



# Building Successful Relationships

Love

**LIFE**   
**GROUPS**

## Leader Check-in

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Make a list of the current relationships in your life. Circle the relationships you would consider strong and underline the relationships that are waning. How might this study help you to sustain or improve these relationships?

## Discover

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**Read Proverbs 4:23.** What are some of the key words in this passage? How would you explain this passage in your own words?

**Read John 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.** Based on these passages, how would you define love?

What fears keep people (or you) from loving the way that God loves?

What is the difference between love and infatuation? Have you ever mistaken infatuation for love? What happened?

Consider the quote: *Whoever has the heart has the person.*

Do you agree or disagree? Support your answer.

## Fully Own

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**Read 1 Peter 4:8.** Do you spend more time pointing out the sins of the people you love, or helping them overcome their weaknesses?

**Remember Proverbs 4:23.** What can your life tell you about the current state of your heart?


What does it look like to love someone without desiring something in return? Has anyone ever loved you this way? How did this relationship impact your life?

What conditions have you been placing on your love?

## Challenge

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The first step to building successful relationships is to give love without merit. Choose one person from the list you created to practice on this week. How can you give love to them without expecting anything in return?





# Building Successful Relationships

Faith

**LIFE**   
**GROUPS**

## Leader Check-in

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What happened this past week as you practiced the first step to building successful relationships?  
What new insights into love and relationships has God given you?

## Discover

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Can you think of a time when someone expressed faith for you and changed your view of yourself, your future, or the obstacle you were facing?

**Recall Proverbs 4:23.** What might happen when someone receives discouragement from their loved ones, instead of encouragement?

**Read Galatians 5:5-6.** What is the relationship between love and faith? Can you truly love someone unconditionally without believing in them? Support your answer.

Consider the definition of faith offered in this study: *believing more for someone than they believe for themselves.*

What are some of the challenges to having this kind of faith for others?

Sometimes we see a future for others based on what we ourselves want. How does having faith for our loved ones differ from having an agenda for them?

## Fully Own

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**Read Hebrews 11:1.** Do you focus more on the way your loved ones are right now or who you know they could be?

How might God use you to encourage your spouse/friend/family members/coworkers in their faith? In their dreams? In their work? In their struggles or challenges?

Think of three people who are close to your heart right now. What adjectives do you think God would use to describe them?

How can you show these people every day how God views them? What is it that you like about their character or habits (look specifically for things that do not personally benefit you)?

## Challenge

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Who is the most encouraging person in your life right now? Take a moment this week to thank that person for their faith for you.





# Building Successful Relationships

## Interest

**LIFE**   
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### Leader Check-in

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What relationship-building success stories do you have to share this week?

What challenges have you encountered?

### Discover

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**Read Psalm 139:1-6.** Have you ever considered the fact that God is interested in you? How does that make you feel?

**Read Philippians 2:3-4.** How does your ability to take an interest in someone else's passions or hobbies reflect upon your character?

In what ways did Jesus model Philippians 2:3-4? How can we imitate Him as individuals?

Reflect on the quote:

*When you show interest in what interests somebody else, they take your interest as being interested in them.*

Have you seen this at play in your personal life?

What might happen if the Church became known for being *interested* in what interests those who are not yet a part of the Body?

### Fully Own

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Why is it that we often struggle to be interested in others?

Do you desire more to be an *interesting* person, or an *interested* person? How might this tendency affect your relationships (positively or negatively)?

In your top three relationships, what are the main interests of those people? List at least three per person.

**Read Romans 12:10.** How can you demonstrate interest in those things? Think specifically and practically.

### Challenge

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Outdo yourself in honoring the people you love. Pick (at least) one person to show interest in this week. Follow through on the ideas you came up with earlier in the study, and watch what happens!





# Building Successful Relationships

**LIFE**   
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## Availability

### Leader Check-in

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Take a moment to reflect on the topics covered in the last few weeks: love, faith, and interest. What has been your biggest takeaway so far?

### Discover

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Can you name a “foxhole buddy” who supported and cared for you during a time of crisis? What did this relationship teach you about availability?

**Read Psalm 118:1-6.** How does God demonstrate the concept of availability in this passage?

Break up into two different groups to read the following passages:

- Group 1: Luke 5:17-20
- Group 2: Mark 6:31-34

After reading, consider the following questions. Share your observations with the group as a whole:

*What do you notice about Jesus’ attitude in your passage?*

*Why do you think Jesus was able to stay available in the midst of the chaos?*

How does the concept of availability relate to Central’s Mark of Ownership: Life is Better Together?

### Fully Own

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Have you ever seized (or missed) an opportunity to be available to someone going through a crisis? What was the effect on your relationship?

Is availability just a question of time? In what other ways should we be available to our loved ones?

**Read Galatians 6:2 and John 13:34.** Would your friends and family identify you as a burden-carrier? How can you continue to learn from Jesus’ example in this area of your life?


