

## **199. Relationships #2: How To Increase Value** By Arland Steen

### *INTRODUCTION*

We're in a series I'm calling "Building Better Relationships." Today I want to mention one word that will transform your relationships.

The word is *appreciation*.

We should express appreciation to other people because it raises their value. If you've ever bought a house in the Conejo Valley you know the meaning of the word 'appreciation.'

If you've ever bought a new car and driven it off the lot you know the meaning of 'depreciation.'

Every time you appreciate those around you, you raise their value. The Bible says we are supposed to do that. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (New International Version): *Encourage one another and build each other up.*

Ephesians 4:29 (New International Version): *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs.*

Appreciation is one of the deepest human needs we have. I read about a place in England where they have "Dial A Compliment." If you're down, you dial that and somebody on the phone will talk with you and build you up. This shows people are hungry for appreciation.

Paul describes three things he appreciates in people and they are things we often overlook. Here they are:

### **Three Things We Should Appreciate In People**

#### **□ We need to appreciate people's loyalty**

These are the people who have stuck with you and have been faithful through thick and thin and stayed when they could have walked out on you. They are the ones you can count on.

Philippians 1:3-5 <sup>3</sup> *Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God.* <sup>4</sup> *I always pray for you, and I make my requests with a heart full of joy* <sup>5</sup> *because you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now.*

These people were Paul's Booster Club who supported him and stood with him for years. Now he's at the end of his life and he is in prison and they're rooting for him, cheering him, saying "Go for it, Paul!"

The point is, behind-the-scenes people deserve your appreciation. They may not be spectacular, they may not be the superstars, they may not do anything really out of the ordinary, but if they just stick with you, you need to appreciate that. Some of you have had a marriage partner who has stuck with you through a lot of junk – maybe a bankruptcy, mid-life crisis, a health problem or maybe you have stumbled and had an affair and they were quietly supportive. You need to appreciate their loyalty.

How many of you have ever been to Yellowstone and seen Old Faithful? It is not the biggest geyser nor the most beautiful. But people like it because you can count on it. It is loyal. There is something to say for that.

Paul says from the very first day you've stuck with me.

Who do you need to express appreciation to who recently stuck by you?

#### **□ We need to appreciate people's differences**

Colossians 3:13-15 (JB Phillips): *Be patient and tolerant with one another, always ready to forgive if you have a difference with anybody for you were called to live as one united body and always be thankful.*

Don't insist that everybody be like you, think like you, act like you and do like you. Learn to enjoy people's differences and uniqueness. That is something we usually don't appreciate. We want everybody to be like us. Thank God they're not. Can you imagine what the world would be like if everyone were like you?

Sometimes I think God gets a kick from putting opposites together in marriage. He just puts two opposites together and says, "Work it out!" For instance, you have:

- a) morning people mixed with night people
- b) daring and impulsive people mixed with cautious and reserved people
- c) talkers mixed with bumps on the log
- d) spenders and savers – Someone said, "At the end of your life whether you end up with a nest egg or a goose egg depends on the chick you married."

The fact is we are all made different and we should appreciate our differences. Paul says to be patient and tolerant. Differences in marriage add balance. The marriages that have the most problems are where they are exactly alike. Think of it this way: the greater your differences in a marriage, the greater your potential for growth. Acceptance of that difference is an attribute of maturity.

#### □ We need to appreciate people's efforts

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 (Good News Bible): *2 We always thank God for you and always mention you in our prayers. 3 For we remember before our God and Father how you put your faith into practice and how your love made you work so hard.*

You can't afford to take people's efforts for granted, regardless of the results. We had preschoolers at our house. Many times, they wanted to "help." Maybe it is "help" Daddy make something. Or "help" Daddy make shells. Or "help" mama vacuum. They usually are more of a hindrance than anything but you have to appreciate their effort. One day their "help" will grow up and really be a boon but only if you appreciate them.

Too often we think things have to be perfect in order to be appreciated. Too often we nag instead of brag. We give pokes instead of strokes. If you wait until things are perfect in your house to appreciate your wife or husband or children or the people you work with, you're never going to appreciate anybody because nobody's perfect.

