

Encourage

Inspiration for IPHC Leaders

ARTICLES THIS MONTH:

DON'T SACRIFICE Your FAMILY FOR MINISTRY

TAKE YOUR
DISAPPOINTMENTS
TO GOD

HOW YOUR LOCAL
CHURCH CAN IMPACT
THE WORLD

DON'T WEAR THE
"APOSTOLIC" LABEL
UNLESS YOU MEAN IT

UNDERSTANDING THE
SIX LEVELS OF
RELATIONSHIP





TAKE YOUR DISAPPOINTMENTS TO GOD

All leaders are tempted to blame others for their trials. Step back and ask God how He wants to change you!

A number of years ago I started learning some valuable lessons about illusions, disappointment, disillusionment, and truth. There was a situation where disappointment and disillusionment made a claim upon how I responded to others and my response to God. In all honesty, I cannot remember what I read, or who I heard, but someone helped me discern this and opened the door to a more fruitful way of dealing with life. To whoever it was, I offer heartfelt thanks.

The English prefix, “dis,” has Latin and Germanic language roots. It indicates “a pulling apart or a separation.” Thus it has a privative function related to the word it precedes. That’s why “discouragement” literally separates us from “courage.”

This monthly digital magazine, Encourage, uses a different prefix. We know how easily Satan seeks to “discourage” us in life and ministry. So we pray that this resource will fill you with the courage you need to fulfill your mission.

But let’s get back to disillusionment and disappointment. In a particular situation, I found myself becoming resentful, demanding, untrusting, and even bitter in response to disappointments and disillusionments. People and circumstances did not match my expectations. I realized later that part of this was because I was not living up to the expectations I had placed on myself. I was transferring my self-resentment to others.

I blamed other people. I blamed the devil. I didn’t blame God because I could not imagine that God would do this to me.

I was wrong. It was not the devil and it was not other people who allowed the disillusionment to come my way. It was God. God did this to me. God allowed this to occur in my life. The reason: Because only truth can set us free.

I realized God loves me so much that He sends His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, to confront and shatter the illusions we have about ourselves and others. In other words, it is God who brings disillusionment with our illusions! Only by shattering our illusions towards others, ourselves, and God can we



BY DR. DOUG BEACHAM

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Encourage

A place of hope. A people of promise.

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finally be set free to understand forgiveness, grace, mercy, and love.

I will not tell you that it has been an easy road. Yes, I still disappoint myself and sometimes people and situations disappoint me. But I'm learning to discern the first responses of anger, fear, and resentment. I have learned to ask: "Okay, Jesus, what is the truth You are wanting to teach me in this?" Here are some things I'm learning on this journey:

1. The other person is usually not the primary problem. I am the primary problem!
2. God is at work in the other person to use him or her as His tool to engage another aspect of my life that needs sanctifying grace.
3. The other person is loved by God as much as God loves me.
4. I must rejoice when my illusions are exposed. When I rejoice, truth can break through and set me and others free.
5. The Holy Spirit is striving to transform each of us into the image of Jesus Christ, transforming us "from glory to glory" (2 Corinthians 3:17, 18).
6. My tendency to judge others is tempered with the knowledge that others are also in the process of being transformed by the Spirit. My response is tempered by showing the same grace that is being shown to me.
7. Confrontation, reproof, correction, and discipline remain important.

But the origin of those responses is no longer from the anger and disappointment of disillusionment. The origin has shifted to the process of patience, character, and "hope that does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (see Romans 5:4, 5).

My prayer is that when you encounter disillusionment and disappointment, you will take your struggle to God and allow Him to put it all in proper perspective. Let the Holy Spirit use every trial to form and shape you into the leader you were called to be. □

"My prayer is that when you encounter disillusionment and disappointment, you will take your struggle to God."



HOW YOUR LOCAL CHURCH CAN IMPACT THE WORLD

God wants every congregation—no matter how big or small—to have a missionary vision.



BY RAY BUCCIARELLI

Ray Bucciarelli is an IPHC missionary candidate. Ordained in the Ephesians 4 Network, he serves as the missions pastor at Faith Christian Church in Melvindale, Michigan. He and his wife, Kathy, have four children.

Several years ago my senior pastor asked me to help him establish a culture of missions in our church. As the missions pastor I began a lot of soul searching and Bible study. There were two questions to immediately answer: (1) What is missions, and (2) what is culture?

