

# “Relationships As Fuel”

You, Me, Us Sermon Series | Week One | Newbreak Church

August 1st, 2021

**This week is about relationships as the fuel we need as humans. This message answers the question: How can relationships fuel my life?**

For more insights relating to this week’s sermon, see <https://newbreak.church/blog/>. We post a new blog every Friday which coincides with the sermon passage or theme from that day.

## Start Here

- What is something you enjoyed doing that you had to stop during the pandemic? Have you started again?
- Are you an introvert or an extrovert or an ambivert? Describe how this affects your personality and preferences.

## Going Deeper Into the Message

### **Point 1 – Prioritize God’s design for relational living.**

The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” (Genesis 2:18, NIV)

This passage in Genesis often gets misbranded as being about marriage exclusively. But that is far from the truth! We are wired for connection, first and foremost with God, but also with other human beings. The varieties of relationships serve this purpose. In fact, being married is not a requirement for a relationally fulfilling life. If it was, Paul would not have said that his singleness was a good and satisfying life (see 1 Corinthians 7).

So, God’s design for us is to pursue authentic and real relationships with the people who are around us (whether that be marriage, friendships, family, co-workers, etc.). We thrive when we do so! And plenty of psychologists warn us about the pitfalls of not having healthy relationships:

"Virtually every emotional and psychological problem, from addictions to depression, has alienation or emotional isolation at its core or close to it."  
→ Cloud and Townsend

### Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- In the midst of a busy schedule, how are you currently developing genuine relationships?
- Read Cloud and Townsend's quote again. Do you agree with their assessment? Why or why not?
- Under what circumstances do you feel most lonely or isolated? What tools do you use to help you feel connected?

### **Point 2 – Let God meet my needs through relationships.**

Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. <sup>10</sup> If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble... <sup>12</sup> A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three (Three = you + someone else + God) are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12, NLT)

In context, this passage falls right after the author of Ecclesiastes discussed the vanity and meaninglessness of time spent acquiring wealth at the expense of fostering relationships. We all have the same amount of time in our day, the question is always how do you prioritize spending your time?

One way to prioritize our time is to build friendships and relationships. One of God's greatest gifts to us is the ability to develop the bond of friendship with others. These life-giving relationships take time, energy, and intentionality. In other words, these relationships won't move beyond superficiality without our intentionality. We need to place great value on what God values. God has given us a community of like-minded people in our lives who will provide us support, help, and comradery that we can't experience alone.

Another reason why we should prioritize fostering relationships is that God often times chooses to provide His comfort through a friend. This is what happened in 2 Corinthians 7:6 when Paul attributes God to have comforted him “*by the arrival of Titus.*” We also know that quality relationships tend to bring out the best in us.

### Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Are you pleased with the time you commit to fostering relationships? If not, what can you do differently? If so, is there someone you can help build relationships?
- Was there ever a time when you felt God’s comfort through a friend? Describe that time. What does it look like to be that for someone else?
- How can God use you this week to comfort someone? At home? At work? In your Life Group?

### **Point 3 – Grow in my vulnerability with others.**

So now I am glad to boast about my **weaknesses**, so that the power of Christ can work through me. <sup>10</sup> That’s why I take pleasure in my **weaknesses**, and in the **insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles** that I suffer for Christ.  
(2 Corinthians 12:9b-10 NIV)

Contrary to what some may believe, vulnerability is not a sign of weakness, but of courage. Let’s be honest, all of us are imperfect people on a journey. Now, hopefully we are on a journey of following and trusting Jesus! But even along the way we falter and fail. And honestly, we just feel weak. That is okay! Our vulnerability is an opportunity to be understood and draw strength from those around us.

When we consider Christ, He exemplified strength through vulnerability. The key source of both was His grounding in the love of the Father. He knew who He was because He knew whose He is. Being safely vulnerable with others stems from our belief in the Father’s love for us. Our security comes from being valued by God. When we care more about how God sees us than we care about how others see us, we can be free to share the strengths and weaknesses of our hearts without fear.

## Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What can I do to become more genuinely vulnerable with those I trust in friendship? In marriage?
- Think about a time someone confided in you, being vulnerable in the process. How did you help strengthen them? How did their vulnerability deepen your relationship?

### —FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

What is one thing you are going to change in your life in light of the sermon?

BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids?