

## Better Together 09/12/2010

How many people use Facebook?

Facebook Paradox – We live in the most connected society that’s ever existed and at the same time we have a culture where isolation and loneliness are on the rise in epidemic proportions.

*Facebook's very premise—and promise—is that it makes our friendship circles visible. There they are, my friends, all in the same place. Except, of course, they're not in the same place, or, rather, they're not my friends. They're simulacra of my friends, little dehydrated packets of images and information, no more my friends than a set of baseball cards is the New York Mets.*

*Scanning my Facebook page gives me, precisely, a "sense" of connection. Not an actual connection, just a sense. ... (“Faux Friendship” article chronicle.com by William Deresiewicz)*

Many people feel **relationally bankrupt** in our culture today. This isn’t something we want or seek out. It’s just a reality of the times we live in. So who am I talking to today?

- You stand in a crowded room with people you know and feel alone
- Have a lot of people near you in person but they are far from your heart
- Be the life of the party but be relationally empty
- You’re married, but are hungry for intimacy and to be known by others
- You’re a teenager and are battling feelings of isolation & crave a real relationship where you can let your guard down
- You’re an older person and feel abandoned, forgotten
- Single and desire so badly to be married
- A leader who seems to have it all together, who is always giving to others, but often feel lonely and lost

GOD – Why do we have these feelings? What might God be saying to us today?

**God created us for relationships.** A relationship with Him and a relationship with others. We were never complete without others in our life.

**Genesis 2:18** *“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’”*

This theme carries through the whole Bible:

**OT** – see emphasis placed on individuals finding their people and their land; Psalm 68:6 <sup>6</sup> “God sets the lonely in families” **Ex.** Jim & Linda

**NT** – relationships are taken to another level.

- The Church – no longer is a temple or physical building the focus, the emphasis is placed on God’s church. **Colossians 1:24** tells us that **the church is the people of God**. In our culture today, we still fall in the trap of thinking of the church as a building. (talk about new IW location)
- It’s in the context of the church, of God’s people, that God most often works. Often times we fall in the trap of thinking God has a **Plan A and a Plan B**: Plan A – God working directly, supernaturally in my life; if that doesn’t work we settle for Plan B – God working through someone else in my life.
  - Ephesians 4:14-16 *“<sup>14</sup>Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup>Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in **all things grow up** into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup>From him **the whole body**, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, **grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.**”*
  - **We’re better together.**
  - Why is it this way?
- God dwells inside each of us
  - **1 Corinthians 3:16** *“<sup>16</sup>Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?”*
  - God working through other people in your life IS His Plan A because God is in the other person.
  - It’s not that God is far off, uninvolved and delegating His duties to people; it’s that He’s chosen to have people be the delivery vehicle for His work.

## YOU

God’s ideal scenario are His people loving each other, serving each other, working together, helping one another, and living life together. In this scenario every person would have a relationally full and rich life. Why doesn’t this happen?

### 3 Barriers to Relationships

- 1) **Performer** – I have to perform for people to be accepted or liked. You create impossible standards for yourself and daily put on your best performance. You live a false life for others.

Why do we behave like this? –feel if they knew the ‘real’ you that you wouldn’t be accepted or liked; insecurities; not good enough; must earn people’s approval

God’s answer in Galatians 1:10 “Am I trying to win the approval of men or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.”

→ don’t live for the wrong audience, live for an audience of One

→ you’re not who others say you are, you’re who God says you are

→ you’re already accepted

2) **Lone Ranger** – you don’t think you need others. You can do it alone. Your relationships with God is something personal, not public.

Why do we behave like this? – don’t understand God’s view on relationships or how God uses others to bring about spiritual growth and breakthrough in our lives

God’s answer in Genesis 2:18 “The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’”

→ Man was incomplete with God alone (perfect environment, perfect connection with God, and still something was lacking) He needed human connection as well.

→ We are created in God’s image, God is relational. Relationships with others are at the core of the way things were created.

→ **Ex.** Working out with Adam

→ *“Remember that we were created finite, not self-sustaining. Therefore we have to look outside of ourselves to get the things we need. This includes depending on God for everything and depending on others for what we cannot give ourselves.”* – Dr. Henry Cloud

→ **Independence from others is independence from God Himself.** (over 50 “one another” passages in the NT alone)

3) **Turtle** – turtle crossing a road, hears a car coming. What does it do? Pulls itself in its shell and hides in safety. False illusion of security and escape. Survival instinct. Its very actions will lead to its death.

Why do we behave like this? – you’ve been hurt or betrayed, you think “to survive in life, you can really trust anyone” or feel that people don’t really care about you, feel

unappreciated, rejected

God's answer in James 5:16 "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

→ healing comes through people.

→ **Ex.** Personal story about sharing a struggle before I was married

→ God designed us to grow and heal in relationship with others. **Your healing, answered prayer, freedom, breakthrough may be as close as your next relationship**

WE

Hebrews 10:23-25 <sup>23</sup>Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. <sup>25</sup>**Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.**"

Next Steps:

- 1) Join a Life Group
- 2) Maybe technology or social media has become a substitute or barrier for you developing real relationships with others. Take a media fast for a week.
- 3) Have someone pray for you today. Struggle with isolation, loneliness, or one of the barriers I mentioned.

Question for LifeGroup LifeLine this week:

1. Why did you decide to join a Life Group this semester?
2. Have a volunteer read Hebrews 10:23-25.

<sup>23</sup>Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. <sup>25</sup>Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

A) Verse 24 says one of the main objectives when we meet together should be to 'spur one another on toward love and good deeds.' How might that be lived out in our group this semester?

B) Verse 25 talks about the tendency people have to stop meeting. What do you think in your life might get in the way of you attending this group on a regular basis? What can be done to make the group a priority?

C) Why might it be even more important to keep meeting together when times are difficult? Has there been a time where a person or a small group of people have really helped you through something challenging?

3. Don't forget to go through the **Life Group Agreement** if you haven't already.