What is missions? This takes me back to a time when I was teaching a breakout session at a national teen event. When I asked the kids to define missions, hands went in the air and they began blurting out random answers from every perspective. Responses ranged from “feeding the poor,” and “winning the lost” to “caring for orphans and widows” and “disaster relief.”

Generally all those answers are correct, and missions can include all these things. All those tasks help fulfill our ultimate goal to complete the Great Commission. But sometimes we only focus on the task and never look at the ‘why.’

If we are going to finish the task that Jesus gave us 2,000 years ago, we must become more strategic and purposeful as a global church. Personally, I think 2,000 years is long enough to have received an assignment from Jesus and not have it finished! It’s time to get this job done!

What about culture?’ Culture is something we do inherently. I don’t have to think about how to drive on the right side of the road. I just do it subconsciously because I live in the United States. Nor do I wake up every morning and focus on speaking American English so my British accent doesn’t slip out. No, my American accent is instilled in me.

So, how do I develop a culture of missions in the local church? It must come primarily through the senior pastor, and key leaders must model it. It also comes with patience because you can’t create a culture overnight.

To begin building a mission culture in my home church, I knew something needed to change. I began to teach the people that missions is not just what we do, it’s who we are. Then I taught that missions is not a program in the church to be departmentalized. Missions should not be viewed as a separate ministry like women’s ministry, children’s ministry, or the youth group.

No, missions is something that all people in the church should participate in, believe in, and have activities for. My breakthrough came when our children’s pastors came to my wife and I, asking, “What can our kids effectively do for missions?”

I immediately connected them to a pastor who was overseeing a struggling orphanage in northern India. Their vital need was bedding, hats, gloves, and coats for the coming winter. Our children went to work and within weeks they raised thousands of dollars to meet this need. As a bonus there was even enough money left over to fix the facility there.



I'm talking about children between the ages of four and ten raising money for missions! To this day, all of our kids know the names of all 44 orphans. They exchange video greetings, make cards for each other and so forth. This is an example of missions being instilled early into the emerging generation of our church.

The adults at my church lit up when they saw what the little ones had done. This excitement carried over throughout the rest of the body and infiltrated into the other ministries. I know every church is different, and not every church can follow this model. But the principle is the same. We must be purposeful, effective, and patient until everyone in the church realizes that missions is their responsibility.

I have identified seven keys to building a missions culture. They are:

- Knowledge
- Passion
- Commitment
- Faith
- Consistency
- Relationship with missionaries
- Your ability to communicate the vision.

My booklet called *Missions in the Local Church* explains these keys in more detail. (You can request it by emailing me at ray@reach1040.org.)

The missions vision of your church will be proportionate to the size of the congregation, thus determining the available resources to accomplish its part. Do not be overwhelmed with all that needs to be done. Just simply

find your role in this glorious task of finishing the Great Commission.

You don't have to be a big church to touch the world for Jesus. I have seen smaller churches become more effective and strategic in missions than larger churches. The idea is to begin doing something. Start with anything!

I have ministered in more than 100 churches these past few years. I have never seen a church's growth stop because they started a mission program. There is no way for me to explain it or articulate it here, but churches actually grow and their overall giving is increased as the congregation recognizes that they are investing in advancing God's kingdom.

Your church's finances are like an ever-running faucet. Money is always flowing out for both kingdom purposes and non-kingdom purposes. Yes, you need to get the church roof fixed. Yes, you need paper towels in the restrooms. But here's the challenge: Evaluate how much of that running financial faucet is for the advancement of God's kingdom globally.

Do you feel your church is doing enough to reach the world? Jesus paid a huge price for us to get the gospel to those who have not heard. Consider how you can begin developing a mission culture in your local church. I believe your church can and will be effective both across the street and across the world. Let's work together and get the gospel to everyone! ☐

"I have seen smaller churches become more effective and strategic in missions than larger churches."



DON'T SACRIFICE YOUR FAMILY FOR THE CHURCH!

Please don't allow the enemy to keep you so busy that you lose the most important people in your life.



BY RICK
WOMACK

Rick Womack is the former executive assistant to the bishop of the Georgia Conference of the IPHC. Last year he and his wife, Patrice, and their two children moved to The Rock, Georgia, to pastor Mountain Gap Church. He also now serves as missions director for the Georgia Conference.

