



# LOVE PEOPLE BUILD OTHERS

## SPIRITUAL OUTCOME DEFINED

Approaches others with both grace and truth, knowing when to encourage and when to correct with the best interest of the other in mind.

## SPIRITUAL OUTCOME DESCRIBED

In Exodus 34, we're given this scene of the very presence of God passing before Moses declaring, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished..." (34:6-7). God often refers to Himself in this way, as merciful, gracious, and compassionate toward humanity, while simultaneously just and faithful to not allow evil to go unpunished. God's character is full of grace and truth. For us, though, this combination is extremely difficult to balance and can be confusing to learn how to live out with others.

On the one hand, we hear Christ say, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged" (Matthew 7:1). On the other hand, James tells us, "Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins" (James 5:20). With these two passages in mind, consider John's description of Jesus. Very briefly, he tells us Jesus was filled with "grace and truth" (John 1:14). We all know the pain of being corrected. It's not at all pleasant, and yet Proverbs tell us that if we "rebuke the wise ... they will love you" (Proverbs 9:8) and that the "wounds of a friend can be trusted" (27:6). Building others up involves encouraging them as well as helping them see when they are in the wrong. This takes prayer and thoughtfulness. We must be aware of our own perspective and motives as we consider the perspective and needs of our friends. To neglect their well-being by doing nothing is unloving, but to neglect their well-being by being careless or overly aggressive is unloving as well, and often destructive. Real love contains both Grace and Truth.

*"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."*

*- Winston Churchill*

## EVIDENCE OF THIS SPIRITUAL OUTCOME IN A PERSON'S LIFE

- Experiences a growing concern for other believers over being right or being liked.
- Has relationships with other believers where grace and truth are both given and received.
- Is not shocked by or blind to the sin of others.
- Can acknowledge the reality of one's own sin and the depth of Christ's grace in one's life.

## GUIDANCE

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

### **1 SAMUEL 12:23-25**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Who are you burdened for? Who do you talk with God about? For whom do you feel responsible or called to help?

### **PROVERBS 9:8, 15:12, 15:31**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Have you ever sat across from someone who gave you some constructive criticism that was difficult to hear, but you were able to receive it? Why was that? How well do you receive instruction and correction from others?

**PROVERBS 26:4-5**

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well do you discern a person's readiness to hear your input? Do you consider his or her disposition? Do you over-consider it?

**MATTHEW 7:1-6**

Observations:

Discernment Question: When you seek to correct others, do you practice first examining your own heart for impure motives or unacknowledged sin?

**EPHESIANS 4:14-16, 25**

Observations:

Discernment Question: How have you experienced the importance of speaking the truth to others? How have you seen it done in love and without? How does it affect the Body of Christ (His Church) as a whole, whether positively or negatively?

## **1 THESSALONIANS 5:14**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you more of an exhorter or an encourager? What about this is good? What about this is challenging?

## **1. PETER 3:15**

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well are you able to explain your hope in Christ? Do you do so with gentleness and respect? Are you so timid that you rarely talk about your hope in Christ? Or, are you more overbearing with your faith and need to cultivate a listening ear?

## **JAMES 5:19-20**

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do you feel about the responsibility we have to bring back those who are falling away from truth and into sin? Is there anyone God has put in your life who needs your help to come back from their wandering?

## NEXT STEPS

What are practical next steps you will do based on what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture about building others up? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life, as well.

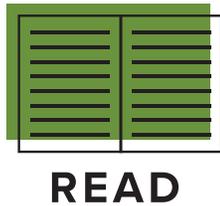
## MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE

### **Hebrews 10:24-25, NIV**

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

### **James 5:19-20, NIV**

*My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.*



# LOVE PEOPLE BUILD OTHERS

## TODAY'S ERA

Increasingly, we live in an era resistant to the idea that one person should “fix” another. Instead we are to “accept” people. We let people do what they want to do.

In previous eras, fixing another person, challenging them, telling them they needed to change, was much more accepted. This doesn't mean those who received correction welcomed it; but it does mean correction was more commonly given.

Today's era, with our reluctance to correct, has many strengths. With acceptance on the rise, petty bickering declines. People are increasingly able to be honest with their views, their opinions, and maybe most importantly, their struggles and wounds. Pretense has decreased. Authenticity has increased. Increasingly, we can all be honest about what's really going on in our lives.

The increased disposition toward acceptance has its challenges as well. What do we do when someone we love is destroying himself with an addiction? Do we let culture's disposition toward acceptance keep us from lovingly encouraging qualitative change in that person's life?

