

“How to Increase the Value of Your Relationships”

Text: Philippians 1:1-8

November 18, 2007

Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church (www.pbpc.org)

Oakland, California

Rev. Chris Geline

PRAY!

We continue our series called “Building Better Relationships”. This morning I want to mention one word that will transform your relationships. This word is also appropriate in that this is the week of Thanksgiving. The word is appreciation.

I. Why should we express appreciation to other people?

- The answer is because it raises their value. That’s what the word means.
- If you have ever bought a home in the Bay Area you know the meaning of the word *appreciation*.
- If you have ever bought a new car and driven it off the lot you know the meaning of *depreciation*.
- Every time you appreciate your wife, your husband, your children, your family, your church, your friends, the people you work with, you raise their value.

The Bible says we’re supposed to do that.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:11, *“Encourage one another and build each other up.”*
- Ephesians 4:29, *“Speak what is helpful for building up others according to their needs.”*

What are their needs? One of the deepest needs is the need to be appreciated.

- I read about a place in England where they have “Dial a Compliment”. If you’re down, you dial that, and somebody on the phone will talk with you and build you up.
- People are hungry, they’re starving for appreciation.

Paul was a pro. He describes three things he appreciates in people and they are things we often overlook.

II. WHAT DO YOU NEED TO APPRECIATE IN PEOPLE AROUND YOU?

1. WE NEED TO APPRECIATE PEOPLE’S LOYALTY

- A. Those are the people who hang in there with you, who have stuck with you, who have been faithful through thick and thin, who could have walked out on you but they stayed. You can count on them. Paul appreciated this in the Philippians.

1. Philippians 1:3-5, 7 *"I thank God for you every time I think of you because of the way in which you have helped me in the work of the gospel from the very first day until now...both now that I am in prison and also while I was free."*
 2. These people were Paul's Booster Club; they supported him; they stood with him for years. Now he's at the end of his life and he's in prison and they're rooting for him, cheering him, saying, 'Go for it Paul!'
- B. The point is, behind-the-scenes people deserve your appreciation. They may not be spectacular; they may not be the superstars; they may not do anything really out of the ordinary, but if they just stick with you, you need to appreciate that.
1. Some of you have a marriage partner who has stuck with you through a lot of junk. Maybe a bankruptcy, maybe a mid-life crises, maybe a health problem; maybe you've stumbled and had an affair; maybe you were just being a jerk but they were quietly supportive. And you need to appreciate their loyalty.
 2. Some of you have been here at PBPC for decades and you have put up with a lot of changes. And you're still here after two years of me and I want to say, "I appreciate you!" When I walk in every Sunday and see you I think, "That's amazing! They came back." And I appreciate you. I really do!
- C. Who do you need to express appreciation to this week who just stuck with you?

2. WE NEED TO APPRECIATE PEOPLE'S DIFFERENCES

- A. Colossians 3:13-15, *"Be patient and tolerant with one another, always ready to forgive if you have a difference with anybody... for you were called to live as one united body and always be thankful."*
1. Don't insist that everybody be like you – think like you, act like you, smell like you, walk like you, do like you. Learn to enjoy people's differences and uniqueness. That's something we don't usually appreciate. We want everybody to be like us. We don't want them to be different. But differences aren't wrong, they're just different. Paul's saying everybody's beautiful in their own way. Thank God we're not all alike. Can you imagine if everybody in the world were like me or you? Thank God, it's Baskin-Robbins 31-flavors. We're all different.
- B. I think it is evidence of God's unique humor that He loves to put opposites together in marriage. I think God enjoys it.
1. If you're married, one of you is an early riser. The other one doesn't believe in God before 11 a.m.!
 2. One of you is daring and impulsive; one of you is cautious and reserved.
 3. One of you loves to talk! You can describe things in detail and you love to talk and talk and talk. And your mate is a bump on the log.

- C. The fact is we are made different. There are no two people alike. We need to learn to appreciate each other's differences. Paul says, "Be patient! Be tolerant! If you have differences, be thankful!"
1. It's OK to be different.

3. WE NEED TO APPRECIATE PEOPLE'S EFFORTS.

- A. 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, "*We always thank God for you...how you put your faith into practice and how your love made you work so hard.*"
1. Circle "...work so hard" – their effort.
- B. Don't take people's efforts for granted, regardless of the results. Don't take their efforts for granted.
1. Those of you who have preschoolers at home – do you ever have "little helpers" around the house? My daughter tries to help around the house (utensils, laundry). She doesn't always get it right. But I appreciate the fact that she's making the effort.
- C. Too often we think things have to be perfect in order to be appreciated. Too often we nag instead of brag. We give pokes instead of strokes. If you wait until things are perfect in your house to appreciate your wife or your husband or your children or the people you work with or whatever, you're never going to appreciate anybody because nobody's perfect.
- D. We need to appreciate people's efforts. When was the last time you thanked your parents just for being your parents. Why the big deal about this? Because it's so important God put it in the Ten Commandments. He said, "*Honor your father and mother.*" He's talking about appreciation.
- E. This one little principle can revolutionize your relationships. Mark Twain once said, "I can go two good weeks on one compliment." We just don't appreciate each other enough. As we move through this series on Building Better Relationships, there's nothing more important than learning to appreciate the people around you. They're not perfect but they need and deserve appreciation.

III. HOW SHOULD I SHOW APPRECIATION?

1. **It needs to be real.** Romans 12:9, "*Don't just pretend that you love others; really love them!*" Don't fake it. Be sincere, genuine.
2. **It needs to be recognizable.** Proverbs 15:33, "*What a joy it is to find just the right word for the right occasion.*" Learn to speak a word of encouragement. Be an encourager, not a discourager. Christians, of all people, ought to be spreading good news, encouraging and lifting people up.
3. **It needs to be regular.** Galatians 6:10, "*Whenever we can we should always be kind to everyone, and especially to our Christian brothers and sisters.*" It needs to be constant, not just once a year but all the time. Why? Because it lifts people up.

IV. Who do you need to be grateful to this week? Projects:

1. Think of at least one person you need to write a letter to, or call and say, "I just want you to know I'm grateful for your loyalty, your effort. You stood by me in that tough time."
2. I challenge you this week to give a compliment to every person in your family every day this week. People blossom under affirmation. They wilt under criticism. If you want to have a more powerful office, affirm your employees. If you want to have a more productive secretary, affirm your secretary. Every time you appreciate the people around you, you raise their value. Become a grateful person.
3. What do you need to appreciate from God? When was the last time you spent 15-minutes just in gratitude to God? He's done so much for you! The Bible says that 2000 years ago God came to earth in the form of a human being. His name was Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ loves you so much. He came to give us a purpose and power for life, the hope of heaven, to give us forgiveness of sin, to give us real meaning. You're not here by accident. God put you here for a purpose. How do I give gratitude to God? By giving myself to Him. He gave Himself for me.

PRAYER

Father, we want to thank You for Your Word, the relevancy and the practicality of it. Help us in our daily lives to make a difference. Help us to be grateful people. Lord, You've said in Your word to do all things without murmuring and complaining but to be thankful that we may shine out as stars in a dark night. Lord, I know if our people, if our lives would show gratitude, it would be so different and a testimony for You in our world. Help us to be appreciative this week. In Jesus' name. Amen.