

Key to Refreshing Relationships: Simplicity

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Date: 24 October 2021

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[0 : 00] Well, we do want to carry on our lessons where we started last week. And what relates to that is a little example from my own life.

I'm not one to do a whole lot of cooking. The area of the kitchen is an area that's off limits for me, unless I'm on my own.

And then there's always, you've never tried it, grilled peanut butter and jelly. I won't go any further, but that's a good one. That's one I can make. So I'm thankful that God has provided for me Carol and the ability that she has, the skills that she's developed over the years to bring a variety of ingredients together and make some very tasty dishes.

But I do want to say she hasn't always gotten the results that she wanted. And you tell them, you're thinking, where's he going with this?

This is supposed to be a class on praise and affirmation. Well, I got her permission to use this example here. Well, that was the case at one time years ago when she made a pumpkin pie.

[1 : 15] And what was even more memorable about that situation was that she made the pie to take with us to somebody's house.

And, well, we got there and had a nice meal, visiting with the people, and it came time for dessert. And as she cut a little piece with her fork and put it in her mouth, she knew something was wrong. And it wasn't what she was expecting. And what happened was that she missed including in the pie and making the pie an important ingredient.

What was it? Sugar. It was the sugar. And she said it tasted bland. I didn't like pumpkin pie.

Yeah. Well, I was going to say that, but I know, you know, as a kid, I probably ate mud. But as a kid, she probably never did. And so whatever mud tastes like, it was very bland.

[2 : 25] And graciously, she spoke up, and it didn't make everybody just work their way through it, pretend. Let's all pretend that this is good.

No, graciously, she staffed us all, and we proceeded with something else. So it wasn't sufficient enough that all the other ingredients were in the pie.

But it needed that one particular ingredient, really, to make it a tasty pleasure for everybody involved.

And since then, she has made many pumpkin pies, and they have been very tasty. Well, so it is in our relationships with others.

There are a variety of what I'll call relational ingredients that go into making our relationships such that they are glorifying to God and really a pleasure for us and that contribute to our well-being day by day.

[3 : 35] And one of those ingredients relates or is this whole matter of affirming one another. I got a little bit of an idea last week of what that means.

We're talking about praising and commending others, giving my own definition of verbal or nonverbal acknowledgement of God's grace in or through the person to glorify God and for that person's welfare and refreshment.

And when we do that, really, we're not stealing praise from God by offering up this praise to the other individual. The quote that I had on the screen there prior to class says, The praising of people does not necessarily preclude or exclude the praising of God if the people are commended ultimately for his glory.

God is glorified in us when we affirm the work he's been doing and is doing in the lives of others. So we're really recognizing the workings of God in a person's life.

We see that in their character, hear it in their words, hear it in their actions. So we're recognizing the workings of God in or through someone's life.

[5 : 04] And we're taking the time to acknowledge it, to offer a commendation or a word of praise to the person. And in doing so, that can be glorifying to God and really an encouragement to the person that continue on what they're doing as they face life day by day.

Another quote from Sam Crabtree from his book on affirmations. Good affirmations are God-centered, pointing to the image of God in the person.

So we're understanding and recognizing this could be for a believer or an unbeliever. An unbeliever is still in the image of God and still does good things as a result of God's common grace. It's nothing that commends them to God and gains them favor to God. Well, even us as Christians, it doesn't grant us God's favor. We get that all through Jesus Christ and our union with him. But again, so we're thinking that these commendations, words of affirmation, praise can go to a believer or unbeliever.

[6 : 16] The only commendable attributes in people were given to them. Everything is from God, through God, and to God, so that in all things, including the commendable qualities in people, he might get the glory.

And we do see many examples in the scriptures. Pastor Jason made reference to one last week or a couple different ones, but one that I'm going to repeat this morning.

From Proverbs 31, in recognizing prior to these verses I'm going to read, the writer records the variety of ways, the multitude of ways in which this woman manifests the good qualities, the workings of God in her life, and really as a result of her fear of the Lord.