One Sunday after church I was enjoying a meal with my wife and two children at one of our local Mexican restaurants when we were invited by another couple to join them at their table. Because this couple was seasoned in life and ministry, we accepted the invitation with hopes of hearing about God's activity in their lives. What they said to me in that moment was deeply encouraging.

"We could tell right away how much everyone in your family loves each other," the man said. This was one of the greatest compliments I've ever received.

I knew this was not an ordinary statement meant to flatter a newly appointed pastor. I had known the man for a few years. No, this statement came from a couple who recognized the health, life, and love shared between the members of a pastoral family. They were, in years past, that same pastoral family.

My wife, Patrice, and I don't claim to have it all together. We've certainly had our share of bumps in the road. But through all the trials, some practical advice

that I received in Bible college remained: Ministry should never come before your relationship with God, yourself, or your family.

I've watched, up close and personally, as pastors and ministry leaders have sacrificed their families for the sake of their churches. I've watched colleagues and friends sacrifice their time, energy, and their very lives for the sake of the church. I've seen the days, the projects, and the "next thing" replace the priority of family.

I've heard it said this way before: "Jesus died for the church, pastor, so you don't have to!" So, how do you keep from dying for your church? How do you keep from losing your family and your sanity while you are being tossed around

by the challenges of church leadership? Here are the core convictions that have worked for me and Patrice:

1. Set your priorities.

We all need to be reminded that our relationship with God comes first. It is from the place of “being in Christ” (2 Cor. 5:17), from that vital and dynamic relationship we have with the Father, that we are able to do things for Christ.

Beyond that is what I call “relationship with self.” This includes your own health—mental, spiritual, social, emotional, and physical. Healthy leaders lead healthy ministries. Unfortunately, the opposite is true as well.

If you are a leader and you are not healthy in any of these areas, please, get help. Find a doctor, a good diet or an exercise plan to help you get physically healthy—then stick with the plan! Find a counselor who can help you process the pain you may be suffering from.

You might be surprised that many of the nation’s largest churches also have pastors who are open about their need for a counselor. Find a colleague with whom you can be transparent, receive objective feedback, and encouragement, and share one another’s prayer burdens.

The “band of brothers” who are closest to me have helped me be a better husband and dad. They listen, encourage, pray, serve as a sounding board, and generally have me in their best interests. These relationships have kept me healthy during the darkest seasons of life.

Finally, my wife and I have chosen to see our family as our first ministry. I believe the kingdom of God can be beautifully reflected in a marriage and in our home when we make it a point to see that the reflection is healthy.

I’ve put it this way countless times, “If I lose my family, I’ve lost my ministry. I won’t sacrifice my family for the sake of the ministry.” I have a core conviction that I only have “one-shot” at this role of fatherhood. I plan to make it count!

2. No posturing allowed!

We’ve all had those tough moments in marriage. Communication gets cloudy, emotions get riled and perception becomes reality. It’s in those challenging times that we find it easiest to “posture” —when we set ourselves up to either look good or avoid blame. Defensive posturing involves protecting our own interests or reputation. But this can’t be allowed in marriage.

Early in my marriage, the Lord helped me understand that my love for my wife can’t be based on anything less

than Christ’s love for the Church (see Eph. 5:25). The translation downloaded to me on that day of defensive posturing by the Holy Spirit sounded like this: “Rick, how are you loving your wife like Christ loved the Church?”

It was certainly a day of reckoning as every notion of “being right” left, and I was only left with what was right: Christ sacrificed all, gave all, and died for all. How could I, having received such a correction, move forward with my posture of “rightness.” I had to die to my rights and love my wife sacrificially.

I’m thankful for that day the Lord broke through my stubbornness. He helped me understand that the ultimate demonstration of love was completed at Calvary. I only had to receive, embrace, and reflect that same love in my marriage.

That breakthrough has helped me encourage others in counseling and mentoring. In fact, it’s a question I’ll often ask other men to contemplate: “How are you loving your wife like Christ loved the Church?”

*“If I lose my family,
I’ve lost my ministry.
I won’t sacrifice
my family for the
sake of the ministry.”*

3. Take a seasonal outlook.

I’m not talking about a Weather Channel forecast. We have to be aware of the seasons of our lives. Whether it was the “terrible two’s” (which weren’t really that terrible) or the “dreaded teen years” (which we’re presently in and loving...seriously!) we have chosen to reframe them

in order to give them a new outlook.

