

## "Loving Relationships"

Someone once asked me, "Steve, what does the perfect marriage look like?" My reply was honest and simple, "The one wherein you are driving each other to Jesus!" That's what relationships of all stripes and kinds are – the gift of God to perfect the perfectly saved. Jesus came and demonstrated the only way to overcome sin and self-for-selfness, alienation and separation is by the sacrificial love of God (See Jo 3:16 and I Jo 3:16!) To the degree we are in step with the intent and activity of God to love others into being, we will find ourselves fulfilled and energized. To the degree we are out of step with the intent and activity of God to love others into being, we will find ourselves unfulfilled and fatigued.

Take Christian husbands and wives for example. Paul first mentions the necessity of being filled and led by the Spirit of Christ before he ever talks of submissive and sacrificial love between spouses (Eph 5:15-21). To be under the influence of Love Himself is the key to fully functioning as husbands and wives were meant to function. Without the ongoing compelling of God's love, all manner of unwise (5:15), morally stupid (5:17), dis-solving (5:18) decisions will be made. Paul recommends a different route – renounce temporary, external "goods" (5:18); embrace every relational crisis as a call to worship (5:20); declare your willingness to be for the other so His Life in you for others may find His release (5:21).

How will you know you are filled by, under the influence of, His Spirit? Your relational philosophy will be affected! You will begin to be transformed by the renewing of your mind as He moves you from a "me-ology" to a "Thee-ology" – wherein "me and my needs" begin to take a back seat to "God and His supply". You will be less and less dominated by the "outer" ((circumstances, soul reactions, soothing mechanisms) and more and more compelled by the "inner and unseen" realities (peace, assurance, spiritual resources). You might even realize that solving every problem to your satisfaction is not nearly as critical as the "problems" solving you – that expressing the holiness of Christ really is more important than your own personal happiness. You might also find your prayer life changing from "my will" to "Thy will", from "me and mine" to "Thee and Thine". This is where we begin to realize "My will! Me and mine!" is actually a prayer of separation that has a tendency to create "hell and earth", while "Thy will! Thee and Thine!" is the prayer of union and oneness with the ability to bring "on earth as it is in heaven".

To respond under the influence of the Spirit of Love is not a guarantee of having our desired results. Both approaches can result in disappointment, fatigue, and frustration. The difference is this: Every "Me-ological" approach pushes us into the hands of a hateful, lying, disintegrative source. (How many good decisions have you ever made under the influence of one who despises you, lies to you, seeks to use you?) Every "Thee-ological" approach presses us into the heart of Jesus Christ – Who loves us, tells us the truth, and promises us to redeem the temporal for His eternal purposes. (Ps 119:91; Ro 11:36; 11 Cor 4:16-18)



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## Praise Reports & Prayer Requests

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## Greetings

Have you ever wondered why there seems to be so much disconnection, so much disruption, so much disintegration all around us? Maybe the answer to that question is in a recent survey that concluded 67% of people (under 45) fully agree with the following statement: "What is right for your life or works best for you is the only truth you can know." Meaning what? That your feelings are the way leading to the facts of life. Your thoughts constitute the truth. Your intuitions are the wisest route to a fulfilled life.

So, each of us sets out to choose our own way, create our own truth, determine our own path for a fulfilling life. The individual person becomes the locus of all reality. Reality is self-determined and self-defined. A thing is what I say it is and the path to self-optimization is decided by me. We could call this the religion of "self-divination": "you shall become like God", knowing what is right and wrong, good and evil, helpful and harmful.

I think the survey is inaccurate. I believe it's closer to 95% (of all ages) who believe we can determine our own way, choose our own truth, create as we go our own path to fulfilling life. Only One ever dared to say, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life". Until we choose Him as our single way, our only Truth, and the entirety of our Life... we shall go on remaining wayless, truthless, and lifeless.


## Calendar


### JULY


8	Alachua Study
18-20	Waymart, PA
27	First Baptist Church Alachua, FL

## Praise & Prayer

 The gift of God's perfect love

 The revelation of God's Way, God's Truth, God's Life

 The release of His Love into all our relationships

 The receptivity and demonstration of His Way,  
His Truth, His Life