That was her inner motivation. But even after recognizing all that, the writer offers up some instruction to, whether it's her children or husband or others, of how should we respond to such a person.

And this is what it says. Her children arise and call her blessed. I mean, that's something we need to help our children understand and instruct them how to do that.

[7 : 31] Look at all that mom does, you know, beyond Mother's Day. And we try and encourage them to do that on Mother's Day. But more than once a year, we're helping them recognize, look at what God's done in your mother's life.

You know, have you ever acknowledged that to your mom and what God's doing, so on and so forth? You can work that out in your own mind. So her children arise and call her blessed. Her husband also, he praises her.

And then it's interesting how he gives an example of how a husband could praise his wife. Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.

Oh, man, when was the last time you said that to your wife? In fact, I was sitting in the office working on this lesson, and Carol was in the kitchen.

I can't remember what she was doing, but probably doing something for supper or whatever it was. And so I asked her what she was doing, and she let me know. And so I said, many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.

[8 : 36] So after I went and picked her up off the floor from her shock of hearing that, you know, we had a good laugh. And, yeah, I haven't ever put it quite that way.

Hopefully I've put it other ways, but the whole idea here in the passage is, as husbands, we recognize God's grace in our lives, and we don't ignore our obedience to God's word and recognizing and acknowledging that to our wives.

And as it says in this passage, well, continues, charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord, there's that inner motivation. She's to be praised.

Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate. I mean, we're letting everybody know, what a gift God has given me in this wife.

And words getting around that, boy, you should hear this guy and what he's saying about his wife and how he commends his wife and all that she does in the home, so on and so forth.

[9 : 44] You're getting, again, the idea. So as we recognize the grace of God in her life, really an act of obedience to God that we would commend and give her praise in all that she's doing, so that, again, God would be glorified, but that she would be refreshed.

We want her to be refreshed. You know how it is in the work that you do, whatever you do.

Someone even comes in and says, man, that looks great. We appreciate what you did.

And you might be exhausted, but just those little words of commendation, it's kind of like a nice fresh air blowing on you and a refreshment to hear that.

And that's the way obedience to God's word works in our relationships and how relationships are strengthened. Well, we see lots of examples, other examples beyond the Proverbs 31 and the Scriptures.

God the Father affirms the Son at the baptism of Jesus. When he came up, Jesus came up out of the water. John saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and resting on Jesus.

[10:56] And then in Matthew 3, 17 says, And a voice from heaven said, This is my Son, whom I love. With him I am well pleased. So here's a public affirmation of Jesus from God the Father about Jesus.

And I expect Jesus understood what was going on and heard it as well. And John and possibly others heard this public affirmation too. And the affirmation of the Father's love to Jesus saying, This is my Son.

I mean, that's wonderful. How many times again you've been in public someplace, your Son is with you, someone comes up you know, and you go ahead and talk to them. And before you know it, the conversation's gone on, and you've never acknowledged this person standing next to you.

But what encouragement and refreshment would it be to your Son if you take time, Hey, this is my Son. You know, probably not going to go too much.

In him I'm well pleased, and so on and so forth. But just that acknowledge that makes your Son stand up a little taller from that encouragement that's been offered.

[12:11] And whom I love, it could be. Acknowledging that to your Son, that declaration of love. With him I'm well pleased. That declaration of his approval, the character of Christ, so on and so forth.

I mean, this had been going on from all eternity. This relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And here we see it again, all three here. This affirmation and declaration of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit descending like a dove, the voice of the Father from heaven, Jesus there.

I mean, it's just another outworkings of this love relationship that exists within the Trinity being made known publicly, and at this time being made known publicly through this affirmation and praise and commendation of the Son.

That's all part of strong relationships. And that's why we're looking to make this a real part of our relationship, if it's not already.

So this threefold affirmation between the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Let's go on. And Jesus also commends others, in this case, the faith of the centurion.