By reframing our perspective and shifting our expectations, we have been able to embrace the new that each season brings. We loved the years I spent traveling in a conference leadership role. It was a time to see new places, meet new people, and have long drives with meaningful conversations. We also loved the years I worked in retail sales while serving in volunteer roles in local churches. Those years gave us the perspective of what it means to lead a ministry, work a full-time job, and build a family.

Our present season is one where both of our children are in their teen years. We love this season because we see the opportunity that we have to invest in their lives and prepare them to make a difference in the world.

4. Don’t procrastinate--start now!

Perhaps you are a ministry leader or pastor who has sacrificed much of his or her life with priorities determined and demanded by a group of people other than those closest to you. Perhaps you are at a place of evaluating your effectiveness as a spouse or parent. Perhaps you are just entering ministry and trying to navigate those new waters. Wherever you are, start now! □



DON'T WEAR THE 'APOSTOLIC' LABEL UNLESS YOU MEAN IT

Many leaders today want power and authority without the character to match.



BY LEE GRADY

J. LEE GRADY is an ordained IPHC minister who serves as contributing editor of *Charisma* magazine and as editor of *Encourage*. He also directs The Mordecai Project, an international missions organization based in Florida. He is the author of *The Holy Spirit Is Not for Sale* and other books.

A few years ago I heard a preacher tell a room full of ministers that they couldn't work miracles or exercise apostolic authority unless they used the word apostle as a title. So some of them ran out and printed new business cards—as if putting the word in front of their names was the magic ticket to reclaiming New Testament power.

That was a dumb idea! For the past 15 years or more, thousands of people have been wounded and countless churches have nosedived because immature leaders thought they could gain apostolic status the easy way. We are so eager to qualify ourselves that we forget God alone calls, prepares, and sends true apostles.

The late Arthur Katz, who was a prophetic voice to our movement for many years, wrote in his 1999 book *Apostolic Foundations* that nobody should be eager to step into an apostolic assignment or to treat such a task flippantly. "God is jealous over the word apostolic," Katz wrote. "It is a word that has fallen into disuse and needs to be restored, and that restoration is not going to be cheap."

We are so carnal, so power hungry and so enamored with status and position that we don't have a clue what apostolic ministry really is. Most charismatics and Pentecostals think it is about authority, and many men who claim to be apostles build top-down pyramid structures that abuse people. Others think apostolic leaders are marked primarily by sensational miracles. Yet, I see something we have entirely missed when I look at the life of the apostle Paul.

Paul told the Thessalonians that love is the true hallmark of any person who is sent on an apostolic mission. Therefore, if we want apostolic power or authority (which we should), it must flow through apostolic love or it is a counterfeit.



This apostolic love can be described in four ways:

1. It is incarnational. Paul brought the gospel to the Thessalonians and lived among them. He did not just drop in, preach a good sermon, take an offering and leave. He said, “We were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives” (1 Thess. 2:8, NASB, emphasis added). Just as Jesus came to this earth, lived among us and died for us, true apostles give it all.

If all a so-called “apostle” does is preach a good message, he is a poor substitute for the real thing. And if he also spends more time taking up offerings for himself, he is a hireling or a con artist. Our movement today has been littered with debris caused by imposters who preyed upon innocent victims in the name of “ministry.”

2. It is sacrificial. Paul risked his neck in Thessalonica, and then he told his followers that he would “suffer affliction” from his persecutors (1 Thess. 3:4). But he loved them so much that he prayed for them continually, and he longed to visit them again even though he knew it would be risky. He never mentions money. In fact, when he was with the Thessalonian church, he worked night and day “so as not to be a burden to any of [them]” (1 Thess. 2:9). That flies in the face of modern apostles

who charge \$1,000 an hour for their consulting fees—or who expect the pastors in their “downlines” to buy the privilege of getting advice.

3. It is relational. The word brethren appears in 1 Thessalonians 17 times. That’s because Paul viewed the church as the family of God. He saw himself in the role of a gentle, nursing mother (1 Thess. 2:7) as well as a strong father (v. 11). Paul’s affection is so thick and so slobbery that it drips off the page of his letter.

