



Links Players

RELATING TO GOD 1: RELATIONSHIPS

“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.” (John 15:15, NIV)

WHETHER OR NOT YOU’D CALL YOURSELF ONE OF JESUS’ PEOPLE, you’ve likely seen the bumper sticker or heard the assertion, “It’s not about religion; it’s about relationship.” And maybe you’ve wondered who thinks this is helpful. First of all, what is *it*? And secondly, you’re not so sure you want another relationship.

Forget the golf swing. If you’re looking for something truly complicated, it’s relationships. At the golf course, they’re not so bad—but those are *friendships*. It’s the relationships at work and in your neighborhood, at home and even at church that can really test your mettle. Maybe you’re being reminded of why dogs are called “man’s best friend.” You may have to clean up after them in the yard, but apart from that they’re on your side.

Relationships are not always easy, but they are vital. By design, God put us in a place of dependency—on him and on others. And by design, he has created others to need us, too.

But what about our relationship with God? Is it only one-sided, or do we have something to give to him? We sure do! For the next ten Fridays, we will explore our relationships (the varieties of our connection) and our relationship (the quality of our connection) with God.

Let’s begin by recognizing several different relationships we might have with God on the basis of Jesus’ words in John 15. In a single sentence, Jesus explores the connection of a servant and a master, two friends, and a teacher and a learner. All of these are ways we might find ourselves relating to God. Though he moved his disciples from the level of servant to the level of friend, we might still serve him, just as he said he came to serve us. We might also recognize the intimacy of friendship, where we talk with him about things we share with few others. And we can look to him as a teacher, one who passes on to us the things we need to know about life in his kingdom.

When we consider these three relationships, we birth little hesitancy in any of them. They are familiar connections, made so by our life experiences. They should set us up to see how we relate to God and how we might get better at doing so.

Opening questions How many of your closest friends play golf? What other friendships are important to you? And what other relationships apart from friendship help you get along in life?

READING John 15:1-4; John 15:15; James 2:23

Remaining in relationship (John 15:1-4)

What metaphor did Jesus use in this passage for a fruitful relationship with him? How does this passage stress the importance of staying in relationship with Christ? How have you found this to be best achieved in your life?

Points of connection with Jesus (John 15:15)

In today’s context, how do you see yourself best able to...

serve God ? _____

walk with him in friendship? _____

learn from Christ? _____

God’s friend (James 2)

What would it mean to you to be called God’s friend? How is it possible?