[13:29] Remember, the centurion's servant was sick and about to die, and someone had come to Jesus, told him Jesus was coming, the centurion was coming, they met on the way, and the centurion indicated he believed that Jesus could heal the servant with just the spoken word.

You don't even need to come to my house. I've got people under me, and I tell him to go and do this, and they go and do it. And I expect and I believe that you could do the same, in this case, with my servant.

Just speak the word, and I believe that my servant will be healed. Well, if Jesus can be dumbfounded, he was dumbfounded at what he heard from this man, but didn't keep it to himself, but made a public declaration that was certainly to the glory of God and the workings of his grace and of all people, this centurion, and offered up this commendation.

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him. And turning to the crowd, following him, he said, I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel. Wow, what a commendation.

I mean, would that be refreshing for you to hear? It would be to me. Well, not only the Father in Jesus, but Paul himself. We'll go through some of these quickly.

[14:54] We see in the Saints of Rome, in his letter, in the book of Romans, verse 8, he says, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you.

So even just that acknowledgement of what am I doing in regard to my knowledge of you? I'm thanking God for you.

I mean, that in itself is an affirmation and a commendation and refreshment to hear that this person is thankful for me.

But he also offers specific acknowledgement and commendation of things that he sees specifically in their lives because of your faith and how it's being reported all over the world.

Something similar in 1 Corinthians 1, 4-7, and that can be kind of a lesson to us as well. We usually associate the Church of Corinth with, what a mess that these people were in.

[15 : 55] and he had to work hard, I'm sure, to come up with anything that you could praise these people for. Paul saw it. He saw even good in the lives of those people who many of us look upon and say, these people were a mess.

And so, you may have to look a little harder at times in the lives of people, but there will be something that you can praise God for in this person's life that could be an affirmation and encouragement and a refreshment to that person.

And that's what Paul does here. He says, I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way, in all your speaking and in all your knowledge.

Yeah, they had problems in these areas, but there was also room for encouragement and acknowledgement of praise and commendation, thanking God for what God is doing in your life. Yeah, there's some changes that need to happen here, but it's not like you're without fruit totally. There are good things that God's doing in your life, and I want to thank God for that and let you know that I'm thankful for what he's doing in your lives.

[17 : 12] And then also to the saints in Ephesus, for this reason ever since I heard about, again, specifically your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. So we're to getting around.

Love is a manifestation of that affection for God and other people. And so it's manifested through these people and their relationships with one another.

And Paul had heard about it. So he's acknowledging specifically, specific things that he's seen in the life of the person. And that makes the affirmation and commendation much more sincere and, I'll say, receivable that, okay, it's not so general.

Thank God for whatever he's doing in your life. No, I've recognized something specific there. And that's what I'm acknowledging and thanking God for in your life.

Well, let me give you one more example. From 2 Timothy 1, the example of Onesiphorus and Paul. And in this example, it's interesting because we see praise given, our commendation, affirmation given through Onesiphorus, received by the Apostle Paul, but then given back to the Apostle Paul.

[18 : 32] So we see how this cycle can work and ultimately goes to God as we give it. The other person receives it, encouragement, they're encouraged by it, and they're stimulated as well.

So how does it become a habit, a practice among a large group of people? Well, it starts by one person doing it with another person, that person recognizing the refreshment, picking up the exhortation that was given to them through this person's example, practicing it to another, you get the idea.

On and on it goes, and that's the kind of church body or if you want your family to be that way and it's missing in your family, well, you be the one.

You start it and give it to someone and then they can receive it and hopefully they pass it on to another sibling or another parent.

Well, that's what we're seeing here. In verses 16 through 18, May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.

[19 : 43] On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day. You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.

So I expect Onesiphorus, we don't hear of here, but he didn't come silently to the Apostle Paul. I'm sure he came with many verbal affirmations and commendations of what Paul was doing.

