



Relationships: Rowboat | February 24, 2016

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

Relationships take commitment. Sometimes we enter into them unknowingly and other times we enter into them haphazardly. If we picture our relationships as something we willingly commit to for the long haul, we might be better prepared to weather the difficult storms.

Key Verse

Philippians 2:3-5 (NIV)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Discussion

The analogy of climbing into a rowboat, being essentially chained to another person, is scary but powerful. If we knew we were locked into a relationship with no way out, we might do more to figure out our differences.

1. How might you be motivated to resolve issues in your relationship if you knew you were “stuck” with them forever?
2. Are there issues or differences in your current relationships that you need to let go for the sake of the boat moving forward? Explain.

The other unique perspective we get from this analogy is the observer on the shore. If we were able to picture a coach on the shore instructing, guiding, helping; we might again adjust our interactions with our boat mate.

3. If you examine your current relationships, what might a coach say to you concerning your role in the boat?
4. Are there things the shore observer might see in the both of you that you can't see from inside the boat?

Considering others greater than ourselves takes a lot of practice, intentionality, and an understanding that we will not always live up to this expectation. However, prioritizing others needs generally increases the chances that our needs do not go unmet.

5. Are there instances in your relationships where you do the lion share of the rowing? Explain.
6. How does taking this perspective shift your attitude with your current relationships?

What's Next?

A rowboat, something so simple can paint a picture for how our relationships are going, how we can adjust, and help us shift focus to the long term rather than the moment. Sometimes “jumping ship” prevents us from experiencing the richness and depth that comes from successfully navigating rough waters. Consider what things are making your boat crash and rock, how are you contributing to helping or hurting? What would it take to communicate to someone important that you are in the relationship for the long haul? What do you need to adjust for the shoreline observer to be able to say, “Well done! That's it. Keep it up!”?