Have you ever thought about how much you need to appreciate your parents? Have you ever thought about the fact of how much easier it would have been for your parents if they had not had you? The vacations they could have taken, the extra clothes they could have had, the less hassles. Do you realize how much extra work it was for your parents simply because of you? You have a lot to appreciate your parents for. They put up with all kinds of stuff. Maybe share some personal things from my childhood.

When was the last time you thanked your parents just for being your parents? I wish I had this opportunity now because I never fully realized what my parents went through because I did not have children until after they were gone. I tell you I appreciate them much more now than I did when they were here. This is so important to God that He put it in the Ten Commandments. When He said *Honor your father and your mother* He was talking about appreciation. This one little principle can revolutionize your relationships. Mark Twain once said, "I can go two good weeks on one compliment." We just don't appreciate each other enough. There is nothing more important to building a better relationship than learning to appreciate the people around you. They're not perfect but they need and deserve appreciation. We need to appreciate their loyalty, their differences and their efforts.

#### *THE RIGHT WAY TO SHOW APPRECIATION*

##### □ It needs to be real

Romans 12:9 (Living Bible): *Don't just pretend that you love others; really love them!*

Circle "pretend" and "really." When you appreciate other people, it needs to be genuine, sincere, heartfelt and with no ulterior motives. Someone said one time that usually when somebody pats you on the back, he wants you to cough up something. Paul says, Don't have any ulterior motives, don't just pretend that you love others, really love them.

### □ **It needs to be recognizable**

Appreciation needs to be clear and specific. Sometimes guys will say they don't need to tell their wives they love them because they already know it. Or because they're not the affectionate type. They need to do it. "That's not me." Change. Learn to do it. Learn to speak words of encouragement. There's enough bad news in the world.

Proverbs 15:23 (Good News Bible): *What a joy it is to find just the right word for the right occasion!*

Have you ever had the experience of saying something you know made somebody's day because it was real and recognizable?

Proverbs 12:25 (Living Bible): *a word of encouragement does wonders!*

I was encouraged more than you know on January 17<sup>th</sup>! It was one of the "highlight" days of my life.

Thank God I'm not the pastor who was shaving on Sunday morning and cut himself. He told the congregation, "I had my mind on the message and cut my chin." He preached for an hour and wore the people out. After it was over a deacon said, "Pastor, next time keep your mind on your chin and cut the sermon."

Or, like the pastor who got this comment which left him confused as to whether it was a compliment or not. She said, "Pastor, your messages are like manna from heaven." He got to thinking about manna. 'Manna' means "What is it?" in Hebrew. Manna is bland, tasteless and rots after 24 hours. No, words of encouragement need to be clear and defined.

### □ **It needs to be regular**

2 Thessalonians 2:13 (Jerusalem Bible): *We ought to continually thank God for you.* Circle "continually."

Galatians 6:10 (Living Bible): *Whenever we can we should always be kind to everyone, and especially to our Christian brothers.* Circle "whenever."

This means it should be constant not just once a year because it lifts people up.

A pat on the back gets more results than a kick in the pants. This verse means to give roses to people while they can smell them. A single rose given while someone's alive is much more valuable than a wreath at a funeral.

*Whenever we can* – do it now! If you stop and think, you'll thank. Thinking and thanking go together.

We have so much to be grateful for. Scientists have discovered that the healthiest human emotion is gratitude.

People who have an attitude of gratitude live more healthy lives emotionally and physically.

On the other hand, God considers ingratitude to be a terrible sin. It is listed along with witchcraft, adultery and occultism.

PROJECT: Think of at least one person RIGHT NOW you should write a letter to or call and say "I just want you to know I am grateful for your loyalty or effort or kind deed. You stood by me in that tough time."

PROJECT: Compliment every person in your family every day this week. People blossom under affirmation. They wilt under criticism. If you want to have a more powerful office, affirm your employees...more productive secretary, affirm her.

### **SALVATION**

What do you need to appreciate from God? When was the last time you spent 5 minutes in just gratitude to Him? He's done so much for you. He came to earth in the form of a human two thousand years ago. His name was Jesus Christ. He gave to give us Life and a purpose for our lives. Cleansing from our sins and the ability to walk in His love. The greatest expression of gratitude to God is to give your life to Him. He gave His for you. Will you do that before you leave today? In a moment we will pray together.