I mean, he didn't come there because, I just thought I'd come. He was well connected with the Apostle Paul and his ministry and what God had been doing through Paul's life.

And so he's now coming to Paul offering words of encouragement and affirmation probably. We know Paul was handling things well, but I'm sure Onesiphorus didn't know that in and of himself probably came with words of, you know, don't get worried, don't get discouraged.

God has worked in your life in the past and in this situation I'm sure he's going to work and reach into the lives of other people. We don't know specifically, but we can use some imagination here of what commendation he may have brought to Paul in Paul's time of need here.

[21 : 04] But he did offer some, we expect, verbal affirmation, praise, commendation to Paul, but it also came by way of helping Paul, believing that Paul was a servant of God even though he was in prison.

God was working through Paul and the support and help he provided Paul was indeed that form of affirmation to Paul and commendation of his ministry.

And on Paul's part, he offers the affirmation and praise and commendation to Nesiphorus in his letter to Timothy. He praises in verse 16 Nesiphorus in this letter for his ongoing service to him. He often refreshed me. so it wasn't just a one and done kind of thing. Okay, check that box off. I did that and wonder what's going to be in Sunday school next week.

No, he often did it. This was a way of life for Nesiphorus. He didn't come to Paul expecting just to do one act of refreshment and encouragement, commendation, over and over again.

[22 : 17] He was doing and he didn't see Paul through worldly eyes. He wasn't ashamed of my chains. That's probably what his captors were expecting to happen, that we'll put him in prison, that'll silence his ministry, shame him, who's going to want to be connected with him now?

Nesiphorus. He didn't have that worldly mindset that would keep him from coming alongside Paul, encouraging, offering him this affirmation and praise and commendation that would help him, that would spur him on to love and good works.

Now, he was not ashamed of my chains. He gave up his time and energy to serve Paul. He searched hard to find me until he found me. Yeah, like I said earlier, hey, you may have to work harder in finding something in somebody's life, but, you're not going to quit.

You're going to look for that, understanding that this person has the image of God imprinted on them. Even the common grace of God means there's going to be something there that I could commend in this person's life, so I'm going to look for it and encourage it or come in the door on Sundays and you're going to search and look around and be actively looking for who can I move toward and come alongside and offer a word of encouragement and commendation.

People already did that to me this morning when I came in in general conversation, and that was refreshing, especially when I'm contemplating having to stand up in front of a group of people and talk, and so it spurred me on to, hey, get up here and talk and teach the lesson, leave the results up to God.

[24 : 14] So that's what Paul was doing, what Enesiphorus was doing. We've got to keep going here, but you're getting the idea of giving it, receiving it, and giving it back.

So let's move on and take a look at, well, what might it look like in some specific examples for us in our daily walk.

remember, we're giving a verbal, or it could be a nonverbal acknowledgement of God's grace in or through the person to glorify God, and also for the person's welfare and refreshment.

So it could be, what I've described already this morning that's taken place, just an appropriate greeting, an acknowledgement of the person's presence.

In South Africa, it was very different than from over here in the States, that working in the office there, whatever, on the property, you'd be walking by a person that you would see numerous times, and you know how it is, you walk by a person once, you acknowledge them, and it's not like you keep doing it, but over there, you keep doing it, and offer that acknowledgement, and that is a refreshment, that is a confirmation that all is well here, between me and that person, and that person, I mean, you know what it's like, somebody walks by and maybe they're just thinking of something else, and we're not going to assume something's wrong with me or whatever, but they just might be thinking of something else, but sometimes they're, oh, what's wrong with me, how come they're not encouraging me, you know what it's like, what I'm saying here, so just a simple acknowledgement, and we see that in the scriptures too, 1 Peter 5, 14, greet one another with a kiss of love, 1 Corinthians 16, 20, the same idea, all the brothers here send you greetings, greet one another with a holy kiss, and then a second letter, greet one another with a holy kiss, all the saints send their greetings, so just this, not just me,