Or how about when relationships clash? This doesn't just happen with people we don't like. It happens with people we genuinely and deeply love. Are we to ignore the challenges another person brings to a friendship or a marriage because we fear offending our culture's bias toward acceptance? Is that authentic and loving, or a pretense all its own?

We definitely shouldn't pretend all is well when it isn't.

Add to these challenges the teachings of Scripture. We certainly don't want to force our views on others — that doesn't work. But Scripture says a lot about speaking truth and talking with others about following Christ. Consider Paul's example: *“Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others”* (2 Corinthians 5:11a).

And a few lines later we read, *“We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God”* (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Paul was doing what Jesus told us to do. We are to *“make disciples of all nations”* (Matthew 28:19). Little could be more offensive in today's world. Who are we to tell others, especially those from another nation or culture, that they should become Christ-followers? Such thinking is in stark contrast to the mood of the day, which can cause one of two reflexes.

For some, they'll reject culture's message entirely. Scripture tells us to do something, and we should do it. If we have truth, we speak it forthrightly in any and every situation.

For others, they'll reject Scripture. They believe our era has learned from the mistakes of the past. Why accept these antiquated teachings?

But do these two reactions present a false choice? Are there aspects of the current era's bent that are, in fact, a correction to the past? Do some of these corrections actually align with Scripture rather than reject it? Every era has its blind spots. Maybe we can take a step back from it all in hopes of discovering a way of life that truly *loves people*.

## TENSION

There is a tension — a distinction — we must carefully consider. On the one hand, we know there are times when healthy encouragement, instruction, or exhortation must be given to a friend. To neglect this can be unloving — even irresponsible — when we see genuine need in a friend’s life. At the same time, we instinctively know the importance of respect for others. Just as we are in process, we must respect the process of others. Consider two statements:

If we exhort without respecting, we are overbearing.

If we respect without exhorting, we are irresponsible.

One of Scripture’s most direct commands to fathers states this: *“Fathers, do not exasperate your children ...”* (Ephesians 6:4). It’s an interesting command. Why give it to dads? Most likely because dads are inclined to nag their kids. The best of intentions can leave kids exasperated and embittered. For a dad, respecting his children means remembering they are in process and they’re going to make mistakes.

But slide too far away from exhortation, and a different error is made. The full context of the command to fathers is telling: *“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord”* (Ephesians 6:4).

Dads are commanded to train their kids. As they grow, children need guidance. Not only for the many competencies we all need in life, but also in what it means to follow Christ. This does not mean children won’t make their own decisions about matters of faith; we respect those. But intentionally training the next generation can protect them from making many of the mistakes we ourselves made.

Here are some other examples. College roommates know each other well. Encouraging and exhorting each other is a loving thing to do; nagging each other is not. Co-workers see things in one another they will not see in themselves. Helping sharpen a co-worker’s effectiveness is both generous and loving, especially in competitive situations. A line can be crossed, though, when helping a co-worker becomes belittling or controlling. It’s critical we dig deeply into both sides of this tension in hopes of discovering Scripture’s true wisdom.

## RESPECT

Jesus was the master at loving those whose values differed deeply from His own. An accusation made against Him is quite telling.

*The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.” But wisdom is proved right by her deeds (Matthew 11:19).*

This description is in stark contrast to the religious leaders of Christ’s day. Jesus lived in a time when *exhortation* ruled, and separation from those who had different views was the common practice. In the midst of this culture, Jesus was known as a “Friend of sinners.” Not only was He unafraid of those who differed from Him, but He respected them and displayed genuine love for them by spending time with them. Even more, their time together was not Him relentlessly pounding them with truth. He dined with them ... so much so that some mistook Him for a glutton and a drunkard.

Paul carried on Jesus' example in many ways. One of the clearest instances in Scripture is when he stepped into the city of Athens. Paul was Jewish and well-versed in Scripture. He knew the numerous warnings in Scripture against idolatry. The second of the Ten Commandments reads: *"You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them ..."* (Exodus 20:4-5). To craft an idol and bow down to it was deeply offensive to the Jewish perspective. *"While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols"* (Acts 17:16).

We know this feeling. It's the feeling we get when we're convinced friends have been duped by deception. They're engaging in something — a relationship, a practice, a belief — that we're convinced is destructive. Love drives our distress because we want them to be OK. We want better things than the destructive harvest they will reap from the seeds they are sowing. What does Scripture teach us to do? What did Paul do with the people in Athens?

