



A Conversation on Real Relationships | RRA Leadership Team | 3.19.23

Weekly Study

S H A R E

This week Doug, Ryan and Ethan wrapped up our Real Relationship series with a conversation based out of John 21 about a pattern that we see in Jesus' interactions with people: initiation, conversation and restoration. Jesus initiated toward people, in love, even when he was the one who was wronged. He cares more about people than the problem they're dealing with, but He knows that love doesn't mean letting people continue to live in a way that is hurting them. We celebrated the fact that Jesus will make sure that you know He's for you and with you before He corrects you. We can bring everything to Him and trust that we will be met with unconditional love, and seek to be a church that does the same for other people.

Before you dive into the study check-in with each other by asking these questions:

- **What is something that you're really excited about right now?**
- **What was your biggest takeaway from this week's message? How do you want to apply it to your life this week?**

G R O W

Read John 21:1-12.

God loved the world so much that he initiated toward us. This is what love for other people does. In this passage we see that Jesus did this for Peter on the shore, even though Jesus was the one who was

wronged. He owned the sins of the world and his best friend still ran away from Him, but there's something about how Jesus initiates conversation with people he loves that is beautiful — so much so that it leads Peter to jump out of the boat and swim toward Jesus even though he probably believes a conversation with Jesus is coming about how he denied Him when He needed Peter the most. Jesus knows that the order matters when it comes to engaging in conversation with people He cares about, and that includes us. Our mistakes do not change his countenance toward us. He initiates connection by showing us that He is with us and for us, and then He calls us into more. He extends grace to us first, and then through relationship, gets to the truth that needs to be spoken in order for us to grow into more of who He's made us to be.

- **What is your takeaway from this message about your typical reaction when faced with conflict or difficult conversations? Are you more of an escalator or withdrawer?**
- **What do you typically think Jesus' facial expression looks like toward you — especially when you sin?**
- **Who do you want to initiate toward this week?**

MOVE

Read John 21:15-17.

Conversation that results in restoration can be challenging to navigate because we often miss the mark on two different sides: the first risk is being afraid to rock the boat in our relationships. We become the “green light” friends who condone people's decisions and believe we're being loving, but then gospel-centered, “iron sharpens iron” conversations rarely happen. At thing we can do is be a well-meaning Christian friend who give bad advice based on emotions because they don't want to confront you — so they tell you what you want to hear and give advice that misleads. But loving someone doesn't mean that you let them sit in something that's hurting them.

The other extreme is a kind of call-out culture that happens in the church where more interactions than not are hard conversations or heart to hearts. When this happens, friendships and relationships turn into projects instead of prioritizing time spent with someone you love. Both of these extremes are difficult to avoid, but Jesus did it perfectly. He cared way more about people than the problem, and when we do the same, we can view necessary conversations as an opportunity for increased intimacy with the person in front of us. As followers of Jesus, we want to allow the Holy Spirit to work in us to become the people

whose friends can bring anything to us and know that they are first going to be met with unconditional love and grace and know that they'll be supported with truth that will help them become the people God always intended for them to be.

- **When a friend asks you for advice, where do you draw your wisdom from? Do you trust that that source of wisdom is in alignment with the word and character of God?**
- **Share an example of someone who has met you with unconditional grace and truth and what that felt like for you.**
- **Is there someone in your life that you have had a relationship with in the past that you need to forgive? Is there someone you need to draw a boundary line with? What step can you take this week to begin this process?**

P R A Y

Commit to praying for one another as we all know real relationships are difficult but worth it. Pray for courage and strength to do the hard work of initiation, conversation and restoration in our interactions with others, that it would lead to increased love and connection with others and that the world around us would see a brighter, clearer picture of who Jesus is.