



MAIN POINT

Healthy relationships are Christ-centered and respectful

MAIN VERSE

Philippians 2:1-5

TEACHING GOAL

Students will understand that healthy relationships – especially friendships, crushes, and dating – should reflect the way Jesus treats people, and they will be challenged to practice respect, humility, and kindness in how they interact with others.

HOOK (2 minutes):

- Let me start off with a question. You don't have to raise your hands, but I want you to think about this:
 - Are there any parts of your life where Jesus has a say...
 - And are there parts where it feels like He doesn't?
- For example:
 - Jesus gets a say in how I act at church
 - Jesus gets a say in how I treat my family
 - Jesus gets a say in how I behave around certain friends
- But there are other times when it feels different:
 - "Well... these friends are different."
 - "This is just how middle school is, so... Jesus understands why I behave this way."
 - "Those rules don't really apply here"

SCRIPTURE (2 MINUTES):

- If you were with us last week, we finished our series on discipleship called "Follow Me," and we looked at Philippians 2:1-5. This week, we are going to look at that same passage, but we're going to change gears a little bit.
 - Today we are starting a new series called Realationships and it's all about how we treat other people.
 - Whether it's family

- Or friends
 - Or maybe someone you like, have a crush on, or may be dating.
- Let's read the passage together and then I'll tell you why we're revisiting it again.
 - READ PHILIPPIANS 2:1-5 NIV

TENSION (5 MINUTES):

- Here's what's important
 - Paul never says, "Do this in some relationships."
 - He doesn't say
 - Only be humble with your friends or the people you like
 - Only be kind when it's easy
 - Put others first unless you REALLY want something bad enough
 - Paul's message is clear: This standard applies to all relationships!
 - Jesus doesn't model different versions of love. He models one way of living. And that way applies everywhere.
 - Main Point: The healthiest relationships are Christ-centered and respectful.
 - Here's the question I want to ask you: What would it look like if Jesus were at the center of every relationship in your life?
- Here's where this gets real:
 - When it comes to how to love others, most of us don't reject Jesus' teaching, we limit it.
 - We say things like:
 - "I'll be patient... unless I'm annoyed."
 - "I'll be kind... unless they hurt me."
 - "This is different because we love each other."
 - But the truth is that Jesus' way, what we read about in Philippians 2, applies to all of these relationships.
- **NOTE ON DATING:**
 - Each week, we're talking about every relationship you have, but I realize that some of you are at a stage where you're either interested in or you are dating someone. So let me say this...
 - Just because you have a crush on someone or just because you like them and they like you, our feelings don't get to cancel out Jesus' way of life.
 - These special relationships are another arena for us to live out what God teaches us.
 - So if God's way says that we should treat one another with humility, respect, and place their needs above our own in a godly way, then that applies to anyone you might be attracted to as well.
 - God's way is better and only leads to healthier relationships.

APPLICATION (4-5 minutes):

- So we've learned how we should treat one another, but what do we do? How do we put Jesus as the center of the relationships that matter most in our lives?
 - The first thing to remember is that putting Jesus at the center doesn't start with changing other people. It starts with allowing Jesus to change us and become our number 1 priority.
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- Think about it this way:
 - When Jesus is at the center of a relationship, it means He gets a voice before you react.
 - So before you clap back at your parents, or join in on the inappropriate group chat, or post the mean comment, or say something you'll probably regret later...
 - Pause and ask...
 - "Does this reflect the way Jesus treats people?"
 - "Is this a loving way to respond?"
 - "Am I pursuing my own way or Jesus' way?"
 - To take that moment and pause and pray is what it means to follow Jesus in real life and in real time. Not only in our everyday lives, but specifically in the relationships that matter most.
- Putting Jesus at the center of our relationships isn't about perfection. It's about direction.
 - Am I learning to handle relationships in a Christlike way?
- But it's important to remember, letting Jesus shape who you're becoming isn't just about your actions... it's about your motives.
 - It's not just:
 - Am I being nice?
 - But
 - Why am I doing this?
 - We begin to ask...
 - Am I being kind because I want something back?
 - Am I being respectful unless my feelings get hurt?
 - Am I treating people differently based on how much I like them or what they can do for me?
- When Jesus is at the center, we don't treat people based on how they make us feel.
 - We treat people based on who Jesus is.

LAND THE POINT (1 minute):

- Jesus doesn't give us different standards for different relationships.
 - One Savior.
 - One way.
 - Every relationship.
 - The way Jesus calls us to live applies to everyone — always.
 - "The rules of love are simple: Everybody, always." — Bob Goff
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