



## **The Sixth Law of Relationship**

### **What Makes Relationships Supernatural?**

We all have moments in our lives that change us forever. One of mine was when a pastor friend asked me to go with him to teach at a Christian college in Russia. It would be a two week assignment, but I had to raise \$5,000 to be able to go. This was a huge amount of money for me. My friend gave me \$1,000 to help me get started and thus began my first endeavor at fund raising. It was hard for me, painfully difficult but I sent out more than fifty letters to friends who I thought might help. What stunned me was who gave, sometimes quite large amounts and who chose not to support the ministry. I was befuddled as it was not at all what I expected! God provided far more than I needed and with the extra money raised I was able to buy clothes for the children at an orphanage in Moscow as well as gifts for the students in my class. The teaching assignment completely altered my view of myself, what was my ministry and my life with God. Spiritually it was one of the most exhilarating times of my life. Yet what was most eye opening for me was the number of people who I never thought would ever support the mission trip and who did not have much of a relationship with me at all gave sacrificially and in large amounts. It seemed to me that the intersection between God and the people I knew across time came together in the Lord's way of funding my teaching trip to Moscow.

Once more let us consider the wise words of James the brother of Jesus on relationship and how we are to live with others. **My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong?** (James 2:1-7 NIV)

Here's the sixth law of relationship. Every person in your life is brought to you by God. Relationships are not accidental. God places people into your world for a reason and we may not know why but we can be certain Christ has a purpose in bringing each of them to you. One of the most thought provoking statements made in the Bible is found in the Proverbs. Perhaps you have not taken enough time to consider its ramifications. **In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.** (Proverbs 16:9 NIV) This is of course a huge discussion point, one much more difficult to process than we have time today to attempt. Although we figure out all sorts of strategies for how we will go through our day, God is the one who puts it all together; including who comes in contact with us. God is in charge of it and often the most important part of our day is who we meet and the conversations we have with them. There is no such thing as an accidental encounter, a lucky acquaintance, a chance meeting. It all is orchestrated by God, and He has a reason for us crossing paths with the ones we meet, talk to on the phone and text.

Let's consider an example from the Bible and in some ways it may seem like a negative one, but it certainly was not. Pharaoh was the most hated man among Jews before Moses came and with God's power rewrote

history for the Hebrews. Pharaoh made the million or more Jews living in Egypt slaves and they were worked mercilessly by their cruel taskmasters. It was a dreadful life and Pharaoh was to blame for the poverty and brutality they suffered: men, women, and children. Who would have blamed the Jews for hating Pharaoh and wanting him dead? And yet God put Pharaoh in his place of power and influence for a reason. Listen to what the Apostle Paul notes. **For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."** (Romans 9:17 NIV) The point he makes is that God raised that particular king to his position because the Lord's plan was to reveal His power not just to the people of Israel and Egypt but also the entire world. If a different Pharaoh led Egypt, he might have made life for the Israelites a bit more comfortable and less threatening. Instead, this fire breathing Pharaoh really gave it to the Israelites and as a result, they did not need much nudging to flee Egypt when it was time to begin their journey as a new nation under God. The powerful miracles of the plagues and the parting of the Red Sea were a direct result of having that particular Pharaoh fighting viciously against the Lord and His plan. All of this became a sign forever of God's authority over Creation, the nations and more specifically, the people He chose to bring salvation to the world.

We only have time for one more example from the Bible, but it clearly makes the point needed. Joseph, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, the founder of the Jewish nation was not an "accidental" child by any means, as if any are. The woman who would become his mother, Rachel, was one of two wives Jacob had and she was unable to give birth. Her sister, also married to Jacob had plenty of children but not Rachel. As has been the case for many women across the ages, this created great psychological turmoil for her, and she brought her anger and despair to her husband. **When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I'll die!" Jacob became angry with her and said, "Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?"** (Genesis 30:1-2 NIV) Jacob tossed the demand back on Rachel and reminded her that God is in charge of what children are being born so he wasn't going to take responsibility for Rachel's emotional anguish or accept her blame. Eventually Rachel saw the plan of God. **Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and opened her womb. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son and said, "God has taken away my disgrace." She named him Joseph, and said, "May the Lord add to me another son."** (Genesis 30:22-24 NIV) So let us be clear. Joseph came directly from God. Rachel was thrilled of course. His brothers not so much.

Joseph became the favorite son of their dad Jacob, which for obvious reasons was not received well by his brothers. More than that he seemed arrogant to them, flaunting the favoritism he enjoyed. It got so bad for the brothers that when the opportunity came, they famously sold Joseph into slavery. They then covered up their crime by pretending to their dad he had been eaten by a wild animal. Imagine the heart break that brought Jacob! What they missed was that Joseph was a part of their lives because God put him there. They lost him once they gave up on him. Lost his life with God. Lost his spiritual influence. It was much later that the brothers discovered what a great man their brother was when a devastating famine in their land forced them to go to Egypt to try and buy food, only to discover that the very same Joseph they had rejected was now the one person who could authorize them gaining food to feed their families and prevent starvation.

You may not know why God brings certain people to you and may even wish they weren't there like Joseph's brothers. Some are irritating, frustrating and even big problems for you. I find it fascinating to consider that God makes it clear that He puts husbands and wives together and joins them supernaturally. **For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.** (Genesis 2:24 NIV) Jesus underscores this when He insists, **"Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."** (Mark 10:9 NIV) If this is true, that God brings together husbands and wives, why would it not be the case also that the Lord puts together friends, family members and all sorts of relationships? Never underestimate the likelihood that you are with someone because God has done it and He has a reason for you to be together. Remember this is true also in relationships. **And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.** (Romans 8:28

NIV) If it is the case of the stuff that happens during the day, how much more so must this be when God puts various people on your pathway!