

The Year of Connecting

2020 Year Launch

Jan 4-5, 2020

Jn 15:1-17; 17:20-23

Introduction

- **Bridgeway's Core Element to all that we do: TRANSFORMATION**
- **Welcome to 2020: The Year of CONNECTING**
- **How 2020 Will Go**
 - **1 Book ALL YEAR – Ephesians (1998/2008)**
 - One of the most theologically rich books in the NT
 - One of the most practical books about relationships in NT
 - Saving the Armor of God in Chapter 6 for 2021!
 - **2 Series – Same Book =**
 - 1 is on Knowing God to Connect to Him (17 parts)
 - 1 is on Learning How to Connect with Each Other (26 parts)
 - **Go Slowly – Break for Topical Series addressed in the book**
 - Understanding the Holy Spirit
 - Spiritual Warfare in the World Today
 - Training on how to Share Our Faith with those around us.
 - Training in Discovering and Developing our Spiritual Gifts
 - 3 part - Marriage Mini-Series
 - 2 part – Parenting Mini-Series
 - 2 part – Ministering in the Workplace Series
 - 4 part – Advent Series!

HOW IMPORTANT IS CONNECTION? – let's take a look at other human needs

- **The Importance of getting enough WATER every day**
 - **The Expectation for Optimal**
 - **Replenish Need** - Water is 60% of your body weight – it's critical – you have to replenish what you lose naturally. The more you lose, the more you have to replenish.
 - **General Intake: According to the Mayo Clinic** (water from any source) – depending on your weight.
 - **124 ounces of fluids for men** – more if you exercise, are in hot weather or are sick. (hydroflask)
 - **Institute of Medicine = 104 oz.**

- **92 ounces of fluids for women** – more if you exercise, in hot weather, sick or pregnant or breastfeed.
 - **Institute of Medicine = 72 oz.**
 - **The Level of Internal Demand – Very High**
 - **The Cost of Ignoring**
 - Thirsty, Dehydration, dizziness, lethargy, confusion, mood swings, seizures
- **The importance of getting enough SLEEP**
 - **The Expectation for Optimal**
 - **Replenish Need** – both for body and mind
 - **What sleep does:** Rebuilds muscles, removes brain plaque, sorts memories, regulates emotions, builds immune system, controls appetite and metabolic function.
 - **7-9 hours of sleep. Adult generally.**
 - Newborns (0-3 mths) – 14-17 hrs
 - Infants (4-11 mths) – 12-15 hrs
 - Toddlers (1-2 yrs) – 11-14 hrs
 - Preschoolers (3-5 yrs) – 10-13 hrs
 - School kids (6-13) – 9-11 hrs.
 - Teens (14-17) – 8-10 hrs
 - Adults (18-64) – 7-9 hrs
 - 65+ - 7-8 hrs.
 - Men sleep worse as they age
 - Women are constant unless pregnancy or menopause.
 - Not all sleep is equal and not every body is equal (genetic mutations)
 - **The Level of Internal Demand – Moderately High**
 - **The Cost of Ignoring**
 - Tired, weakening, poor decision making, more negative, increase risk to disease, damage to brain/mind
- **The importance of a healthy DIET**
 - **The Expectation for Optimal**
 - **Need** = Getting vitamins, minerals and nutrients
 - **Depends** on height, weight, age, sex, activity and genetic factors.
 - **Gain/Lose Weight** - If you consume more calories than you burn, you gain weight, vice versa.

- **Not all food is equal** – not all calories are equal (calories in drinks).
 - **Full vs. Fed** - Just because your stomach is full doesn't mean your body was fed.
- **Caloric Intake for Men** (17-50, less the older you get)
 - Sedentary = 2400
 - Low Active (30-60 min/day) = 2700
 - High Active (60+ min/day) = 3100
- **Caloric Intake for Women**
 - Sedentary = 1800
 - Low Active = 2000
 - High Active = 2200
- **The Level of Internal Demand** - Medium
- **The Cost of Ignoring** – far more severe in young ages and older ages
 - Hunger, weight loss, weakness & fatigue, low immunity, difficulty healing, irritability, dizziness, hair loss, dry skin, depression, death.
- **The Importance of CONNECTION**
 - **The Expectation for Optimal**
 - **Biblical Expectations:**
 - Daily and Constant Contact with God
 - Healthy patterns and consistent contact with Healthy People
 - **Scientific Findings:**
 - All sentient beings (thinking beings) are profoundly impacted by social environment and relationships.
 - Dysfunctional or absent social and relational interaction in children can lead to long-term health and educational problems.
 - Not all social interactions are the same – meaningful and not.
 - **The Level of Internal Demand** - Low
 - **The Cost of Ignoring**
 - **Loneliness is terribly damaging** – can lead toward more social isolation, depression, substance abuse, poor sleep and appetite, suicidal thoughts, breakdown in health, etc.