He says the members of the church “have become very dear” to them (v. 8) and that they “also long to see [them]” (3:6). It’s no surprise that he ends the epistle by exhorting the people to greet one another with “a holy kiss” (5:26).

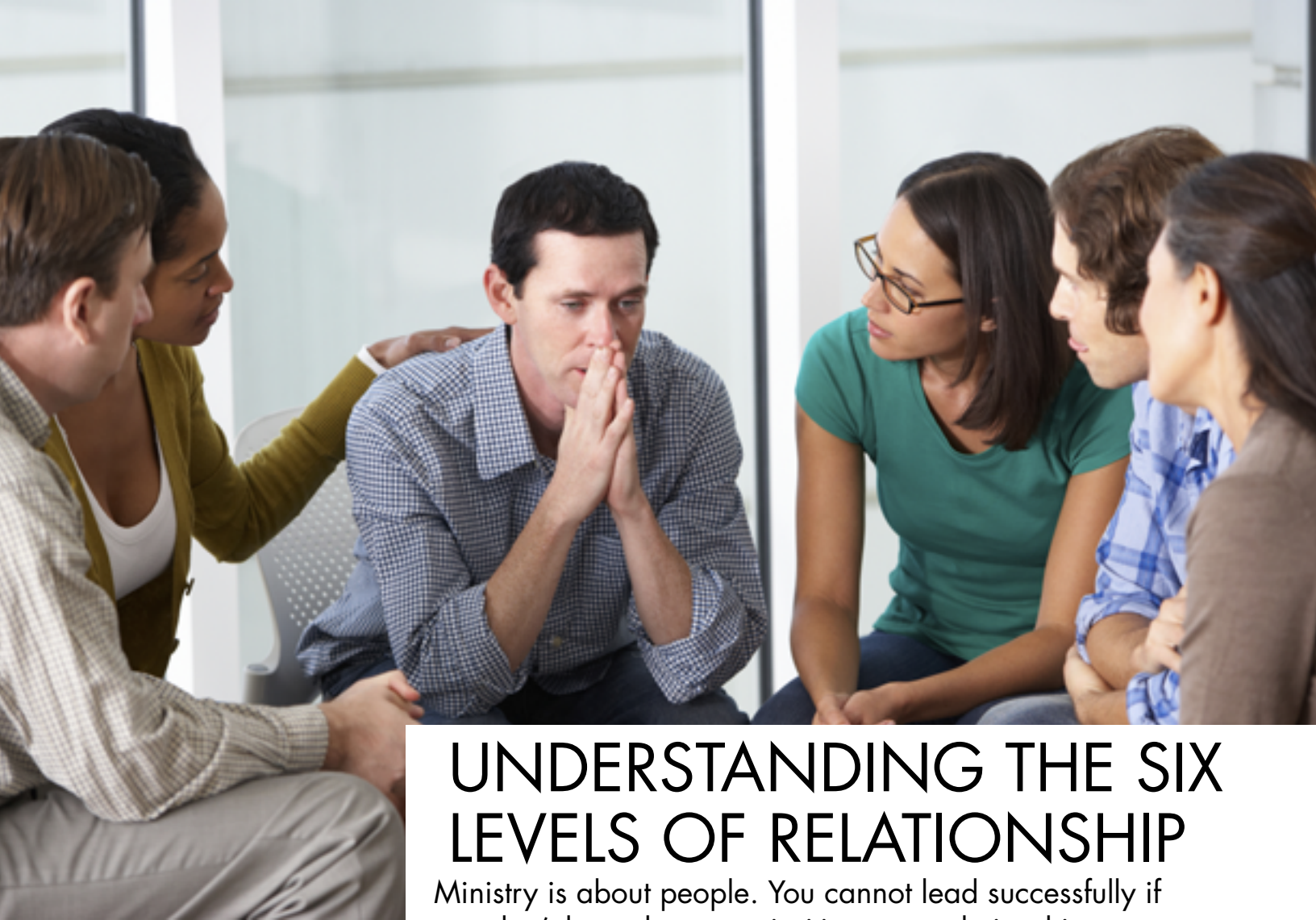
What has happened to this kind of holy affection in today’s church? Why are we so disconnected? We have replaced deep relationships with cold professionalism. Many pastors have not been properly fathered, so they don’t know how to love—nor do they have close friends.

