



## Offensive Relationships | Week 3 | Ethan Mattot | 2.17-18

### Weekly Study

#### SHARE

- Is Valentine's Day a joyful, neutral, or irritating day for you?
- What is something you are proud of recently? Small or large, God counts every good act worthy of praise.

#### GROW

Welcome to week 3 of our “Relationships, Biblical Strategies” series here at Red Rocks. No matter what stage of life we are at individually, we *all* have relationships. God designed us to be in community. Yet, as imperfect people, we live out some bad strategies to navigate our relationships. But God doesn't leave us to figure it out on our own. We can go back to scripture to hear what God has to teach us about relationships. So we can step into the unique, beloved person he created each of us to be.

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:4, ESV).

- What does it feel like to describe yourself as “beloved”?
- What is a moment where you felt God's love for you this year?

This week, Ethan called for us to have offensive relationships... to the enemy. Bad strategies like **jealousy**, **settling** for less, contentmentless **toil**, and valuing “**me over we**” in our relationships, make us weaker in the constant ploy for our souls. Ethan taught us biblical strategies to fight against this, so our relationships don’t become avenues for the enemy’s deception and divisiveness, but instead, kingdom weapons for good. Without God, we are playing constant defense. Yet, if we unite with him in our relationships, we start playing offense, bearing kingdom fruit and making disciples. In other words, changing the world.

**Read Ecclesiastes 4:4-12**

- What is impacting you the most from this passage in Ecclesiastes?**
- What stuck out to you the most from Ethan’s message this weekend? Are there any initial questions on your mind?**

This passage in Ecclesiastes sounds pretty bleak, doesn’t it? Luckily, we have “God strategies” to replace these pitfalls. Envy and toil are described as chasing the wind, meaningless. Comparison leads to insecurity in ourselves and jealousy for others. Because of this we start seeking control in our relationships, forgetting we are already made complete through Jesus. We can replace our jealousy and need for control with **surrender** to a God who describes us as “wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14) and tells us he has good plans (Jeremiah 29:11) for our lives. Further, if we find ourselves striving yet never satisfied, we can ask ourselves the question: “Who is on the throne right now?” When we make relationships or ourselves our everything, contentment feels fleeting. When this is the case, we toil for more and more, yet it never seems to be enough. We begin to believe the lie that we are not enough. But we can turn our toil into **tranquility** by putting God back on the throne.

- What is something you need to surrender to God? Why do you think it is hard for you to open your hands and give control back to God for this particular thing?**
- Is placing God on the throne challenging for you? What might that look like?**
- Think about a time where you felt content, ask yourself “Where was Jesus?” in that moment of your life?**

## MOVE

### Read Genesis 1:28

Relationships bonded over mission to become more Christlike and a source of Christ to the world. Think epic stories like Harry Potter or Lord of the Rings. The groups of friends are united deeper together and have their own arch of growth because they are united for a higher purpose. Each person's individuality wasn't lost by doing that, if anything putting "we before me" shows us who we truly are.

Ethan gave us **four** strategies for our marriage or relationships:

1. Be in the word
2. Pray together
3. Serve together
4. Worship together

**Fill in the blank: "But in this family, we \_\_\_\_\_". What strategies are you excited to bring into your relationships? What is more challenging for you?**

We have a relational God. He desires to be with us. Despite our brokenness, he wants nothing more than for you to invite him into your life. Jesus sacrificed his perfect life for us because he loved us. When we understand the magnitude he will suffer and sacrifice just to be with us, we feel in our hearts how worthy of praise our God is. We can trust that it is worth it not to settle for any less than what God has for us. When we sacrifice for more, we become more like Jesus and we step into a deeper relationship with God and others. In those relationships, we get glimpses of heaven on earth and taste the true contentment our Father has for us in our lives.

**It can be easier to understand why we sacrifice for our loved one or spouse, but what makes "God worth it" to sacrifice for?**

**Is there a time in your life you can remember where you felt close in your relationship with God? Maybe it was during a time of need, or through an answered prayer? What about a joyful time of year, or through a gift from God in your life?**

**Where in your life are you settling for less for yourself?**

- What relationships in your life are lacking mission? How can you bring Jesus into those relationships?**
- What is a marriage or relationship you look up to? What about the relationship stands out to you?**

## **P R A Y**

Split off in groups of 2-3. What about this message is a challenge for you? What is going on in your life that you need prayer for?

Invite God into this prayer with you and your partner/relationships. Remember, “a cord of 3 strands is not quickly broken,” (Ecc. 4:12 NIV).