[26 : 23] I'm encouraging you to do it, but he's putting it into practice as well, we're all sending our greetings to you, so there's an affirmation, a confirmation that, hey, you people are important to me, and to us, and we want to know that we acknowledge you, we're sending you our greetings, and again, we're recognizing that person is a person made in the image of God, and is different than an inanimate chair of the dog, I mean, even your dog, you come in the house, hey, buddy, how you doing, good to see you, he's jumping around you, and he's scratching behind the ear, not that I'm looking for head, and scratch me behind the ear, when I see you, but you get the idea that we do that with a dog, or whatever, let's do it with one another, offer that appropriate acknowledgement, a simple greeting, and acknowledgement can be a real commendation, and praise, well, a word of

praise, maybe just beyond a simple acknowledgement, or a commendation for a good, either spoken or done, again, the apostle

Paul is our example here, in Philippians chapter 2, with Timothy and Epaphroditus, and I expect when his letter was read in the church, that I expect both of them would have been encouraged, and refreshed, by what they heard Paul had written about them, Timothy, he said, I have no one else like him, he takes a genuine interest in your welfare, I mean, this was something genuine, something specific, Paul had seen in Timothy's life, and he's acknowledging it, and acknowledging it to others, so not only is it an encouragement to Timothy, but also an encouragement to the other people to see Timothy in this vein, and that now presents, makes these people have a listening ear to

Timothy and his ministry, a lot going on here, just by some of these simple acts that we do with and for one another, verse 22, he says, as a son with his father, he has served with me in the work of the gospel, or Epaphroditus, he writes in verse 25, calls him my brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier, you see how that, those kind of terms used about somebody, really brings a relationship together, you're introducing someone to somebody, hey, this is my friend, I want you to meet my friend, I mean, just saying something simple like that is a real affirmation and bringing a relationship together between two people, as Paul was doing here, he says in verse 26, he longs for you, for all of you, so he saw the love of God and Epaphroditus' life and how it was expressed toward others, and he's really commending that about him, he says, welcome him in the Lord with great joy and honor men like him,

I mean, we're concerned of course about, oh, no, no, if I, he's going to get a big head, and, you know, we can't always determine how the person's going to receive it, we're just trying to be obedient to God and offer up unto the person what we've seen God do and others of his people do in making relationships strong, so I'm not going to be so concerned about what might happen or take place in the person's heart or mind, I'm going to do what God wants me to do toward this person and in this relationship and trust and pray that God would use that to produce a greater character and godliness in and through this person, and that's what Paul was really doing here. Well, let's keep going on here. So we're going to be thinking, we see these examples in the scriptures, so we're thinking about, okay, I see these examples in the scriptures, how am I going to put it into practice?

[30 : 57] Now start thinking about all the different places that you meet people. You have relationships with different people. Certainly you have relationships with people at home, people at work, people at church, your neighborhood, good.

Okay, so now start looking at these people as people made in the image of God. People that you have the privilege and responsibility to reflect the image of God toward them, the person of Jesus Christ, the love of God, the love of Christ toward them, in this practice, this relational ingredient of affirmation and praise and commending them.

your spouse, what could you say? This is what I want you to be thinking. Can't come up with anything, go to Proverbs 31 and be ready to catch her if she drops over.

But express it in your own words. You know, I thank God for your faithfulness in the numerous ways you've shown his love to me throughout the years. Even today, just look at what you've done.

I want you to know that, you know, I haven't acknowledged that in the past, but I want to acknowledge that today. Something like that to your spouse, your children.

[32 : 19] Boy, you know, I really thank God that you were the son he gave me. Children are a gift from God. Boy, that kind of affirmation, doesn't matter what kind of character he is.

if he's been doing a lot of bad things, I thank God that he gave you to me. Why, Dad? I wouldn't say it because of how he's making me more like Christ through you.