The result? We cover our dysfunction with busyness. We work, work, work—while sterile, loveless congregations struggle to grow. We use gimmicks and programs to get people in seats because our love is not warm enough to attract people to Jesus.

4. It is confrontational. Paul was not seeker-sensitive. He did not hesitate to confront sin. He gave the Thessalonians one of the most frank, forthright sermons on sexual sin ever written (1 Thess. 4:1-8). But he confronted them as a loving father by exploring them to stay within their God-given boundaries. He didn’t use anger, manipulation, domination, or threats. He led with strong, apostolic love.

I believe God wants to pour out a new wave of apostolic power on our generation. But we can’t be trusted with this anointing if we refuse to grow up. We will have the maturity to use the word apostolic when we learn to walk in the love that was modeled by the first apostles. □

“Many pastors have not been properly fathered, so they don’t know how to love—nor do they have close friends.”



UNDERSTANDING THE SIX LEVELS OF RELATIONSHIP

Ministry is about people. You cannot lead successfully if you don't know how to prioritize your relationships.



BY BRIAN
KINGREA

Brian Kingrea pastors Word of Hope Fellowship in Silver Spring, Maryland. A graduate of Emmanuel College, he has served in leadership positions in the Mid-Atlantic Conference of the IPHC. He and his wife, Kay, have three children.

Years ago my wife and I decided to relocate our ministry. We expected our church to grow as a result. I was wrong! Within the next year several significant members of our ministry left. I was crushed.

My vision was solid. Our plan was strategic. What was happening? As I began to seek answers I discovered that leadership is not about my charisma, my good decisions, my performance, or the fact that I seemed to have all the right answers. Leadership is about people!

Your ministry will live or die by the people you are surrounded with and by your ability to develop appropriate levels of relationship with those people. I have discovered that there are certain rules specific to a leader's relationships. If these rules are broken, a ministry will face significant obstacles to growth.

Have you ever watched six-year-olds play softball? For them, there are no boundaries. You can run the bases backwards and you can score a point for the opposing team and everyone will still stand and cheer. But the short-lived cuteness of these moments ends quickly. The coach gets frustrated and spectators lose interest because no one wins and the game never ends.

You can't do ministry that way. Yet, many leaders face unbearable frustration each and every day because they know how to play the game but don't know how to set boundaries.

Jesus laid the foundation for relational boundaries in ministry in John 15. He told his disciples: "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard

from My Father I have made known to you” (v. 15). Did you catch what Jesus is doing here? He is defining levels of relationships and setting boundaries.

First, Jesus says there is a difference between a friend and a servant. He then goes on to tell them the difference: “For a servant does not know what his master is doing.” From this we see that the sharing of information is what determines the level of relationship.

I have come to believe there are six levels of relationship that pastors and leaders experience in ministry. These levels are listed below in order of their importance.

1. My relationship with my Master

Jesus called His disciples His friends. We sing about being friends of God, but how many of us are at that level with our Master?

At a small Bible study I asked a group of individuals how many of them knew God’s will for their lives. No one raised his hand. I was shocked because there were people in the group in full-time ministry. I began asking this question while speaking to larger audiences, and I discovered that in almost every case no one acknowledged knowing God’s plan for their lives!

I dare to say this is due to the fact that we really don’t spend as much time getting to know God as we spend doing His work. If I want to know the plans of a person, I must get to know that person!

Scripture tells us that God used to walk with Adam in the garden. This implies close sharing and communication. Conversations that man used to have with God we now have with friends, church members, and counselors.

Ask yourself: Before you chaired your last church staff meeting, did you discuss your meeting agenda with God prior to sharing it with your team? If not, something must change! Your agenda must flow from your relationship with your Master. Leaders must experience deep intimacy with God!

2. My relationship with my mate

Besides Christ, your mate is the most important relationship in your life. I suffered for years under the fear that my spouse would get too discouraged if I shared with her about my ministry related-struggles. I desperately needed Kay to be my encourager, but I was also robbing her of sharing in the joy of God’s provision.

You don’t have to protect your spouse from the min-

istry! We must believe that God knew you would be serving in ministry long before you were even aware of your mate. So, I cannot believe that God would put us with a mate who would frustrate or hinder His plan.