With his Jewish training in mind, consider Paul's opening comments to the Athenians. *"...People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious"* (Acts 17:22).

He didn't open by blasting their idolatry. He didn't jab his finger in the air or declare them deceived. Rather, he lightly commended them. Yes, he disagreed with the object of their devotion, but he respected the fact that they were a devoted people.

Paul's entire comments reveal more. As he gently instructs, he doesn't reference the Scriptures he knows so well, but instead he quotes their own philosophers and poets. Hear the following carefully.

*From one man [God] made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. "For in him we live and move and have our being ..."* (Acts 17:26-28).

That last line, *For in him we live and move and have our being*, is from the Cretan writer, Epimenides. It comes from the poem, "Cretica," written 600 years before Christ; and in the poem, the statement comes from the mouth of Minos, the son of the Greek god, Zeus. Paul, who passionately advocates for the Son of God, is doing so by quoting the son of Zeus.

Paul then goes on to quote a second poet. *"... As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring'"* (Acts 17:28).

This second quote comes from a Cilician poet named Aratus who wrote, *"It is with Zeus that every one of us in every way has to do, for we are also his offspring."* Knowing Paul, this is stunning. Paul references a quote about Zeus to teach a truth about God. We know enough about Paul to know his doing so as not an endorsement Zeus, but this shows the extent to which Paul goes to respect his listeners and find common ground.

Paul's example is reflected in the writing of Peter. Peter tells his readers, *"... Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect"* (1 Peter 3:15).

So both Peter and Paul follow Jesus' lead. They don't wag their fingers in the faces of those who differ. They don't talk down to people or belittle their way of living. Rather, they respect them. But what about the other side of the tension? What about the need to exhort, instruct — and yes, at times, correct?

## EXHORTATION

Let's consider exhortation and correction from the perspective of the recipient. We've all received the correction of another. Scripture, and Proverbs in particular, says a great deal about the display of both wisdom and foolishness related to receiving the exhortation of others. Consider the following carefully.

*"Whoever heeds life-giving correction will be at home among the wise" (Proverbs 15:31).*

*"Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you; rebuke the wise and they will love you" (Proverbs 9:8).*

*"Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is the rebuke of a wise judge to a listening ear" (Proverbs 25:12).*

*"Mockers resent correction, so they avoid the wise" (Proverbs 15:12).*

These observations reflect the struggle we experience when we receive the correction of others. On the one hand, we value the wisdom and insight of others. We benefit from it and want it.

On the other hand, instruction from others is a sensitive matter. We don't walk through life inviting rebukes. We've received both humble and haughty correction. When done well, we may flinch, but we instinctively know it's good. When done poorly, we react no matter the truth or falsehood of what is being delivered.

With that in mind, consider a reality we must carefully consider: *"A person's own folly leads to their ruin, yet their heart rages against the Lord" (Proverbs 19:3).*

Foolishness leads to ruin. We've seen it. We've experienced it. If we ourselves are racing toward destructions, we want a friend to tap us on the shoulder and point us toward a better way. Initially we may react negatively. We may brush the instruction aside. But in our quiet moments we ponder, *Maybe I should listen ... maybe I should consider the counsel. Is there something to it?* And sometimes we humbly change course and are grateful for the courage of the person who spoke up.

Part of us does believe in exhortation. We believe it because we know that there are times we need it. When done well, we know correction is an act of love.

What does Jesus say about bringing correction?

*Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

*Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*

*Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces (Matthew 7:1-6).*

Three paragraphs with three big ideas.

First, when correction is coupled with judgment, it is rejected. Friends will be more receptive to correction when it's done with humility. Correction is not synonymous with judgment. That's an implication of the first paragraph of Jesus' teaching and the first big idea of this teaching.

Second, correction that comes from a person's experience is far more welcomed and effective than correction that comes from textbook knowledge. Before helping a friend with his or her "speck," we're to get the "plank" out of our own eye. Not only does this protect us from being a hypocrite, but it also offers a helpful starting point. Others are far more interested in our exhortations when they know how our convictions have brought hope and healing in our own lives first.

And third, we must recognize that some are simply not ready. Because of this, Jesus teaches to *"not give dogs what is sacred"* and to *"not throw your pearls to pigs."* This is strong language, but it's reality. Receptivity matters. When

we rush to bring correction, we may do more harm than good by turning our friends off because they've "heard it all before."

