

Introduction:

Renowned psychotherapist concludes, “There must be a better way.”

“Imagine what could happen if God were to place within his people intangible nutrients that had the power to both prevent and reverse soul disease and then told us to share those nutrients with each other in a special kind of intimate relating called connection. Imagine what could happen if that were true, if we believed it, and if we devoted ourselves to understanding what those nutrients were and how we could give them away.

I envision a community of people who intentionally mingle in settings where these nutrients are passed back and forth, where I pour into you the healing resources within me and you pour into me what God has put in you. Like spiritual gifts, these nutrients only nourish our own souls as we give them away for the blessing of others.

In recent days, I have made a shift. I am now working toward the day when communities of God’s people, ordinary Christians whose lives regularly intersect, will accomplish most of the good that we now depend on mental health professionals to provide. And they will do it by connecting with each other in ways that only the gospel makes possible.”

Dr. Larry Crabb

Question: What is this “better way” and how does it work?

God's Answer: "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love."

Romans 12:10

- What does it mean to be "devoted to one another?"
- What does it look like to be "devoted to one another?"
- What keeps us from experiencing this authentic devotion one to another?
 1. It doesn't happen _____.
1 Thessalonians 4:9-10
1 Peter 1:22-23
2 Peter 1:5-7
 2. It takes time, effort, and _____.
 3. It is especially difficult for some of us to share at the "feeling" level because:
 - We fear _____.
 - We come from poor _____.
 - We've had negative _____.
 4. Personal unresolved _____ and _____.
 5. Excessive preoccupation with _____.
 6. Failure to recognize our _____ and personal _____ in relationships.
 7. Idealistic / Unrealistic _____.

How can you develop deeper “family relationships”?

1. Honestly evaluate your level of “connectedness” and family devotion.
2. Identify the top two factors that are keeping you from building warmer, deeper relationships in God’s family.

Factor # 1 =

Factor # 2 =
3. Prayerfully determine which _____ you would be most comfortable with.
4. Prayerfully decide on a specific time, event, or activity that would allow you to “take the next step” toward devotion and connection. (If possible, ask someone to go with you.)
5. Join a Growth Group or Ministry Team for a specified, limited time.
6. Be friendly – even if it doesn’t come naturally.
7. Ask God to let you find someone who feels “less connected” than you this week and love them.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think it is important to understand our unity/membership in God's family in order to obey John 13:34?
2. How might "authentic devotion to one another" change how unbelievers view God's people and the Gospel?
3. What are the top two factors that are keeping you from building warmer, deeper relationships in God's family?
4. Discuss when and how you can develop deeper relationships. What most concerns you about taking the "next step?" Why? Pray for each other.