



SESSION TEN Relating – Part 2

What we're saying together in what is usually called "the actual parenting process" is the great model of the way God deals with His children, and it always falls into two phases. I don't want to bore you by repetition, but I do want to *drill it* home to you—that God does *consistently* two things for His people and they're always in this order: first this, then this. And if that's the model, then top priority must come to establish a *relationship* with your child, you see. How do you do it? Do it the way *He* does it. Now how does *He* do it? I'm not saying this is *all* He does. *You* study, see how He does it. I know this: that He's always there. He's never preoccupied. His ear is *always open*, and His *door* is open, and He's there to meet you any time you come. Be there, especially when they're young. Be there—all the time.

Second—we touched at the end of the last session; meet his needs. Now we've defined a need as something that is indispensable. He doesn't need ice cream every meal. He doesn't need candy all the time. But he *does need* to be recognized as somebody worthwhile. He needs to be loved unconditionally. He needs to realize that you think he's all right! *He needs* those things. I'll tell you again, if you do that he'll come to you.

May I read you part of a letter that one of my daughter-in-laws wrote some years ago? She's the one I referred to the other day. She specialized in early childhood education. She has a real gift in dealing with young children. She had been visiting with our other son in South Bend, Indiana and was going back to northern Wisconsin on the bus. Her husband had preceded her. She was riding the bus through Chicago and on up to northern Wisconsin. In Chicago she got on the bus and she recounts the experience: "There I met one of the most pitiful families I've ever seen. There were three dirty, hungry, tired, annoying little kids and their miserable parents coming from Washington to the Twin Cities. I'm sure they hadn't bathed or eaten a hot meal in days." Do you think their needs were being met? Now watch it: "When the husband wanted his wife's attention he jerked her by the back of her hair and the baby must have cried 90 percent of the time. You could tell that the children were annoying every passenger waiting to board. And I could only guess that we all were hoping that *that* family wouldn't be on our bus. My heart went out to that poor mother and distant father. I longed to keep the kids for just 15 minutes so they could get themselves together." Can you imagine travelling by bus with three kids? A one-year-old, a two-year-old and a six-year-old from Washington to St. Paul?

Then she began to drop a little drop in their tank. "Well it took only the pat on the head and we were instant friends. It always works. They just *clung* to me." And the more they cling the more you know their needs are not being met. "They just clung to me, dirty, grimy and noisy. While we waited for the bus we rummaged through my purse and found the bird caller and some paper and coloring pens. Everyone around us looked a little embarrassed and when one lady said, 'Oh I guess you're a teacher or something.' I wanted to say, 'No, I'm just concerned for these poor parents and kids. You don't have to be a kindergarten teacher to do that.' The little boy was six years old and his brilliant idea was to save the front seat for me and him. Without thinking what that might mean for a ten-hour trip, I just agreed. But it *really* turned out neat. Matt and Julie (my other son and his wife) had sent two magazines with me and B.J. and I poured over every page until it was too dark to read. They had packed a generous lunch and supper that B.J. and I finished off in the first half hour of the trip. I could tell how hungry he was because he gobbled down everything I offered him. When the bus stopped at the Burger King bus stop in Wisconsin, his family didn't get off. So B.J. and I went in and had a good, hot supper.

"What a sad, sad family," she writes, "and what a contrast they were to the loving, caring family I had just left. It hardly seems fair that simply by birth those kids will grow up so radically different from Greg and David" (my two grandsons). "I guess that's the reason God is so serious about the way we live, because children have so little choice and are so dependent on their parent for a good life. B.J. did not want to go to sleep because he was afraid he would be asleep when he came to my stop and he wanted to tell me goodbye." I can't *read* this [emotional]. "I watched him struggle to stay awake, but he lost. And when I got off of the bus, I could only pat him on the head and tell him goodbye. That was kind of sad. He probably woke up the next morning and thought it was a dream."

My friend, every child has a *right!* And those children had nothing, and do you know what is going to happen to them? They're going to get in trouble with our society, and they're going to throw them in jail, and they're going to beat them. And do you know where it started? Some parents—and I don't *blame* them—they were not related to when *they* were children, so they pass it on. I'll guarantee you; you *try* it sometime. With little kids like that, you just give them a drop and they'll come *to* you. And you mothers *especially*, but I plead with you *fathers*, you *lay* down your lives for your children and meet their *needs*. They'll rise up and call you blessed. And there'll be a relationship between you and them that you won't believe. And in the process you will save their humanity. That's what *God* does. He meets our needs. That's not *all* He does. That's not all He wants *us* to do.

