughter but has never *expressed* that to her.

She will be trying to figure that out – sometimes decades later, even as a mature and grown woman.

Now I want to tell you something that it has taken me a long time to learn.

Our heavenly Father is deeply in love with us and pleased with us.

He knows who we are and who we can become.

He will never fail us or leave us.

He wants the very best for us – so much so that He was willing to sacrifice His only son so we could have a deep and personal relationship with Him.

God was demonstrative in His letting us know *we are enough*.

Men I want to encourage you to be demonstrative in your admiration of your daughters. (and your sons too) Treat them like the princesses and princes that they are.

Now I know that there are some of us that might have Dads who will never begin to even try to show us their love.

But let's 1st deal with the Dads that are here this morning and *want* some practical application to this.

If you can't tell your daughter that you love her with your voice then start by writing it in a card and sending it to her.

Look her in the eyes and smile – our eyes can sometimes do the talking for us.

Now I am not just talking to the dads who have little girls but all dads it doesn't matter if your daughter is six or sixty she will love to hear and know that you approve of her.

Be *interested* in her life – what is happening at school, work, or home.

Take her out for lunch or an ice-cream – it doesn't have to be expensive.

Please don't assume that your daughter *knows* you love her.

What about those of us that have *not* had that from our Dad and may *never* get it from him?

Well I totally believe that God doesn't create us into a void and that we can find the answer to the question "Who am I – am I enough?" in our *other* healthy relationships and in the word of God.

Here are some truths about how important you are to God the Father.

Psalm 139:17-18 He thinks about us all day!

Zephaniah 3:17 He rejoices over us with singing!

Psalm 56:8 He stores our tears in a bottle and records them all

Jeremiah 29:11 He created us with a purpose

Genesis 2:27 He made us in his image. Roger and I have this thing we do when we see a character trait in one of our children where we say either "He get that from you" or "She gets that from me" depending whether it is a negative or positive characteristic.

John 3:16 He loved us so much that He was prepared to sacrifice His own son so we could be in a relationship with Him and to give us a chance at eternity

Always remember that a relationship with your Heavenly Father *will* always answer the questions 'Who am I and am I enough?'

What about a relationship between a woman and her husband?

Genesis 2:24-25 For this reason a man leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife; and they will be one flesh and the man and his wife were without clothing, and they had no sense of shame.

A relationship of complete *acceptance*.

This was Gods plan for our relationship with our husbands.

It should be a relationship where no matter what we have done or what we look like, we should feel no shame.

This is a *two way thing* too ladies we are meant to totally accept our husbands as well as them accepting us.

When you first fall in love nothing your spouse does can make you love him or her less.

Often in our pre-marriage courses try to point out areas where a couple might struggle. But the feelings they have for each other then help them see past each others faults.

Sadly there comes a time in *many* marriages when nothing your spouse does can make you love him or her *more*.

Men your wives should be your first disciple. This should be the relationship that you give the most to.

God wants our relationship with our spouse to be one of mutual acceptance and respect.

But again for some of us this is *not* the case.

There are some who are *not* married and then there are some of us that live in loveless unaccepting marriages.

Roger has often said that most unhappy marriages don't end in divorce, they end in unhappy marriages.

Here's the thing it takes two willing people to make a marriage work and two very willing and determined people and a lot of hard work to repair

a damaged marriage.

And the *first step* is to make a *choice* to accept your spouse and choose to love them.

But what about those of us who for whatever reason *don't* get that sense of total acceptance from a spouse?

Let me assure you that it *can* and *will* come *again* from the other relationships in your lives.

That's the beauty of being relational creatures – if we can't get it from one relationship, our other healthy relationships can meet *much* of this need of total acceptance - just like God does. His acceptance of us is not conditional or half hearted it is total and never needs to be questioned.

Romans 5:8 says 'that while we were still sinners Jesus died for us'.

Total acceptance! And God knows us better than anyone.

The relationship of Mothering

Even if you aren't a mother!

And to the woman he said, I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in sorrow you will *bring forth* children; and your desire shall be to your husband, and he will rule over thee. (Genesis 3:15)

Interesting that women's punishment for sin was to do with *relationship* and mans was to do with *working* the land.

