



REAL AND LIVING RELATIONSHIP

Spiritual Connections in a Carnal World

by Matt German

Most people in the world don't understand the true meaning of 'relationship'. Even within the Body of Messiah, not enough believers really seem to understand it. According to the dictionary, 'relationship' is: "1. a connection, association, or involvement. 2. connection between persons by blood or marriage. 3. an emotional or other connection between people." Notice the common word here – connection.

Too often what we see in the Body is a casual 'association' as 'acquaintances', rather than the closeness and connectedness of spiritual family. What we need in the Body today is 'real and living relationship'. This is a term that I heard a number of years ago, and the more time has passed, the more significant the phrase has become to me.

Real – "1. Being or occurring in fact or actuality; having verifiable existence. 2. True and actual; not imaginary, alleged, or ideal. 3. Of or founded on practical matters and concerns. Genuine and authentic; not artificial or spurious. Free of pretense, falsehood, or affectation". Something that is real is not fake, it's not an imitation, nor is it contrived, and there is proof of its existence.

Living – "1. having life; being alive; not dead. 2. in actual existence or use. 3. active or thriving; vigorous; strong". In other words, it's not dead, not dormant, and not on life support; it's something through which LIFE FLOWS.

Love is the key to relationship; in fact, Scripture says that it is the 'bond of perfection' (Col. 3:14), the glue that holds relationships together. Without love, there can be no "real and living relationship".

Eph 4:16 (speaking of Messiah) "from Whom all the Body, being fitted and knit together through that which every joint supplies, according to the working in measure of each individual part, makes the Body increase to the building up of itself in love.

We are joined and knit together within the Body by what every

joint – every relationship or spiritual connection – is supplying. Life has to flow in BOTH directions in order for it to be a healthy connection or relationship. If life is only flowing in one direction – if only one part is contributing to that relationship – then it is not "real and living".

Each of us has different levels of relationship with different people, just as Yahshua did: he had the 'multitudes', then He had the 70, then He had the 12, then He had the 3 (Peter, James, and John). He related to these different groups and individuals in different ways, yet He loved them ALL. As a spouse and parent, you love your husband/wife and kids. You don't love one less than the other, but the way you relate IS different. It's crucial to recognize that there is no "cookie-cutter" method to relationship; we must allow each relationship to be what it is intended to be, which means that we must have the spiritual discernment to recognize what it is intended to be, and then pursue it appropriately.

The bottom line is that love must be expressed (demonstrated) through ACTION.

John 3:16 "For Yahweh so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..."

The ultimate expression of love was shown by Yahweh, the Father of all, in the giving of His Son. "Yahweh so loved that He gave; Yahshua so loved that He came." Sacrificial love doesn't ask "how much is it going to cost me?" It declares, "Whatever it takes." Yahweh gave His first and His best.

John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, just like I have loved you; that you also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Is the Body of Messiah today known for the love that its members have for one another? Unfortunately not, yet Yahshua made it very clear that that was His intent.

Have you ever asked yourself why He said that this was a "new commandment"? Doesn't the Torah teach that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves? Yes, it does. Yet this love of which Yahshua spoke is truly SACRIFICIAL LOVE – it's loving our neighbors MORE than ourselves, preferring one another, putting one another's needs ahead of our own.

The reality is that it's hard to love someone if you never spend time with them! That's true of our relationship with Yahweh and Yahshua, and it's also true of our relationships with each other. Relationship flows out of fellowship. Put another way,

fellowship leads to relationship. If we don't have fellowship with one another, we don't really have relationship, either. According to Scripture, our fellowship with one another actually testifies to the fact that we're walking in the light (1 John 1:7). And we weren't called into just any fellowship, but the fellowship of Yahshua:

1 Cor. 1:9-11 ⁽⁹⁾ God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Yahshua Messiah, our Master. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Now I beg you, brothers, through the name of our Master, Yahshua Messiah, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. ⁽¹¹⁾ For it has been reported to me concerning you, my brothers, by those who are from Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.

Yahweh called us into the fellowship of His Son, and we must do everything we can to prevent divisions, contentions, and strife. That is part of loving one another; love is patient and kind (1 Cor. 13:4).

True relationship goes beyond "what's in it for me"; it asks "how much of ME can I put in it?" Sadly, the 'Church' today still has too many who are takers but not givers.

Why People Don't Relate

There are many reasons that people within the Body don't relate. Here are a few of the key ones:

Fear. We've all been burned, disappointed, and hurt by past relationships. We've also all made mistakes in relationship (even WITHIN the Body). But we must not allow fear, past rejection, hurt, or previous failures to govern our relationships in the Body today, for "Yahweh hasn't given us the Spirit of fear but of power, and love, and discipline" (1 Tim. 1:6-7).

Not Recognizing Spiritual Connections. It requires true spiritual discernment to know who we are to relate to. We must recognize that "Yahweh has set some in the assembly", that He has assigned each of us to a specific place and part of the Body. We must be diligent to find our place – and then lay hold of it tenaciously. And we must always be led by the Spirit in pursuing relationships.

Desire. Unfortunately, far too many believers are content with superficial relationships, both with Yahweh and with others in the Body. But that's NOT the Father's will. In fact, limiting ourselves to superficial relationships is violating one or the other of the 2 greatest commandments – loving Him with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and loving our neighbor as ourselves. We must develop a passion for relationship.