Because he saw that you were just the person that I needed in my life. And that he gave me the privilege of introducing you to Christ and truths that could help you in your life and transform your life like he's been doing in my life.

So, you just have to think it through yourself. An employee, provide a commendation for good work, a good work attitude. You've seen a co-worker giving an appreciation, acknowledgement for his or her part in your combined effort to make a product.

Maybe the product you're making is you do a certain part on it and they do another part. You know, if they don't do their part well on the part, what happens? All I did was a waste.

[33 : 34] You know, the part goes in the scrap pile. But when they do it well, it reaches the end of the production line and you ever say, man, thanks, you know, for what you did and enhancing that part and that we could make it.

You know, if you didn't do your part, everything I did would be for a loss. So I just want to thank you for what you did and how you're using your skills to help me be successful in making part.

Well, on and on it goes. And we've seen this in our church offering these words of praise and commendation. You know, Kertes and Fishes stood up here recently and thanked God for the ways that you ministered and served them.

And Brooke and Ollie, a letter was written from Pastor Jason last week, thanking God for those that help. You know, just ways in which we're doing it in an ongoing way.

We're just thinking more about it and being more intentional about it. Well, it would be a good time we could break up class and you could come up with all kinds of ideas, but we've got to keep going.

[34 : 44] So what does it look like? It's continuous. Let's make a habit of it. Do it on and on. 1 Thessalonians 4.1 It says, Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God as in fact you are living.

Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus, do this more and more. So keep at it. If you're doing it, keep at it. Do it more and more in all these different environments that I've mentioned. But it's also given and received wisely. We recognize that anything that God gives and instructs us to do can at times be turned and used for selfish purposes.

And we want to avoid that. So when we give it, let's consider and remember, let's do it for God's glory and the other person's welfare.

We're not selfishly motivated. We're not commending someone so that they can get something they want. Oh, you have a nice dress on today, or shirt and jacket, you're straightening your shirt and hoping they say something, oh, yours looks good too.

[35 : 51] And you get the idea here. We're not fishing for a commendation and praise ourselves. We're doing it. This is the characteristic of Jesus Christ.

So I'm going to speak a word of commendation and praise for what I see God doing in this person's life, for God's glory in that person's welfare and refreshment.

And so we see this motivation all throughout the scriptures. I don't have time to read each of these verses, but if you don't have some of these memorized, it's always good to memorize a verse that helps you focus on what's the purpose of life, what's my motive for life, whether therefore we eat or drink.

Whatever we do, we do it all for the glory of God. So have that, the spirit of God draws that to your mind. Do it genuinely. It flows from an actual recognition of a character quality revealed in a person's life, a good action done, or good words spoken by the person.

So don't just make something up. The person will see you right through that. And if you try and come up with something another time, it will fall flat.

[37 : 03] They hardly will even receive it. So like I said, you may have to look hard at times in the life, but there's something you do see. And you might have to even draw their attention to that.

But you're acknowledging that in your life, in that person's life, and there's a real genuineness about what you're saying and doing for the person. But do it proportionally as well.

Balanced with correction. There's times in the scriptures that would be one of those other relational ingredients that are necessary at times. When we see a fall to sin, whatever in someone's life, scriptures encourages to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering.

In Psalms and hymns, spiritual songs, and Colossians 3 passage there. So there will be times that loving correction is needed, but we're going to be careful that that correction times don't become predominant in your relationship so that, you know, a person could be tempted just to give up with that ongoing, constant flow of negative comments and corrections and might tempt them to stop listening to you or just avoid you altogether.

Oh, no, here they come again. You know, I'm just going to duck in here. You know, last night, the thing I need right now is to hear something else that I'm doing wrong. I can never do anything right. You get the idea here.

[38 : 34] So when loving correction is needed, most likely it's going to be received better if you've previously given some commendations and even the commendations and words of praise are predominant really and given more often.

But also give it an appropriate measure. Given too much, it really does lose its refreshing value when someone's thirsty.