Now let me move on to this next one. Now I don't know how to introduce this to you, but I see God doing something other than “He's always there,” and “He meets my needs,” and “It's amazing! He's a shepherd.” And I can pick out words—especially in the Psalms—that He uses to refer to. “My God is a rock; He's always there.” “My God is a shepherd; He meets my needs.” I could go right through it like that. I won't take time to do that. But I see my Father, my God, doing something *else* with His people. When He took the people of Israel—which is the family of God in the Old Testament—as He was taking them through, you know, out of Egypt to the Promised Land, He was *dealing* with them as a family. And He got them out of Egypt and He stopped out in the wilderness and He did something *strange* toward His children at Mount Sinai. Do you know what He's doing? He comes down on Mount Sinai and the mountain quakes, and it smokes, and there's thunder and lightning, and it scared the people to death, and they ran back. God said, “Don't touch the mountain. If you touch it you'll die.” Do you know what God is doing? May I just tell you? This is not discipline. He's not punishing His people; He is trying to establish another aspect of their relationship. So must you. Do you know what He said? After it was over and they were scared to death, and they said to Moses, “*You* speak to us. Don't let God speak to us again lest we die.” Do you know what God said? God says, “Don't be afraid. Listen, I'm not trying to hurt you...I'm trying to teach you to fear Me so that we can walk together.” Do you know what that is? I don't know whether you can catch it from Mount Sinai, but I plead with you to study if from that light. What He's doing is establishing another aspect of their relationship. Do you know what it is? It's that relationship where He establishes Himself with the *right* to tell them what to do. He is their what? *Lord!* He is their *Lord*.

Oh you say, “That's not relationship!” It certainly is! And He says—. Do you know what happened when it was all over? They turned and they said—. Look, here's the relationship and you know what it is. It's a relationship! And they turned and when it was over, they said, “All that Jehovah has spoken...”—say it— *we will do and be obedient.*” That is what? It is commitment to the living God as Lord.

Is that relationship? Give me a nod! Is that relationship? That's *relationship*. It's the relationship between one who takes the place of allegiance and submits himself to his God, his Lord. That's not discipline. That's not training. That's *relationship*. And it's wonderful!

Do you remember a time when you turned your back on God in disobedience and rebellion and you said, “I'm *not* going to do it”? And you ran off like a spoiled child and finally God caught you, maybe in a time of pain or pressure, then you turned back and say, “Yes Lord.” Was it good then? Was He good? Oh, the *relationship* that was reestablished. Do you realize that *parents*, for their *children*, must do the same thing? I'm not suggesting that you have thunder and lightning around. For some children, it almost takes that. But now, *don't* misunderstand me.

Turn with me to the passage where the New Testament apparently refers to this, 1 Timothy, chapter 3. Apparently this is what Paul is giving as instruction to the Church through Timothy. He's talking about leaders in the Church. The paragraph is talking about qualifications for the elder or the office of a bishop, however you want to translate it. Verse 2 of chapter 3, “The bishop, therefore, must be without reproach, the husband of one wife,” et cetera. Now verse 4. The one who is in the place of leadership as an elder—or however your church is organized, chapter 3, verse 4, this one should be, and he is to model; he is not to be *different than*, but he is to model it for the others—“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.” Now that's not discipline, that's relationship. Do you know what it is? He rules well as “lord” and he has his children in subjection with all gravity. And that's a *wonderful* thing!

You young parents, have you ever seen it take place in your child? That can take place between a child and his parent just like it takes place between you and your God. If you rebel against God and you say, “I'm not going to do what He says” as Jonah did and he ran away, and God had to discipline. And then Jonah came back and said, “Yes Lord.” You know, *you* do that. Have you ever seen your child do that? Rebellion, and he turns away, and then he comes back and says, “Yes.” *That's the relationship.*

Now how do you do that? How do you have, how do you establish [it]? Any of you who are familiar with the ministry of Bill Gothard, that is the core of his ministry. Dealing with young people in American society who have never had the foggiest notion that they ought to be in subjection to their parents. He has come in with that. Young children ought to be in subjection to their parents. But parents have the first responsibility to rule well and to see that their children are in subjection with all gravity. How do you do it?

I'll tell you how you *can't* do it. Now look, by definition, if you want this, now I don't know what to *call* this, if you're *there*, especially in those early years, and then all the way through their lives, if you're always there, you mothers will take *most* of the responsibility, but the father is there, and you're always there, he'll relate to you. If you meet his needs, he'll *really* come to you and he'll begin to trust you. But if you rule well, how do you do it? I'll tell you one way you *can't* do it. By definition you *cannot* force it. *You cannot force it.* If you force it, it's not what you want. Now do you see what you want? You want a *voluntary* choice on his part to give himself to you. Now that's what God wants from you, you see. He wants a voluntary submission by choice. Not because you have to, but because you have chosen to give your life to Jesus Christ. If you *force* it, you've denied it! You can't force it. You see, by definition you *cannot* force it.

