

K'NEX

(First Things First, Pt4)

February 3, 2019 ser3806 Sun E & Sun L

I. CATCHING UP!

A. I cannot begin to express how excited we were at how many of you came to “Catch the Vision.” It was truly encouraging. For those of you who were unable to attend, you can watch the meeting on line @ <https://youtu.be/T2cA3p0z9Fk>.

B. Here's where we are:

There are **four** individual spiritual, and therefore practical, challenges before us in 2019.

1. Read through the Bible in 5 years or less.
2. Give God the “whole” tithe.
3. Serve – somewhere, someplace. Choices are mentioned in the sermon “Service that Goes Beyond the Now,” available in hard copy in the Main Lobby and on line at GCCCpray.com.
4. (Today is our 4th challenge) K'NEX (Connect).

As of last Sunday, this is where we are in how many of you found the grit to say, “Pastor, I'm in!”

Bible Reading:

Tithing:

Serving:

C. For those of you still contemplating—“Should I? Can I do it?”

1. Here’s a text I received regarding *reading the Bible*:

“2 weeks in. Thank you for that challenge. Wow! Life changing in a whole new way. Soul searching.” *A. B.*

In reference to “bringing our Bibles” one Sunday a month. I got this text ... don’t tell anyone ... DURING THE CHURCH SERVICE. I was sending a message upstairs to the Tech Crew, and this came across my screen.

“You have to give us more time to find the scripture in the service when we bring our Bibles. We are familiar with the Scriptures, [but] have found it very hard to keep up. So you’ll have to give us a little extra time.” *D. C.*

SO, HERE’S THE DEAL! I’ll give you extra time if you give me extra time. LOL! Are you connecting the dots?

STARTING THIS MONTH, the third Sunday of every month, there will be no Scriptures on the screens. Bring your well-worn or not so well-worn Bible to Church and I’ll give you time to find the Scriptures. Hey, I’ll even help you out. Up for the challenge? Knew you would be.

Fantabulous! Rather ... AMAZING! ☺ **Mark this month's date, FEBRUARY 16TH.**

2. Here's a conversation regarding *the tithe*. (**show video of Ruthann Goller-Enz—3 minutes**)

3. **As to service—every one of you who said, “I’ll serve,” should have received a confirmation that we received your response.** We will be in touch! Your commitment to serve will not only revolutionize and expand GCCC, but the Kingdom as well. Thank you!

For those of you who weren't here last week or for any one of the past three weeks—you can take the challenge today by putting a **B** (Bible Reading), **T** (Tithe), or an **S** (Serve) on your *Welcome Card* or *Giving Envelope* and place it in the *Offering Basket* later in the service. (Transcripts are in the Main Lobby or you can access the sermon on line @ gcccpay.com.)

D. Let's pray!

II. OUR TEXT

1 Samuel 18:1-3 PME p 322; LAB p 421

David and Jonathan's Friendship

1 As soon as [David] had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

“SOUL” CAN ACCURATELY BE DEFINED as our *mind, will and emotions*. Basically, what makes you who you are; what makes me who I am. It’s what constitutes our being.

2 And Saul took [David] that day and would not let him return to his father’s house. **3** Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. **4** And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

GRASP THE PICTURE! Jonathan is the first-born son of Saul, King of Israel, and rightful heir to the throne. However, Jonathan also knows that the LORD God of Israel has prophesied that the Kingdom was to be taken from Saul, his father, and given to David. Stop and think for a moment what most rivals would do—recall Joseph’s brothers? They said, “Let’s kill him and see what becomes of his dreams.” Instead, Jonathan’s love is so great and his bond so deep, he is willing to give up what is rightfully his, to his friend, because he loves his friend more than he loves himself.

LET’S BE HONEST! That’s a “K’NEX” that’s rare and seldom found.

The late Dr. Jack Hyles has said, *“If you have one true friend in your lifetime, you have received a gift from God.”* I would like to believe we could have more

than one *true* friend; however, when you look at God's definition of a "true friend" – one who is willing to lay down his or her life for you, maybe one true friend is more realistic.

III. THERE ARE FOUR LEVELS UPON WHICH WE CONNECT. (Bill Gothard calls these the "Four Levels of Friendship.")

A. God designed human connections (friendships) to enhance and enrich our lives on earth and to sharpen our focus towards the Eternal. Friendships can strengthen or weaken, build or tear down, our potential to contribute to the world in which we live. Consequently, the Kingdom of God is built or torn down by the connections/friendships we kindle.

Proverbs 13:20

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

Proverbs 25:26

Like a muddied spring or a polluted well are the righteous who give way to the wicked.

1 Corinthians 15:33

Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."

B. The key to meaningful relationships is understanding that *connections* have levels or categories. If I may, I'd like to suggest four levels of connecting. They are:

Acquaintance—occasional contacts

Casual—common interests

Close—mutual goals

Intimate—commitment to develop each other's character.

Within each of these connections are freedoms and responsibilities. When connections function outside of these parameters, tension and confusion are introduced, which damage the enhancing and building qualities for which friendship was designed – particularly in the arena of romance.

FOR EXAMPLE: When an opposite sex relationship is built beginning with “sexual intimacy,” it lies to the couple. It's like building a house upon sand. How many couples do I counsel—far too many—who build their relationship upon sex? They think their relationship is sizzling! After marriage and the responsibilities that come with it, they realize that maybe, just maybe, sex was the band aid to cover up the flaws in the relationship, hiding who the other person was. Then 5 to 7 years in, they say, “I don't know the person I married.” Why? The relationship, the connection was built “wrongly.”

