

# THE FOUR LEVELS OF RELATING

Nicolas Ellen, *Guest Speaker*

*April 3rd & 6th 2025*

God designed relationships to be more than two or more people connected by various variables \_\_\_\_\_.

**Definition of Christ-centered Relationships:** Relationships that are primarily devoted to helping one another believe in Jesus Christ, become like Jesus Christ, and belong to the community of Jesus Christ. If we are going to build Christ-centered relationships, \_\_\_\_\_.

## There are Four Basic Levels of relating: (Proverbs 27:5-6)

1. Sometimes our relationships can be \_\_\_\_\_ (v5).
  - A. Rebuking others without respect.
  - B. Exposing sin with rudeness.
  - C. Exposing character flaws with harshness.
  - D. Speaking truth with no love.
2. Sometimes our relationships can be \_\_\_\_\_ (v5).
  - A. Appreciative but not expressing it.
  - B. Concerned but not showing it.
  - C. Having praise in the heart but not expressing it.
  - D. Desiring the highest good of others but not expressing it.
3. Sometimes our relationships can be \_\_\_\_\_ (v6).
  - A. Rebuking in love.
  - B. Spending quality time.
  - C. Speaking the truth in love/giving encouragement.
  - D. Meeting needs and bearing burdens.
4. Sometimes our relationships can be \_\_\_\_\_ (v6).
  - A. Talking behind someone's back instead of to them.
  - B. Insincere favors or gifts.
  - C. Flattery.
  - D. Uncooperative.

An open, \_\_\_\_\_ in many ways at the right time, in the right way, and in the right circumstance through: (Proverbs 27:14; 25:11; 15:23; 15:1, Colossians 4:6)

**Key Point:** When \_\_\_\_\_ in open, loving relationships, unity of heart will be maintained if God's love continues. If unity of heart ceases, \_\_\_\_\_ should be done not for disagreement but for unloving attitudes, words, and actions. You can be \_\_\_\_\_ in what you are saying but \_\_\_\_\_ in your presentation. (Deal with the lack of love.) (Colossians 3:14, Ephesians 4:15)

*(Insights adapted from The Heart of Man and The Mental Disorders by Rich Thomson)*

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## The Four Levels of Relating

### LOOK BACK

- **BLESS:** How has the Spirit of God prompted you to reach out to others in the last week or two? What actions or steps did you take?
- **Praise:** *Psalm 133*, Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to live together in unity! How have you seen him work, answer a prayer, bless you or someone else?)
- **Thanks:** The language of our faith is thanksgiving in all things. What difficult circumstance in your life will you, by faith, give thanks for?
- **Confession:** Think of a strained or distant relationship in your life. Is there something to confess? What is one step you can take this week to move toward more open and loving relationships?

### LOOK IN

- Which of the four levels of relating do you find yourself operating in most often, and how has this impacted your relationships with others?
- Can you think of a time when you spoke truth but knew it lacked love? How did that affect the relationship, and what could you have done differently to reflect Christ's character?
- What are some practical ways to transition from a closed and loving relationship (having good intentions but not expressing them) to an open and loving one?
- How do you typically handle conflict in relationships? How can you ensure that disagreements are addressed with love and a commitment to unity rather than division?
- Which expressions of an open, loving relationship (such as encouragement, time spent together, or acts of service) do you struggle with the most, and how can you grow in those areas?
- What questions, concerns, or doubts do you have regarding what you have heard and read?
- How did the Holy Spirit speak through this passage to inform, remind, convict, or encourage you?
- For further study: Read these passages to deepen your understanding.
  - Proverbs 27:5-6
  - Colossians 3:14
  - Matthew 22:37-39
  - Romans 12:18

### LOOK FORWARD

- Closing Prayer
  - Requests: What are you asking God to do in and through you in the coming week?
  - Relinquishment: Present your body to God as an instrument to work in and through for His glory.