Listen to what John White—I quoted him earlier—a Christian psychiatrist, says about forcing a child. “You cannot ever control another human being even if that human being is your own child. You do not have the right to. You may discipline and teach, you may train, you may point the right course, you may shape behavior patterns, you may reason, you may plead, but you cannot and may not ever control in the sense that you force them.” You *cannot*,” he says.

God has placed your child's ultimate destiny within your child's own hands. He must do it. Now what can you do to get him to do this? Now let me tell you, this is what God does. He *always* does this. Do you know what He does? May I suggest this? If you want to get that, number one, if you meet his needs, first—now God's already done that—if you meet his needs so that he's trusting you. Now if you don't, don't be surprised if it backfires. And I'm *sure* those parents that my daughter-in-law was writing about, you see they're not meeting their needs, and then when they try to *train* the child or even get *any* kind of obedience, man it just backfires! But if you meet his needs first—this always comes first—you meet his needs first. Do that; be *sure* you've done that. You'll *never* do it perfectly, but meet his needs and then do what God did.

He set certain appropriate limits. Do you know what limits are? You can't do this; you must do this. Certain limits. I don't want to use the word that has bad connotations. You set limits. God made them very appropriate. He just set ten simple rules for His people in the Old Testament. And they were very, very simple. But He set the limits. So set limits. “Now you can't do this, and you must do this.” And then, when you see rebellion—when you see rebellion, when you see not failure, not weakness, but when you see rebellion—then have some form of discipline as God did. God only disciplines rebellion. God does not discipline weakness. He disciplines *rebellion*! Jonah, when he said “I will not,” then God disciplined him and threw him overboard, having sent the storm. You see, God always disciplines rebellion! And you have, when you see that, then you have something that just naturally *comes*. And you set your limits and then you say, “If you rebel against this, then you *must* take the consequences,” and then lovingly, you stand back and hope and pray. And I guarantee you 99 times out of 100; do you know what he'll do eventually? He'll do what I remember one of our sons did.

I was with him just before he came down, he was talking with me about this seminar. He is into Marriage and Family Counseling. So he was listening to some of these tapes that we've done in the last month or so. And I was talking about *him*. He didn't realize it. And I said, “One of our boys one day, you know, I don't know what came up but boy he got mad and he ran down the hall and he slammed the door to his room.” Now to me that sounds like rebellion; now I'm not sure. Now what are you going to do? Well, it wasn't appropriate, we thought at that time, so we just sat and waited. He knew if he continued that, there *would* be. But after a while, you hear the door open and he comes back down the hall and he says what I have said to my God: “I'm sorry. Here I am.” Now he doesn't say it *that* way, but he meant it. And you can almost see it take place.

He gives himself to us just like *you*, as a child of God, give yourself to *Him*. Now I want to tell you, if you ever get *that*, you've got it. But if you force it, if you try to conform his behavior without getting that, *you have not got it!* But if you get it so that he voluntarily... What would happen, of course you would faint dead away if your child ever came to you and said, “Dad, from now on anything you tell me to do, I will do.” Well now, that's what Bill Gothard teaches and I believe, maybe we ought to—. Boy, how *good* that would be for that child and how wonderful it would be for you after you got over your faint!

That's what it is! That's what *I* give to my *Father*. And when I can get that from my child where he comes to me and says—. Now I know he's weak! Now, some of you confuse rebellion and weakness. You know, he might want to, but he's so weak and he doesn't do what he wants to do but he chooses to be for you. That's a relationship! Very, very wonderful—relationship.

And I want to tell you, as you relate to these children *you're going to save them! You're going to save their humanity!* And I'll tell you, they'll not have the hang-ups I had and the many young people I've talked to [had]. I talked to some of the students and I remember one of them came to me. And the first time she came she wouldn't even see me personally. She wrote a note and tacked it on my door and said, "Mr. Hatch, please respond by anonymous note." So after dark, I mean after I was leaving the office, I put a note [out for her] and she would come by and pick it up and we corresponded because she didn't want to face me. Finally she came in one day and she said, "Mr. Hatch, I'm the one who has been talking." And she told me "Mr. Hatch," we'd begun to relate. And she came so close and she related. And she said, "I have never had *anybody*"—she was raised in a Christian home—"I've never had anybody who would relate to me as you have." And that girl was *filled* with all kind of turmoil because nobody had ever saved her from that. My friend, we've got to *relate*.

I'll tell you again, as Americans we are awfully short on *anything* like spending time, quality time, and relating. We're so zealous to correct them, and we're going to get to that, don't shoot me yet. We're going to get there. But God will not try to change—He cannot because it won't work—until there's a relationship.

Now let me mention one more thing that God does. God does this. He not only is *always* there with His *ear* is open and His *door* is open and any time I come He's there. And as He meets my needs I begin to trust Him and I see again and again and I and come to trust Him. There's a relationship there. And then my heavenly Father keeps reminding me that He is loyal. And on a few rare occasions He has had to discipline me because of rebellion. And I praise Him for that. And He brought me back, and when I came back, oh what a wonderful relationship!