Just a few weeks ago, Kay and I were facing a significant setback in our ministry. The situation had the makings of a perfect ministry storm. I felt as though everyone was going to look at me to have the answers and to figure out how to fix everything.

Picking up on this, my wife simply said: “This is not your responsibility to fix. It’s God’s.” The weight it removed from me was amazing. A few days later, just before an important meeting with my leadership team, I received unexpected news that averted the crisis.

The real highlight occurred when I told Kay the news. She later expressed how much it meant to her to share in the miracle with me first. If you are experiencing frustration with your mate in ministry, examine the level and

depth of communication you have with your spouse concerning the ministry. God has anointed your spouse to minister with you and to you!

3. My relationship with my mentor

There are two kinds of mentors: Life mentors and situational mentors. Life mentors are those God wants you to do life with. These individuals are more concerned with your individual growth. Life mentors do not waiver in their commitment to you due to failures or achievements. While they

may offer insight and guidance they are more concerned about you.

Unfortunately, leaders seldom cultivate life mentors. We tend to spend more time on church growth and dealing with ministry issues than on our own personal and spiritual growth. This type of thinking leads to the moral failures we see in ministry today.

Situational mentors are relationships that are always evolving due to the ever-changing stages of life and ministry. God places people at various stages to mentor us. These individuals are there for a specific time, place, or situation. They will help us grow through certain stages and overcome specific hurdles. Then, just like they came into our lives, they will leave.

Remember that communication creates the boundaries in your relationships. A mentor who speaks into your life concerning a ministry matter may not be the one you should discuss your marriage with. Know your boundaries!

“Your ministry will live or die by the people you are surrounded with and by your ability to develop appropriate levels of relationship with those people.”



4. My relationship with fellow ministers

After feeding the multitude, Jesus put the disciples in a boat together and sent them across the lake while He went away to pray. They end up in a storm and Jesus walked across the waves, got in the boat, and rescued them (see Mark 6:45-48). Jesus knew if they were going to make it in ministry after He was gone, they were going to need to find a way to weather the storms together. He wants His leaders to work in partnership.

While people are unique and ministry styles may differ, the issues we face as ministers are the same. We all struggle with lack of finances and volunteers. There is always a fire to put out and a difficult church member to deal with. We are all in the same boat!

Fellow ministers in your community are not competitors! They, better than anyone else, can understand the cultural and spiritual climate you are dealing with. Many of us are going in circles in ministry, and we never get anywhere because there is not a fellow minister beside us rowing on the other side of the boat providing balance to our journey.

5. My relationship with my team members

The Belgian horse can pull an astonishing 8,000 pounds all by itself.

While that is impressive, a study found that if two Belgian horses are joined together they can pull 24,000 pounds. The study also found that if two Belgian horses are raised and trained together from birth, the two horses can pull up to 32,000 pounds.

Pulling the weight of ministry is much the same. If you are going to accomplish all that God has for your ministry, you need a team. Otherwise, you will end up burned out and possibly injured!

You may be the lead horse, but you are still part of a team. There is no part of life that God intended for us to do alone. As a leader, it is your responsibility to determine the pace and weight which your team can pull. It is also a leader's responsibility to bring training and unity to the team to enable it to achieve its greatest potential.

6. My relationship with the masses

In church culture today, we have adopted a business model to grow our churches. We brand and market to specific demographics, communicating our message to attract people to our ministries. It works! Churches all across the world have succeeded at filling seats using this model.

I wonder, however, what this says about our relationship to the masses and how it compares to the method

used by Christ. Jesus certainly ministered to crowds, yet He only shared Himself with those who attached themselves to His ministry.

Do we share the vision God has placed in our hearts as a marketing tool rather than protecting it as the treasured divine calling given to us by our Creator? People like catch phrases and slick branding, but they would still rather see a sermon than hear one preached!

We share our vision to get people attached so that they join our ministry and support it financially. Some ministers even go as far as placing individuals in positions with a title in an effort to get them to commit to their ministry. Unfortunately, these are often people with finances. So, we end up selling off pieces of our vision like shares of stock, and we ultimately lose control.

Don't let the masses move you! They know the least and care the least about you. The masses are the same ones who cried "Hosanna!" one day and then shouted "Crucify Him!" a few days later. Love the crowds and look for those who will share your vision.

You will experience more joy and fulfillment in ministry when you learn to live within the boundaries of proper relationships. □