

Why Not All Relationships Are Created Equal

The whole city was gathered at the door, and He healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons. And He did not let the demons speak, because they knew Him. In the morning, rising up a great while before sunrise, He went out and departed to a solitary place. And there He prayed. Simon and those who were with Him followed Him, and when they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is searching for You" (Mark 1:33-37).

In life, relationships are like drivers on a highway. Unless everyone understands what lane they're in, there are bound to be collisions that lead to disappointment when unspoken expectations go unmet.

Jesus was constantly overwhelmed with people who wanted to get and stay close to Him. Mark 1:21–37 records the relational chaos Jesus had to deal with on what was supposed to be a day off. It was the Sabbath, and He taught in the synagogue, cast a demon out of a dude, "And immediately his fame spread everywhere throughout the region surrounding Galilee" (v. 28).

Not even taking a siesta break for chips and salsa, he "went directly" (v. 29) to Simon's house to heal his dying mother-in-law. Then "In the evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were possessed with demons. The whole city was gathered at the door" (vv. 32-33a).

He had to be exhausted and worn out. Nonetheless, "he healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons" (v. 34).

How did Jesus possibly manage these kinds of complex, needy,

urgent relational demands? Building on the concept of relational lanes, here's how I see a dozen distinctions between various personal, professional and spiritual connections after surveying the relationships of Jesus: enemies, former acquaintances, distant relatives, professionals, neighbors, acquaintances, coworkers, friends, mentors, close friends, close family, the Lord.

Jesus' life was like your life—filled with people who drive in whatever lane they choose and seek to merge into the next lane of importance and closeness in your life. This happened to Jesus, and it happens to you and me.

Wisdom teaches us to treat different people differently. Our problem comes from our tendency to develop a relationship pattern that works for us and then apply it to everyone, only to find it working some of the time and failing some of the time. {eoa}

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