You give them a glass of water, not a five-gallon bucket. too much of a good thing, just be too much, and it loses its refreshing value.

But give it also at the appropriate times. The Nesophers discerned it was time for him to go to Paul. You know, it's time. You know, we've been hearing so much about what's going on in this person's life, it's time to go.

It's time that I need to say something. And so those times will be different times. It could be when you see something commendable that they've done or words that they've spoken or after they've put forth great energy in a project or in some service or when they're about to get up and teach a Sunday school class or about to do something and they're having doubts and, hey, you know, God has given you some really good gifts and skills here.

[39 : 57] You can go to that person's house and you can accomplish that project and really be helpful to them. that kind of, so there are all kinds of times. But let me finish up, too.

I know I'm going really fast here. But it also has to, we have to be careful and alert to how it's received. So we're careful how we give it, but we're also going to be careful in how we receive it. If I'm on the receiving of it, I don't want to turn it into a time of praise for myself. You know, Nebuchadnezzar had all kinds of affirmations of his glory and his kingdom out there that he was seeing visually.

He said, look at everything that I've done and the kingdom that I've built. God says, really? Let me help you learn something here.

So he had a seven-year lesson of how great and glorious he was. And at the end of that seven years, he realized, let me pull those words back and now give a proper declaration and affirmation and commendation to the God who is mighty above all.

[41 : 12] So don't turn it into a time of self-praise. Don't make it an idol as one who is on the receiving end of an affirmation. We don't want to turn an affirmation, praise, or commendation into something.

I must have it in order to serve others and carry on. And some of those symptoms might be when I'm not getting an affirmation, we begin to slough off on our quantity or quality of service to others. What's the use? Why do this? Look at everything I've done over and over again. Nobody recognizes what I'm doing, so I quit.

I can slough off just like the other guy down here on the line. He gets away with it. Or we resent others, maybe those we serve.

I do so much for him and he shows no appreciation. Well, from now on, let him do it himself. Why should I work so hard? And he'll see or she'll learn how important I am.

[42 : 17] Now, don't turn it into an idol. Look for some of those symptoms. And so on and so forth. We don't want to become people pleasers and start doing things in order to get what we think we have to have in order to continue on.

Apostle Paul was recognizing that. Am I not trying to win the approval of men or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

So, things to be careful of, don't do. Things to do on the receiving end, receive it with thankfulness. Thanks to God for his grace in you through the other person who prays you.

Thank you, God, for your work of grace in my life that I could even show forth the love of Christ or even use my skills to serve that person in that way. And even to the person, man, thanks for that encouragement.

You really thank God that you're willing to say something like that. That's really been helpful for me. It came just at the right time. I needed it. You get the idea there.

[43 : 27] Well, time is done. So, how are you doing with this relational ingredient of affirmation in your relationships?

Are you a pumpkin pie without the sugar? I hope not. Be that pumpkin pie with the sugar. I'm not trying to make you pumpkin pies, but you understand.

Let's make it our goal this week to really glorify God and reflect the image of Christ in our relationships by making sure this relational ingredient of affirmation, God glorifying, affirmation, praise, and commendation is coming through me and that I'm receiving it well.

And, you know, we'd give you the assignment, you know, come next week with ten examples of how you did it in a variety of relationships that you have, whether it's in your home, your workplace, school for your children, and on and on we go.

And we could certainly offer up praise and commendation to God for his work of grace and helping us be those kind of people in our relationship. So let's plead with him now for that help.

[44 : 47] Well, Father, you've been faithful to help help me to communicate your truth, your counsel that we all need and certainly answered prayer and those in the pews that have appeared to show forth a listening ear.

So I thank you for them and what you're doing in their lives and what you'll continue to do even this week. make us more and more reflect the likeness of Christ that we would be instrumenting in your hands in the lives of other people and we would become a church, a group of people known for those who glorify God in our relationships.

In Jesus' name, amen. Thank you. And that's it.