But He does something else, and I can't get over this. Back in the Old Testament as God was dealing with His people, He not only came down on Mount Sinai but He did something else— almost the opposite. Instead of scaring them, you see, He's got to get that matter so they'll *recognize* He has the *right* to tell them what to do and they'll respond to it. That's what we've just covered. But here's what He also did. He told the people, "I want you to build Me a tent." Now we've put a halo around it, and it *is* wonderful, but it's just a tent. We call it a tabernacle. And He says, "Build me a *tent*. And I want you to build it in the middle of the camp.

Now we've grown *used* to this. Do you know what that means? The God of heaven came down, down, down—and you don't know *how far down*—and said, "I want to live next to you so we can talk together." Sometimes we call it "worship." Please don't miss the wonder of it, even with *that* term. Worship? He comes down to meet with you, and He talks with me and I talk with *Him*. What do you call that? Give me *another* word for it. *Give me another word for it*. What is that? *Fellowship*. Give me *another* word for it. What do you call it when *you all* do that with husband and wife? And one of the issues of the marriage relationship is you must what? Communicate and you share one with another. And as you share one with another there's a relationship that develops between you and your partner, you see. That's what God does.

Do you know what He did? He came down, down, down, down, down and He said, "Build me a house and I'll dwell with you and *there* I will meet with you." Do you know what this is? Do you know what I have to do? What *you* have to do? Some of you men—I gather from what has been said—some of you are lawyers. Some of you are veterinarians and some of you doctors. Do you know what you have to do? Get down, down, down, down where he is and talk with him. Do you know what a three-year-old is interested in? Justification? Hebrew verbs? Computers? He's interested in mud pies. Me, a great theologian, get down and make mud pies? Yes.

One of my great failures that I'm aware of is at this point. Because of my hang-ups—and I don't blame anybody, and God has overruled them and He's used it for blessing, but it's still an awful hang-up—I couldn't talk. A joke around our family used to be, "Daddy lost his voice and we didn't know it for three or four days." Now we laugh at that, and it is a joke, but you see the boys looked at me and they didn't know what to *think* of the old man—I mean their father. I mean, he couldn't *talk*. But their mother could talk with them. And I *wanted* to talk with them. That's got to be there, and if you *do* it and you get down there and listen. Do you know how to listen to them? I watch my sons and *their* wives as they get down with their children, they talk about all *kind* of things, and their kids share with them what happened at school and what their fears are and they talk about all *kind* of things. And they read together and they share and they talk. Let me ask you. Is any relationship taking place? *You've got to get down and communicate with them*. And I'll tell you, if you do it, you'll put Anne Landers and her sister out of a job. I read that

just to keep up with *some* of the screams out there in our society. But I'll tell you, you'll often hear a teenager say, "I don't have anybody else to talk to," so they write to her....

Some of my boys—I don't know why they were working on me this past visit—they were asking me about my father. "Did he ever talk?" "No." I couldn't talk to him. I was afraid of him. He never talked to me, my mother. I didn't have *anybody* to talk to. I'm not trying to get your *sympathy*. I'm just saying it left me empty. But you've got to get down, and as you talk with them, as God did, get down, down! Listen to them. Let them share with you and you *interact* with them, [and] a relationship will begin. It will be far beyond anything you can imagine.

I was counseling with a young wife during the Thanksgiving holidays and she was having an *awful* hang-up. She was one of these who had a *deep* problem with, you know, thinking that she's no good for *anything*. So I always go back into her family, and I asked about her father and he was not there. And I asked about her mother and she said she was always behind the paper—newspaper—and would never talk to me. And she told me this, she said "At 21 I was dating a young fellow"—and she later married him—"but we were having problems and one night I came home and it was *awful* blowup. And I came into the house crying and there my mother was sitting, behind the paper as usual. And she turned to me and said, 'Do you want to tell me about it?'" And this young wife said, "When my mother said 'Do you want to tell me about it?' I was flabbergasted and I couldn't say anything but this. And I turned to my mother and said, 'For all of my life you have never listened. Why should I begin to talk to you now?'" Now friends, I'm not talking to *you* primarily, I'm talking *through you* to parents out there who *never* listen to their kids. And if you want an intimate relationship, you *be* there. You meet their needs. You establish this ruling relationship so they submit to you, and then you get down on their level and listen and talk with them, interact with them. And I'll tell you, something will take place. There'll be a relationship between you and them that will be out of this world! And in the process, you will save them from losing their humanity, and they will come out as normal human beings.

That's *relationship*. That's what *God* does and He does it *first*. That's what He's calling upon *us* to do. First, *relate to them*.

In our next session we will see the *other* side, which is the training process.