This next point is also really interesting!

The words in Genesis 3:15 with much pain you shall *bring forth* children, can also mean *bring up* children

Now any woman that has had children will tell you that the pain of

bringing forth a child is nothing in comparison to the pain of bringing up a child.

I believe that in parenting God gives us a glimpse of the depth of emotion He has for us, the desire to protect, nurture and develop. Any relationship you have of nurture, of protection and of development gives you that glimpse into Gods heart for us.

If you are a teacher there will be certain aspects of a mother relationship with your pupils.

If you have a pet there will be the same sense of mothers love. If you have a business or an idea you will want to nurture protect and develop it.

Your garden may give you a sense of nurture, protection and development.

And of course any relationship you have will have these aspects woven into it.

What about Women and their friends - Understanding

We started this morning accepting and communicating that many of us are *not* mothers, and indeed might not be married.

This being so, we can know for certain that our relational needs can *also* be met through relationships *outside* of motherhood or marriage.

Our healthy relationships with *other women* can be one way we fill up our relationship spaces.

The risk we have is that we try to make *one* best friend.

Children are the best at this because they can have one best friend one day and another one the next day.

Abbey met a little girl one day at the playground and the little girl asked Abbey if she would play with her. Abbey said yes and the little girl called out to her Mum “This is my new best friend”

Teenage girls get their hearts broken by their best friends.

They are defined in their peer group by the people they hang around with.

The teenage years are typically the most self-centred years of our lives.

And so what might be a really important relationship one day might be of no use to us the next and without even realising it we can hurt those we love and care about very deeply.

I remember my teen years with much sadness when it comes to my best friends.

Sadly for some of us our adult friendships can cause us similar pain.

As a woman I believe that we need to have more than *one* significant friend at any one time.

We need women that will speak the truth in love to us and those who accept us *no matter what*.

We need women who will walk through the valleys and over the mountain tops with us, laugh and cry with us, break bread and pray with us, women to have a good laugh with, women to tell our deepest darkest secrets to.

Women who can sympathise with us and women that can empathise with us.

Women we can mother and women that will mother us – regardless of our age differences.

We need women to share our families with and women to share our faith with.

Women who have experienced the same things in life as us and women that haven't.

We need the influence of older wiser women and the exuberance of younger women.

Now you might be *all* of these things but you won't be all of these things to one person

No one woman can be all that and if you think that there is someone like that *I would like to meet her*.

The thing is these relationships all have is understanding.
A sense of "She gets me"

We need to be *open* to having healthy friendships with a variety of women who might be your auntie or the lady next door, the girl at work or even your daughter and don't ever let age stop you from having a great friendship with someone.

Now just before we finish with our last point I want to talk to you about the ironing pile.

You see our relationships are like the washing and the ironing pile. Most items of washing or relationships need just a quick iron now and then to smooth out the creases, some take a bit longer and need a bit of extra heat or steam.

Some items or relationships need outside help and they get taken to the professionals – the drycleaners.

I don't have an ironing pile anymore but when I used to *sometimes* I would leave some items in the bottom of the basket – too hard to even begin to think about trying to get those creases out.

I guess I did eventually iron out those few really difficult ones though because as I said “I don't have an ironing pile anymore”

And finally Women and themselves

We are *sometimes* our own worst enemies, ladies.

We *sometimes* suffer with low self esteems, hatred and loathing, continual comparisons.

I could do a whole message about this topic and not cover it properly.

But Ladies here are a few tips about your self esteem and the way you think about yourself.

Listen carefully, this is the truth.

1 You are not defined by your dress size or a number on the scales – you are so much more

2 You are not defined by the amount of money you do or don't have – you are so much more

3 You are not defined by your role in the home – you are so much more

4 You are not defined by what someone else thinks of you, not your



mother, your husband, your worst enemy or your best friend – you are so much more

5 You are not defined by the media – whatever that is – you are so much more!

6 You are not *only* defined by your relationships! – you are all so much more than that



You are defined by the fact that you are a daughter of the most high God, created in His glorious image to be in relationship with Him and to be in relationship with others.

You are a daughter of the king. That makes you a princess.

Let's pray together.

