

Group Discussion -Session 10: Transforming Our Social Dimension

Teaching Aim: Understand the necessity of healthy relationships with others to experience the spiritual transformation of the social dimension of the self. As we do this we, our families, our church, and our relationships with others will honour God as they are increasingly marked by love.

Opening Prayer

1. What thoughts, memories, or feelings came to your mind as Steve shared on the transformation of the social dimension?

The "Dog" Quote: *The message mentions a bumper sticker: "The more people I meet, the more I like my dog." Why do you think this sentiment is so popular today?*

2. Read 1 John 3:14–16

"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other..."

- **Passing from Death to Life:** John links our "spiritual life" directly to how we love our brothers and sisters. Why is it "death" to remain isolated or unloving?
- **The Ultimate Standard:** According to 1 John 3:16, Jesus defined love by laying down His life. How does this redefine "love" from being a feeling to being an action?

3. Made for Relationships - We are created for connection—with God and with others.

In what ways have relationships shaped your spiritual growth (positively or negatively)?

Do you find it easy or difficult to let people truly know you? Why?

Due to emotional woundedness (rejection, lacking validation, etc.), which tendency do you relate to more:

- Seeking approval/validation?
- Avoiding closeness to protect yourself?

4. Identifying the Barriers

Dallas Willard suggests that sin in our social dimension usually takes two forms: attack (assault) and/or withdrawal.

- **The Wound Factor:** How have past rejections (from family, ex-spouses, or even "church hurt") shaped the way you interact with people today?
- **Attack:** This isn't always physical. It can be gossip, sharp tongues, or judgment. Which "commandment of attack" (Commandments 5–10) do you find most challenging to navigate in your current relationships?
- **Withdrawal:** This is "silent assault"—choosing to be indifferent, discarding people, or "ghosting" people because it's safer. Do you tend to lean more toward *attacking* (reacting) or *withdrawing* (hiding) when a relationship gets difficult?
- Which is more natural for you—attack or withdrawal?
- Can you think of subtle ways Christians sometimes "attack" or "withdraw" without realizing it?
- Why are both equally harmful to relationships and community?

5. The Path to Transformation (15 Minutes)

In Steve's message he outlined three elements Willard proposes for healing our social dimension.

Discuss how to apply these:

- **Receive God's Vision:** If you truly believed you were a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17) regardless of your past, how would that change your confidence in meeting new people?
- **Abandon Defensiveness:** This means being "known" warts and all. What is one "mask" you often wear in this group to make yourself look better than you are?
- **Practice Genuine Love:** Review the Romans 12 list (patience, hospitality, mourning with those who mourn). Which of these actions feels like the "next step" for our specific group?

6. Application & Reflection

- Invite quiet reflection:
- Is there someone you've been "withdrawing" from?
 - Is there someone you've "attacked" (even subtly)?
- Is there a relationship God may be inviting you to restore or engage in?

(Note: It is recognized that with some people who are consistently harmful to us, we must have appropriate boundaries).

Follow Up: This week, identify one person you have "withdrawn" from. Reach out with a simple text, a prayer, or an

invitation to coffee—not because you "feel" like it, but as an act of laying down your life.

7. Prayer Time

- Praying together today may involve seeking healing for past relational wounds, courage to be authentic and open, ability to love like Christ, and specific relationships in need of restoration.

Note: When it comes to dealing with damaged emotions or restoring relationships, it is not always easy to know how, what to do, and when. Please feel free to reach out to Pastors Jon and Steve for confidential help.

Closing Thought

Transformation of the social dimension of our self is inseparable from how we love others. As we receive Christ's love, we become people who bring healing, unity, and life into every relationship.