

## RENEWING YOUR RELATIONSHIP BRAIN

### STARTING OFF

- ✓ It's a **YOU** thing.
- ✓ It's a **CHOICE** thing.
- ✓ It's a **DIFFICULT** thing.

### TRANSFORMING YOUR RELATIONAL BRAIN

- (1) Choosing blessing means **FORMING NEW PATHS**.
- (2) To empathize, seek to **UNDERSTAND** and practice **ACTIVE LISTENING**.
- (3) To live in harmony, give **GENEROUS EXPLANATIONS** for the gap.
- (4) To avoid a vengeful heart, remember **HURT** people **HURT** people.
- (5) You are 100% **RESPONSIBLE** for, and **ACCOUNTABLE** to, the stewardship of your relationships.

## Food for Thought for the week of June 25, 2017

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

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1. Christopher pointed out that relational growth doesn't just happen automatically. It takes a regular commitment to make good choices and to put ourselves in a place where God can grow us. What do the following verses tell us about our role and God's role in the process of spiritual and relational transformation?

**Isaiah 64:8** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>8</sup> Yet you, LORD, are our Father.

We are the clay, you are the potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.

**1 Corinthians 3:1-9** *New International Version (NIV)*

*The Church and Its Leaders*

<sup>1</sup> Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup> I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. <sup>3</sup> You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? <sup>4</sup> For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings?

<sup>5</sup> What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. <sup>6</sup> I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. <sup>7</sup> So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. <sup>8</sup> The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. <sup>9</sup> For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27** *New International Version (NIV)*

*The Need for Self-Discipline*

<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. <sup>25</sup> Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. <sup>26</sup> Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. <sup>27</sup> No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

**2 Corinthians 3:17-18** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup> And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

**Philippians 3:12-16** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. <sup>13</sup> Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

*Following Paul's Example*

<sup>15</sup> All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. <sup>16</sup> Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

2. This weekend Christopher talked about the role of active listening in empathy. How do the following verses add to your understanding of active listening?

**James 1:19** *New International Version (NIV)*

*Listening and Doing*

<sup>19</sup> My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,

**Isaiah 50:4** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>4</sup> The Sovereign LORD has given me a well-instructed tongue,  
to know the word that sustains the weary.

He wakens me morning by morning,  
wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.

**Proverbs 12:15** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>15</sup> The way of fools seems right to them,  
but the wise listen to advice.

**Proverbs 17:28** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>28</sup> Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent,  
and discerning if they hold their tongues.

**Proverbs 18:2** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>2</sup> Fools find no pleasure in understanding  
but delight in airing their own opinions.

**Proverbs 18:13** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>13</sup> To answer before listening—  
that is folly and shame.

**3.** While we are responsible for and accountable to be good stewards of our relationships, we can't do it on our own. The Holy Spirit was given to provide us the power to live the Christian life and maintain godly relationships. What do you learn about the difference in our relationships with and without the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:19-25?

**Galatians 5:19-25** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>19</sup> The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; <sup>20</sup> idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions <sup>21</sup> and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.