The Less Connected We Are, the Less Power We Have

- **Power for What?**

- **A Vision for How Christianity Should Go**
 - **A Step forward = Paul the Apostle's Experience**
 - To live is Christ; to die is Gain
 - I have learned the secret of contentment
 - Firm in his identity in Christ – knowing who he was, living in a state of Grace
 - Filled with clear purpose – to reach the world for Christ, specifically Gentiles.
 - Living in perpetual prayer
 - Bold and proud of the gospel – unashamed
 - Even able to rejoice in sufferings knowing the bigger picture
 - Powerfully working in the supernatural – experiencing miracles, signs and wonders.
 - **Arrival = Jesus Christ's Experience**
 - I and the Father are One
 - I do and say only what I see Him doing/saying – clear downloads
 - Anything I ask, He does for me – perfect prayer life
 - Full, clear purpose - Unshaken and immovable even to temptation
 - Full use of the supernatural power from heaven – raised the dead
 - Inspiring, charismatic and magnetic
 - Moved by compassion and love to the needs around Him.
 - Brilliant insights of wisdom and truths from heaven.
 - Unworried about concerns in this life.
 - Bold in the face of opposition.
- **These are clearer visions of what Christianity should look like. How do we live lives that look more like those?** Do the things that the Bible clearly lays out – they center around 2 things:
 1. **Connected to God**
 2. **Connected to Each Other**

Lesson

- **Fruit of the Vine**
 - **The Constant Development of the True Believer**
 - **Jn 15:1–3** - *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and*

every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.”

- **Built to Produce More and More** – it’s not about earning salvation, it’s about being who we were built to be.
- **Vital Connection**
 - **The Constant Connection of the True Believer**
 - **Jn 15:4-5** - *“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*
 - **Abiding Means to Stay Close and Live Connected** – The word ‘abide’ means to remain stably fixed in a state of being. Everything that is life-giving comes from God. Therefore, if we want anything life-giving flowing in us or through us, that’s only going to happen when we are fully connected to Him.
 - **Impact on Heaven**
 - **Fulfilling the Purpose of Being a Believer**
 - **Jn 15:6-8** - *“If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*
 - **Understanding our Existence Purpose** – living WITH God.
 - **Ultimately it’s about bringing glory to God** – too often we make decisions in our Christian lives based on what’s best for us. But the primary concern for a believer should be how things reflect on God.
 - **Living in Love**
 - **Established in the Love and Identity of God**
 - **Jn 15:9-11** - *“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and*

abide in his love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

- **Living in the Reality of His Love/Favor** – abiding in love means maintain our relationship. As the relationship is healthy, the blessings and favor flow. But it also means that we live in light of the identity of being loved apart from our performance.
 - **Living in Accordance with His Wisdom** – God wants us to succeed in life. He wants us to advance the Kingdom. He wants deep connection and there's ways to make that more likely and less likely. We call those instructions. But they are only helpful if we live according to them.
 - **Fulness of Joy is Possible** – Joy is the deep-seated sense of well-being and happiness that stems from knowing that all important things are cared for by God and that circumstances can't ruin that. God wouldn't promise the fulness of joy if it wasn't possible. It is.
- **A Life of Love**
 - **Loving Others: The Mandate of the True Believer**
 - **Jn 15:12-15** - *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.*
 - **A Mandate to Love Each Other** – We will not love one another in church, appropriately until we know each other more. We will not give love until we feel filled up with love. Yet, the mandate is clear. We need to do whatever it takes to love people rightly.
 - **A Certain level of love demanded** – It's not a fair-weather love. It's not a love that is only responsive to love from others. It's agape, God-type love. It's love that chooses to love first and consistently regardless of the feedback it receives. It's others focused. It's deep from the soul and rich with emotion.
 - **What it means to be a Friend of Christ** – servants versus friends. Involvement, connection, love, engagement, intimacy. These are all words that express what Christ is trying to say to

His followers, to us. He's interacting with us (true believers) differently than the rest of Creation.

- **Producing Power**

- **The Effective Life of a True Believer**

- **Jn 15:16–17** - *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, so that you will love one another.”*

- **Our Eternal Life (present/future) was His Plan All Along** – God initiated the relationship between us. He started it. And God started the plan knowing how it would succeed. He called us out to be with Him and to do great things.

- **A significant portion of the fruit of our lives is blessing those around us.** – When we talk about growing in the Lord and becoming more mature, it should all impact how we treat people directly. If our love for other people isn't growing, then our spiritual lives aren't growing.

- **Perfectly One**

- **The Desire of Christ: For His Body to Be ONE**

- **Jn 17:20–23 (High Priestly Prayer)** - *“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.”*

- **Connected not just to God, but to Each Other as well** – First we are connected to God so that His eternal life flows through us, THEN we are connected to one another. Independent body parts are useless, it's only when we are fully functioning together, in one main purpose (God's will) that we fully thrive.

- **Unified in Mind, Heart and Purpose** – Just as the fully human, fully God, Jesus Christ was perfectly connected to the Father while He was here, so too are we called to live that type of life.

- **Our Connected State of Living is our Best Evangelistic Method**

Conclusion

- **Most of us are spiritually, socially and relationally malnourished – but it's so normal we don't even recognize the symptoms.**
- **We desperately need connection.**
- **Determine this year that you will be determined to Connect, both to God and to His people.**