Proverbs observes the difficult spot this puts us in. *"Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes (Proverbs 26:4-5).*

What is the command in this passage? First, we read, *"Do not answer a fool according to his folly."* But then we read, *"Answer a fool according to his folly."* So which is it? Are we to address the folly of the fool, or are we to keep our mouths shut and let them be?

The contradictory commands make it clear that this isn't a command at all, but an observation about reality. It's describing the challenging situation we may find ourselves in when those we love are committed to dangerous ways. On the one hand, we know when someone's not ready to hear our thoughts. When Scripture says that if we answer a fool according to his folly, we will be just like him, we get it. Our conversation with that friend will leave us looking and feeling like a fool.

But to not address the issue means the person living in foolishness continues on and is "wise in his own eyes." When we love this person, it's extremely challenging. We're stuck. If we act, it will backfire; if we don't act, he or she continues on. When Jesus teaches to not cast our pearls before swine, He seems to be saying there are times it's best to keep our mouths shut, pray, and wait.

With that said, we might think that's a lot to process when considering bringing exhortation. Is it really worth it? Is this something we should really do? These questions lead us to think about opportunity and responsibility.

## **OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

James addresses the opportunity:

*... If one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins (James 5:19-20).*

Samuel addresses the responsibility:

*As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will perish (1 Samuel 12:23-25).*

When it comes to exhortation, we have both an opportunity and a responsibility. When we lovingly come alongside others, we may be *saving them from death and covering over a multitude of sins*. To do so is a tremendous act of love and often is our responsibility. As prophet to Israel, Samuel recognized this. To neglect prayer for his people, to neglect teaching and exhorting them, for him would be rebellion. God had given him responsibility; he would persevere in fulfilling that responsibility to the end of his days, no matter how welcomed or rejected he'd be.

## REVEALING

Stewarding the tension between exhortation and respect reveals a great deal about ourselves and the centrality of our relationship with God. To walk this tension well, we absolutely must be centered. Courage is needed at all points on the spectrum.

It takes courage to exhort. When we step into another person's life, share our own story, and do our best to love him or her by offering guidance, we make ourselves vulnerable. Will they be offended? Will they push back? Will they misunderstand our intentions? This is the risk we take, but it's worth it.

It also takes courage to respect those who differ from us, to find common ground, and to listen carefully to a range of lifestyles and views. To do so puts our own convictions to the test. It makes us vulnerable to correction or to our own perspectives being challenged. We will be misunderstood by those who think we should be more dogmatic, just as Jesus was.

People who are centered on God will have the much-needed conviction that frees them to engage others despite the risk. If we are going to authentically love people, we cannot worship people. We cannot be controlled by their opinions and perspectives. In no place is this seen more clearly than when we seek to be catalysts for good in the lives of others.

But what if we did it? What if we found the wisdom and the courage to both exhort and respect, instruct and accept, speak and listen? The **apply** exercise associated with this spiritual outcome is designed to help us with these very things.



# LOVE PEOPLE BUILD OTHERS

The following pages walk you through an exercise. You will thoughtfully and prayerfully consider the lives of those around you. You will then consider how you can best build them up by living out the tension of both respecting and exhorting them.

Make sure you've finished the reading associated with this **Spiritual Outcome** before working this exercise.

## **FIRST STAGE: IDENTIFY PEOPLE**

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Use the following categories and questions to consider a friend, spouse, child, co-worker, neighbor, boss, etc. What do you wish for these people? If you're concerned about others reading this, use abbreviations or codes; but don't let this inhibit your boldness. Get it all down.

- Who is stuck in a destructive pattern of living? Who is engaging addictive behaviors he or she either sees or doesn't see?
  
- Who in your life is difficult to love or hard to connect with?
  
- Who is breaking your heart? Who makes you think, "If only he/she would \_\_\_\_\_"?
  
- Who is far from God? Who is rebelling against God? Who is seeking God, but has yet to trust God?

## **SECOND STAGE: SEEK WISDOM**

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In this stage, use the following pages to thoughtfully seek wisdom for the next steps.

### **Step 1:**

Choose two to four people and write one name each at the top of the worksheets that follow. Don't just do this randomly. Pick the most pressing or the names you sense God wanting you to address. These may be people you're most resistant to addressing; don't let fear drive you.

### **Step 2:**

Use the questions provided to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider how to both exhort and respect each person. Repeat this for each of the two to four people. If you'd like, you can continue this exercise with all the names on your list; but at a minimum, do so for the two to four you initially chose.