What are the barriers to your availability? Are they practical (such as a full schedule)? Are they emotional?

What steps can you take to guard your heart while still making it open to others?

### Challenge

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Spend some time this week listening to God about your availability. What is he challenging you to do? Journal your thoughts throughout the week—and come to group next week ready to share.







# Building Successful Relationships

**LIFE**   
**GROUPS**

## Respect

### Leader Check-in

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How did God challenge you this past week regarding your availability in relationships? How can we support you in your efforts to obey him?

### Discover

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What makes you feel respected?

**Read Romans 12:3,16 and 13:7.** In what ways are the concepts of humility and respect related?

If respect means establishing a person's worth, how did God demonstrate respect for us as human beings?

**Read Matthew 9:9-11.** Why do we tend to evaluate people's worth according to their station? How did Jesus subvert this social norm?

In what ways do you need to adjust your understanding of respect in order to build healthier relationships?

### Fully Own

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**Recall Proverbs 4:23.** What changes in your heart when you respect another person's value, rather than focusing on their faults?

Who have you been unwilling to give respect to? What is God asking you to do differently in this relationship?

Our ability to give respect is often tied to how much we respect ourselves. What conclusions might you draw about yourself as you consider the following:

- *Is your opinion of others influenced by their economic, educational, or social status?*
- *Do you find it difficult to let someone else be the expert?*
- *How do you respond when someone surpasses you in an area of your expertise?*
- *Does your respect for yourself change depending on what others think of you?*

Do you think most non-believers would agree that the Church respects them? What steps might we take as the Church to communicate respect to those outside?

### Challenge

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Make a commitment to show respect to someone who wouldn't expect it this week, and then do it!





# Building Successful Relationships

## Time

**LIFE**   
**GROUPS**

### Leader Check-in

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Did you follow through on the commitment you made last week? What happened?

### Discover

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Even though we all get twenty-four hours a day, why do we so often feel that we don't have enough time?

Why does spending time with someone put us in a position to capture their hearts, or them in a position to capture ours?

**Read Ephesians 5:15-16 from a few different translations.** What truth about time is this passage communicating?

If time is the currency of relationships, how do you intentionally or unintentionally communicate other people's value with your time?

### Fully Own

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What benefits do you reap from spending time alone with your spouse/children/etc.?

Maria Edgeworth once said, "If we take care of the moments, the years will take care of themselves."

Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

**Read Psalm 90:12.** How can you make the most of the parts of your schedule that you don't control—chores, commutes, the kids' soccer games, etc.?

Under what circumstances would it be a poor decision to invest too much time with someone? Do you know (or can you find) any passages of scripture that support your understanding?

Are there any places in your life where time could become a trap to you—a coworker you spend too much time with, an addictive game on your phone, etc.?

### Challenge

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Take a few minutes every night this week to take a personal time inventory. On average, how many hours a day did you spend on work, family, friends, God, hobbies, or other things? Ask God for his input on how you should be spending your time.





# Building Successful Relationships

## Communication

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**GROUPS**

### Leader Check-in

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What has God been showing you throughout this series? What impact has this study had on your relationships?

### Discover

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Proverbs 15:4 says that the deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. Have you seen or experienced this?

**Read Ephesians 4:29.** According to this passage, what are the key components of Christ-like communication?

Consider the two forms of destructive communication: *lack of communication* and *unwholesome communication*. What practices can you put in place to avoid communicating with your loved ones in a destructive manner?

**Read 2 Corinthians 5:20.** How do the words we speak portray Jesus to the world around us?

**Read Luke 6:45.** If God only used the words you speak to others to judge you—what conclusion would He come to?

### Fully Own

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Read the list of destructive forms of communication. Do you ever employ any of these in your relationships?

ANGRY WORDS  
HASTY WORDS  
RASH WORDS  
HARSH WORDS  
CONDEMNING  
WORDS

LYING  
(EXAGGERATION)  
FLATTERY  
GOSSIP  
SLANDER  
COMPLAINING

MOCKING WORDS  
FOOLISH WORDS  
CRITICAL WORDS  
SCOFFING  
COMPARISON

BITTER WORDS  
QUARRELING  
UNKIND WORDS  
CURSING  
BACKBITING

Read the list of constructive forms of communication. Which ones come most naturally to you? Which might you need to work on?

WORDS THAT GIVE HONOR  
WORDS THAT BRING HOPE  
GUIDANCE  
WORDS THAT PROMOTE FAITH  
CONSOLATION

INSTRUCTION  
EDIFICATION (WORDS THAT BUILD UP)  
INSPIRATION  
REBUKES (SEE PROV. 9:8)  
ENCOURAGING WORDS

### Challenge

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Reflect this week on all you have learned in this study. What insight do you want to carry with you beyond this series? Write the insight down and place it somewhere you will see it often.