Don't cheat on the steps, the levels. Most relationships are not meant to go to level four. Safeguard your connections. Be wise!



IV. DEFINING THE LEVELS OF CONNECTION

A.

Acquaintance—Occasional contacts.

This is the person you run into at the library—Does anyone go to the library anymore? LOL! Or, you at your kid's ballgame.



Or, someone who has liked a post you've posted on one of your Social Media outlets. The acquaintance remains respective to the connection—no more no less. Don't

cross the boundary, it will get you in trouble.

B. Casual—Common interests.

This is the person you sit next to at your kid's ballgame,



or who has a seat next to you at the Flyers game because you have partial season tickets. Nice, eh? Maybe it's the person who you connect with on the Internet because you like *cars, boating, fishing, hiking ... I'd better include the ladies...sewing or cooking; maybe it's *Chow Chows or *French Bulldogs or ... even *cats. LOL!

(show photos p 7 & 8) This connection can go deeper than acquaintance because you have something in common. But it needs to stay there.

C. Close—Common mutual goals.

This is what Wayne Hilliard and I had in common when we first connected in Bible School, then



afterwards started Higher Ground. **(show photo)** We still have that connection, and will continue to have that connection until the day God takes us home. The years have granted us the freedom to share thoughts, concerns and give input regarding our mutual goal—which is ministry.

It's what I have had with most people who have worked for GCCC over the years. It's a deeper connection than "close" because it wants what God wants for a person's life.

Naomi and Ruth

It's the connection Naomi and Ruth had from the first. But this connection, this friendship, would eventually grow into an *intimate connection*, an intimate friendship.

Ruth 1:16-17

But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."

Jesus and His disciples

It's the connection Jesus and His disciples had at first. But, again, this connection, this friendship, would grow into an *intimate connection*, an *intimate friendship* after His death and resurrection. Sadly, it took Jesus' death to move the relationship from *close* to *intimate*.

Why? We can only postulate. Here's my take! They really didn't understand what an *intimate connection* was all about. If they had they would not have scattered at his trial and crucifixion. Somehow, the women got it. I truly believe it was because of their innate maternal nature.

The men were driven by cause; the women were driven

by love and loyalty. But, the men would eventually get there, and when they did—they changed the world.

COF's (Circle of Friends)

I believe this is what we have in our COF. Now, it doesn't start there. But in time a trust is built. We have come to love one another. With that love comes trust, a trust to share openly our concerns without fear that someone in the group will use what we have shared to hurt or damage us, or our reputations. Our COF is a special and precious connection, where we truly desire the best for one another and pray and encourage each other to that end.

Rather than me telling you, let's hear from both young and old-er, who are in a COF. [\(show video\)](#)

D. Intimate—commitment to develop each other's character. This is what David and Jonathan had; it's what is penned in ***1 Samuel 18:3b***

Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul.

It is what is meant when David wrote a eulogy about King Saul and Saul's son, Jonathan, David's closest friend.

2 Samuel 1: 19 & 26

19 Israel, your famous hero

lies dead on the hills,
and your mighty warriors
have fallen!

26 Jonathan, I miss you most!
I loved you
like a brother.
You were truly loyal to me,
more faithful than a wife
to her husband. *(CEV)*

26 I grieve for you, Jonathan, my brother.
You were such a friend to me.
Your love for me was more wonderful
than the love of women. *(HSCB)*

MANY TODAY SEEK TO PERVERT THESE WORDS, BUT THEY ARE DEEP AND PRECIOUS AND REVEAL A CONNECTION, A FRIENDSHIP, ON THE DEEPEST OF LEVELS. Think about this! David had at least 10 wives and as many concubines. **2 Samuel 3** and **1 Chronicles 3** says “and David acquired still more wives and concubines who, in turn, bore him more children.” Seriously, that’s messed up!

Now put this together! Who could David trust? Not the mother of Absalom—she had one desire: that her son would rule in David’s place. Not the mother of Adonijah—she had one desire: that her son would rule in David’s place. Who could David trust? You guessed it! Jonathan.

David may have had sexual intimacy with his wives but with Jonathan, there was a true and pure *spiritual intercourse* desiring only God's will for each other's lives. That's an "intimate connection," and "intimate friendship" on the highest level.

IV. LET'S WRAP THIS UP.

I don't know if you have connections on a CLOSE or INTIMATE level. If you don't, you're missing out on one of the true joys of life—it is a choice. I'd like to encourage you to start by considering joining a COF.

Now your connection will most likely start at the "casual" level. But it will move to "close" if you want it to. And if wise in selecting friends within the group, who knows, maybe, other than your spouse—if your spouse is a spiritually intimate friend—you'll find a friend like Jonathan.

I'm not in any way going to push this. Pray on it!

On February 17th, you'll have the opportunity to join a COF in your area or support group. Pray on it.

V. INVITATION

There is ONE connection, one friendship, I can recommend now, without hesitancy. Jesus. He's the best friend I have ever had and He will be yours, too. How do you enter in to this relationship?

Admit – your sins have separated you from God. (*Psa 14:1-3; Rom 3: 23*);

Believe – that God did something about your sins through Jesus Christ. (The final Pascal

Lamb/Messiah.) (*Lev 17:10; Heb 9: 19-22*);

Commit – yourself to His righteous by confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior. (*Isa 53:5; Col 1:22*);

Do it today! (*Isa 49:8; 2 Cor 6:2*).

Father in Heaven, I'm sorry for the things I've done that are wrong: I am a sinner; forgive me. Thank You for loving me and sending your Son, Jesus, to pay the penalty for my sin. Holy Spirit, come into my heart; Jesus be my Lord and Savior. I give You my life. Amen!