

A HEALTHY HEART LEADS TO HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

+ HAVING A HEALTHY HEART

- Story: Recently someone asked brother Ta-Chang whether or not he felt unhappy about not having been scheduled to preach as often on Sundays over the last few months. He thought about, and realized he didn't have any negative feelings about it at all, because he trusted in Pastor Grace's plans and schedule. The trust he had for Pastor Grace came from having a good relationship with her.

However, Ta-Chang was reminded of a similar type of situation with his boss a few years ago at work. At that time, he did not respond in the same way. Instead, at that time, whenever his boss didn't come see him or assign him on important projects for a period of time, Ta-Chang would start to wonder about his boss's intentions and suspect if his boss doesn't like him anymore if thinks that he is not useful.

What was the difference? Ta-Chang knows that Pastor Grace loves him. He knows that if she needs his help she will ask him; in this way, he feels safe. On the other hand, Ta-Chang doesn't know his boss very well and they also had some conflicts in the past, so he isn't sure about how his boss feels about him. Therefore, we see that trust is the byproduct of having a good relationship.

- What most commonly destroys relationships is our incorrect value system and heart attitude. Therefore, our hearts must be healthy before we can have healthy relationships.
- There are three keys to having healthy relationships: Honesty, Security, and Love, which are directly related to whether or not we have a spiritually healthy heart.

+ HONESTY

- If you want to have a healthy heart, you must be an honest person. Nobody likes to be with someone who is dishonest, deceiving and always trying to cheat you. This type of person couldn't possibly have healthy relationships. Therefore, we must first be honest.
- Why are we dishonest? The truth is most of the time, we're not intentionally trying to be dishonest. As a child Ta-Chang would do deceptive things or lie so as not to incur the anger of his parents or teachers, so as not to be punished. In other words, the root was fear. Therefore, the reason we are dishonest is because of fear.

Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. (Proverbs 3:3)

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. (Psalm 84:11)

- God rewards us for being upright and honesty. Psalm 84 says that God will not withhold any blessing from anyone who is upright.
- **Biblical Story:** Joseph is a good example of a spiritually healthy and honest person. When he was 17-years-old, his older brothers sold him as a slave to Egypt out of jealousy; yet Joseph remained a God-fearing man and very honest. Even when the wife of his master Potiphar tried to seduce Joseph into committing adultery with her, Joseph refused. Then he was falsely accused and put in prison, where he remained upright and honest. Then the time came when Pharaoh summoned Joseph to interpret his dreams. Joseph so impressed Pharaoh that he was promoted as the governor of Egypt. This was all part of God’s plan, that through Joseph, all of Egypt and Israel’s family would be saved during the seven-year famine.
- We see through the entire story that no matter what situation or circumstances he was in, Joseph remained honest and did not lose his integrity. The Bible says that, aside from what he ate, Potiphar gave Joseph control over everything he had—this is a high level of trust. And even though his honesty resulted in his incarceration, Joseph kept his integrity and became a leader even in prison.
- God can only entrust his plans into the hands of an honest person. If Joseph decided to sleep with his master’s wife, he would have lost not only his integrity and honesty, but also God would not have been able to entrust him with all that He planned for him.
- **Story:** Ta-Chang had to take an entrance exam to get into the Ph.D. program. After the exam, the school secretary only saw that he had passed the required number of classes, i.e. three, but she didn’t notice that he did not pass his required main subject, so she gave him an acceptance letter. Ta-Chang’s first instinct was to take the letter and leave, without saying anything, but just as he was about to leave he heard a voice say to him, “If you leave this in darkness, it will always be in darkness. But you need to be courageous and let this come to the light.” So he turned around and told the secretary that he didn’t pass his main subject; realizing her error, the secretary then took back the acceptance letter.

This meant that Ta-Chang would have to take the exam again. This time, however, the exam was much more difficult, because the school alternated between the easier version and the extremely difficult version. Nevertheless, Ta-Chang was confident he would pass. He ended up in the 20% who passed the exam. Therefore, when we are honest, we remain under God’s protection.

+ SECURITY

- Dishonesty breeds insecurity. When you trust someone, you feel secure with that person. Then you can have a great relationship with that person.
- The main problem is that not everyone in this world is trustworthy. Therefore, we should not place

our security upon the honesty and trustworthiness of man.

- **Biblical Story:** David is a good example of someone who has a secure heart. When King Saul tried to kill him out of jealousy, David continued to respect and serve him as a leader. We read in the First Book of Samuel, David had the opportunity to kill King Saul on two separate occasions, but chose not to because he was secure in God; he knew that when it was time for him to be king, he would be king. He was so secure that he was still able to honor King Saul as king, even though King Saul wanted to kill him.
- When we are in difficult situations or we are faced with others' rejection or jealousy, it is important to know where our security is found in.

- **Story:** At work, Ta-Chang had a new coworker join the team. This new co-worker was very smart and capable. Instinctively, Ta-Chang began to feel insecure and the need to compete and prove himself to his boss. Everyday at work, he would be concerned with how much attention his boss showed to the new co-worker to a point where he couldn't take it anymore. One day while waiting on God, he heard God ask him, "What are you afraid of?" Ta-Chang realized his own fears of not being respected and having no value in the eyes of others, that he was putting his security in his co-workers and his boss, but not in God. He was a son of God but was living with a slave mentality.

God then revealed to Ta-Chang his purpose for sending the new co-worker to work with him. Firstly, as a result of having a new co-worker, Ta-Chang no longer had to work overtime, and he was able to leave on time. This allowed him to make it to church services on time as well as have more family time. Also, God revealed to him that the reason his boss hadn't been coming to his office to speak to him recently is not because he dislikes him rather because Ta-Chang is already doing a great job—there are no problems to talk about. Therefore, Ta-Chang understood that his true security should be placed in God, because he has no good apart from Him.

- Ask yourself, is your security found in people, situations, things, or God?

+ LOVE

- A healthy relationship must be founded upon love. What type of love is in a healthy relationship?
- 1 Corinthians 13:
⁴ Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails.
- Jesus said that we would do greater works than Him, and this includes being a greater example of

love. Jesus was willing to love us to the point of death. Even on the cross, Jesus said, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:43-45)

- True love is loving those who hurt you or are even against you.
- Love is not a feeling. It is a choice and a decision to bless and be a blessing. If it were based on how we feel, there would definitely be a lot of people we do not desire to love or bless.
- Prayer can change the way you think. When you choose to love and bless someone (especially someone you don’t necessarily like or who is against you), your focus will shift from his/her weaknesses to his/her good qualities.
- When we see someone or something that we dislike, first pray and bless, instead of immediately making a judgment.

+ ACTION PLAN

1. This week, spend some time everyday to bless someone who you have difficulty with relationally, including those who persecute you or treat you harshly.
2. Memorize the following verses:

² I said to the LORD, “You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.” (Psalm 16:2)

¹¹ For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. (Psalm 84:11)

+ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In the message, Brother Ta-Chang lists the three keys to healthy relationships [honesty, security, and love]. Please share:
 - a. Regarding these three things, do you have any personal testimonies of success/victory to share?
 - b. Which of these things still needs much improvement? Did you hear anything in the message that will help you to improve accordingly?
2. In your relationships (e.g. spouse, family, friends, co-workers), what are some things that cause you to feel insecure? Why do you feel insecure? What is your security based upon?