From Forgiveness to Blessing
Session 1B
© Dallas Willard Ministries

In our life every one of us needs a few things that are irreplaceable:

R_____ –We don't have a soul in isolation; we have a soul in relation; it's always two-fold for the adult especially: to God and to others, people around us.

RECEPTION – (A_____) – I don't just recognize you, I accept you.

- "Expressions" refers to the way a child plays, the way an adult speaks, the shape of your body, likes of food and clothing, family, language, culture, etc.
- Today we're sensitive to these things in a way we've never been but also more brutal than we've ever been. We wind up accepting people to be correct more than accepting them.

L_____ – Love means that there is a readiness to support what is good for me.

- Not necessarily what I want. I need people to do for me what is good not what I want.
- This is active engagement, not a casual relationship -the intimate context in which a person receives their being.
- They have to have love, not just recognition and acceptance but an active engagement for love.

S_____ – I must know it's going to be there tomorrow and the day after. It's permanent; it will never change.

RECOGNITION – ACCEPTANCE – LOVE – SECURITY

When we have these kinds of structures around us; then we are in a situation to have a kind of life that is good, that is healthy, that is blessing to others. A life that shows that there really is a God, that God exists, that all of the good things that we hope for as we learn from Him are indeed true.

But unfortunately, this gets broken, for all human beings. The extent to which there was enough here in early life to stabilize an individual is going to determine how they are able to cope with life as they go along.

- The hurt begins early - sets the tone of life for many people for the rest of their lives because they don't have the capacity to come back and recover and restore their soul into the kind of wholeness that will enable them to move along well.
- Those injuries that we receive have to be dealt with rightly or they will simply curse us as we go through our lives.
    - Between 20 and 30 million clinically depressed people in this country. (1996)
    - The level of negativity…passive kind of resistance that drags everyone to death.
    - It's the wounded souls that make up our societies and often our families; they simply have been broken in these levels and they've become hopeless, and angry…

© Dallas Willard Ministries

- A young person caught up in rebellion – has, first of all, probably done wrong and then the reaction to that has led them to be angry at the people who judged them, and that has led to a hostile attitude that they justify in terms of the harm that's been done to them.

The repairing of the break is what forgiveness is really about.

There are two _____ of love -love to God, love to neighbor (Mark 12:30-31)

- Neighbor is the person next to you; "the boor that is night thee."
- When those are broken as they are, restoration has to be made in those two directions: between God and me, and between me and my neighbors.

All wrong is against God.

- Psalm 51:4 David realized that it was God that he had primarily offended against.
- Why? Uriah, who David caused to be killed and whose wife David took, was God's person. God was involved in Uriah's life.
- When I injure another person, when I haven't loved a neighbor as myself, I hurt God.
- We must remember this. When we do wrong we tear a vast web; we don't do a little thing.
- One of the reasons there's such a lack of understanding of right and wrong today is because we've put away that reality and we say oh its just a little thing. It's never a little thing, because God is involved.

Unforgiveness is always, ultimately, _____ _____ God.

- When we don't forgive, we really are saying, "God, you let me down, you handed me this situation here and just left me with it."
- Also, if we forgive, it will be only because God has enabled us to do it. It will be by throwing ourselves upon God that we are enabled to forgive.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: if you're unable to love yourself is that against God too?
DALLAS: Yes, but you can't deal with that directly. You have to go back and find out WHY you don't love yourself.

- That will be a mixture of the things you've done and the things that have been done to you. The words that come at us are so brutal, they hurt us so badly, we have to have a way of dealing with all of that.
- If you want self-esteem you have to have _____-esteem. You learn to esteem yourself by returning to God's esteem for you. And that's primarily manifested by the fact that he sent his Son to die for you; he loves you that much; he values you that much.
- God's love for us is based upon our worth, which he knows. God sees our _____. God has prepared a time and a place for each one of us and we are of great value to him and that is why he loves us.

© Dallas Willard Ministries

RECOGNITION: If I haven't recognized my wife-son-daughter-dog appropriately, I can't just let that go. You must deal with what happened. You cannot just go on. If you do there will always be a lack.

- There is no formula to follow, but somehow it has to be worked out. You cannot just hurt people and go on. And God knows that. And you can't just hurt God and go on.

AUDIENCE COMMENT: (around layoffs / downsizing) "You got downsized"
DALLAS: It ought to be personal, and it ought to be handled in a way that the person is recognized.

- Are there resources for that person? Can we say, "Blessed are the downsized for theirs is the Kingdom of God?" Yes!

God rejoices to forgive because He knows that this is the way to restoration. God _____ to forgive.
God is looking for the least possible reason to forgive. If you give him half a chance, He'll forgive you!

Micah 6:8 Do what's right, love mercy. Not just 'do' mercy, *love* it.

- Mercy is giving a good that is not _____.
    - Graciousness is a term that's associated with mercy.
- In order to do that, you have to have the resources to do it from. Without the resources to be merciful you cannot do it, and that will have to come from God.
- Mercy is an action. Often you can't do the merciful thing because of all that's involved but even in that situation the idea is, you would want to do it.
- It's a matter of your heart. Mercy will find other ways of responding to that need, when there's a merciful heart.