Effort. Real and living relationship takes effort and persistence; it won't just 'happen'. Like anything worthwhile in the Kingdom, we've got to PURSUE it – and it won't be convenient. It will take both parties pursuing it to make it work!

2 Tim. 2:22 "Flee from youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Master out of a pure heart."

Lack of Knowledge. Because we were raised in the world's system and are surrounded by worldly influences, many of us don't really know HOW to relate or what 'real & living relationship' is all about. Many believers grew up in dysfunctional families, so their understanding of relationship is skewed based on those experiences. We must overcome this lack of knowledge by studying to show ourselves approved, recognizing the spiritual importance of relationship in the Body.

Differences. Many believers, even or especially within the Messianic/Hebrew roots movement, won't relate with anyone with whom they don't have 100% doctrinal agreement. This eventually leads to isolationism and can be a very lonely and dangerous place. We must learn to relate regardless of relatively minor doctrinal differences. This doesn't mean compromising core beliefs, but it does mean keeping everything in its proper perspective – and recognizing that none of us has arrived or is walking in total revelation.

Distance. It's harder to relate to someone if you don't see each other on a regular (frequent) basis, but it CAN be done. It just requires making it a PRIORITY. When we truly recognize the importance of relationship, distance becomes a very minor inconvenience. But true and living relationship goes beyond the occasional e-mail, and it certainly extends beyond calling a brother or sister in Messiah only when WE need something. To quote an old song – and at the risk of sounding corny – sometimes it means "I just called to say I love you."

Hebr 10:24-25 "Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good works, not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as you see the Day approaching."

Amplified: And let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities, Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching.

"Real and living relationship" – I believe that this is a Word for today. The Father is calling His people back to real and living

relationship with Him and with each other. May this word provoke YOU to LOVE; to not forsaking our assembling together in Him. May you find in this word the exhortation to pursue relationship with one another.

Challenge yourself to go beyond where you've been in your relationships within the Body. Commit yourself, body, soul, & spirit, to pursuing relationship at a greater level than you ever have before. And watch what Yahweh begins to do in a short amount of time. From this day forward, let us purpose together to pursue "real and living relationship"!

'Prophets and the Prophetic' – a Primer

In the last issue of "Kingdom Vantage Point", we discussed that change is coming to the Body of Messiah. As I stated then, Yahweh has made it clear to me that true change won't come through the pastoral anointing, but rather through the apostolic anointing coupled with prophetic vision. This means that it's going to take apostles and apostolic people, joined with prophets and prophetic people, in order to bring about this change. It's going to require the Body of Messiah to receive and embrace the offices of apostle and prophet – and those called to minister in them.

Like 'apostle' and 'apostolic', 'prophet' and 'prophetic' are terms that scare and/or confuse a lot of believers. But this doesn't have to be so. The words themselves are actually pretty easy to understand. Both the Hebrew and Greek verbs 'to prophesy' – *nabá* and *propheteúo* – literally mean 'to speak forth by divine inspiration'. A prophet is simply a man or woman called and anointed by Yahweh to speak forth His divine will. 'Prophetic' means 'of or pertaining to a prophet or prophecy'. As applied to a local assembly, it indicates a ministry that embraces the ongoing revelatory word of Yahweh by His Spirit through His chosen vessels.

Like the apostle, the prophet is one of the 5-fold ministry gifts, given by Messiah for the perfecting of the saints and the edifying of the Body.

Eph 4:11-13 He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ⁽¹²⁾ for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Messiah; ⁽¹³⁾ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of Yahweh, to a full grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah

Since the Body is not yet perfect, nor attained the "unity of the faith" or grown to "the stature of the fullness of Messiah", all of the 5-fold ministry gifts are still needed – including the prophet.

After delineating many of the spiritual gifts in his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul went on to ask rhetorically, "Are all apostles? Are all prophets?..." (1 Cor. 12:29). Notice his use of the present tense, indicating again that these offices were still applicable in the local assembly at the time he was writing. New Testament examples of prophets AFTER Yahshua's resurrection and ascension include Agabus, Barnabas, Judas, Silas, and others (e.g., Acts 11:27-28, 13:1, 15:32, and 21:10).

What do prophets do?

Hand in hand with the apostle, the prophet is a foundational ministry to the Body, with Yahshua Himself being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:19-20). The prophet is the visionary, the seer, to the local body, and provides unique, accurate, and timely insight into the will and purpose of Yahweh. This includes visions, dreams, and words of wisdom & knowledge.

To Prophecy or Not to Prophecy? That is the question

According to Scripture, we can ALL prophesy (1 Cor. 14:31), but at the same time there is a protocol for how this is to be done within the local assembly (see v29-33). The primary purpose of prophecy in this context is to edify, exhort, and comfort Yahweh's people (v3-4). Just because someone prophesies, this does not make him/her a prophet. Like any of the ascension gifts, a person must be called to the office of prophet. Like any other gift, they will be known by their fruit.

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– Jimmie Black (worship minister)

*"Sing unto Him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise."
(Psalm 33:3)*

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- The Threshold of Passover (03/29/09) – by Ray Boshers
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