**PERSON #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Respect**

God's view of person #1:

- What does God value about this person?
  
- What does God want for this person? (Guard against imposing your own wants.)

Your view vs. God's view:

- Where do your view and God's view of this person differ?

What needs to change:

- What, if anything, needs to change about your view of this person? What actions could you take to communicate respect and value for this person? How would making these changes affect your relationship?

**Exhort**

God's view of person #1's transformation:

- What do you suspect God wants to be different about this person's life?

Seeking God's wisdom and direction:

1. Prayerfully consider: Is this person receptive?

*Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces (Matthew 7:6).*

**If yes** → Continue on to #2.

**If no** → Consider how you might pray for this person, serve this person, or build a relationship with this person. Skip to #4 below to write your thoughts.

**If uncertain** → Ask God for wisdom and insight. Continue on to #2.

2. Prayerfully consider: Do you have enough relational equity with this person to be heard? Is there trust between you? Have you humbled yourself in the relationship by sharing your own struggles and spiritual journey? Have you served this person?

*Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye (Matthew 7:3-5).*

**If yes** → Continue on to #3.

**If no** → Focus on building relational equity and trust with this person first. Humble yourself by sharing your own struggles and spiritual journey. Find ways to serve him/her. Skip to #4 and write your next steps with this in mind.

3. Prayerfully consider: What does God want me to share with this person? In what tone or attitude does He want me to share it? Do I feel offended by the person? If so, work through this with God first so you can approach the person in love. Am I critical of this person? If so, confess this to God and ask Him to free your heart from judgment, so you can approach this person with mercy and grace.

*Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you (Matthew 7:1-2).*

4. Note next steps and wisdom God gives you:

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**PERSON #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Respect**

God's view of person #1:

- What does God value about this person?
  
- What does God want for this person? (Guard against imposing your own wants.)

Your view vs. God's view:

- Where do your view and God's view of this person differ?

What needs to change:

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**PERSON #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Respect**

God's view of person #1:

- What does God value about this person?
  
- What does God want for this person? (Guard against imposing your own wants.)

Your view vs. God's view:

- Where do your view and God's view of this person differ?

What needs to change:

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**If no** → Focus on building relational equity and trust with this person first. Humble yourself by sharing your own struggles and spiritual journey. Find ways to serve him/her. Skip to #4 and write your next steps with this in mind.

3. Prayerfully consider: What does God want me to share with this person? In what tone or attitude does He want me to share it? Do I feel offended by the person? If so, work through this with God first, so you can approach the person in love. Am I u critical of this person? If so, confess this to God and ask Him to free your heart from judgment, so you can approach this person with mercy and grace.

*Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you (Matthew 7:1-2).*

4. Note next steps and wisdom God gives you:

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**PERSON #4:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Respect**

God's view of person #1:

- What does God value about this person?
  
- What does God want for this person? (Guard against imposing your own wants.)

Your view vs. God's view:

- Where do your view and God's view of this person differ?

What needs to change:

- What, if anything, needs to change about your view of this person? What actions could you take to communicate respect and value for this person? How would making these changes affect your relationship?

**Exhort**

God's view of person #1's transformation:

- What do you suspect God wants to be different about this person's life?

Seeking God's wisdom and direction:

1. Prayerfully consider: Is this person receptive?

*Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces (Matthew 7:6).*

**If yes** → Continue on to #2.

**If no** → Consider how you might pray for this person, serve this person, or build a relationship with this person. Skip to #4 below to write your thoughts.

**If uncertain** → Ask God for wisdom and insight. Continue on to #2.

2. Prayerfully consider: Do you have enough relational equity with this person to be heard? Is there trust between you? Have you humbled yourself in the relationship by sharing your own struggles and spiritual journey? Have you served this person?

*Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye (Matthew 7:3-5).*

**If yes** → Continue on to #3.

**If no** → Focus on building relational equity and trust with this person first. Humble yourself by sharing your own struggles and spiritual journey. Find ways to serve him/her. Skip to #4 and write your next steps with this in mind.

3. Prayerfully consider: What does God want me to share with this person? In what tone or attitude does He want me to share it? Do I feel offended by the person? If so, work through this with God first, so you can approach the person in love. Am I u critical of this person? If so, confess this to God and ask Him to free your heart from judgment, so you can approach this person with mercy and grace.

*Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you (Matthew 7:1-2).*

4. Note next steps and wisdom God gives you:

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## NOTES

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