

Cooperative, Interdependent Working Relationship, Part 2

The Kingdom and the Covenant, Session 2.08

Introduction

- Previous session: Working with your covenant partner, with him as the expert consultant, relying on his direction, expertise, wisdom & judgment

Covenant Relationship

- A covenant is a loving, enduring relationship in which each partner focuses on the other's well-being and success, including what they deserve, need or want.
- Covenants require partners to work compatibly with each other, communicate & be genuinely interested in the other's thoughts & feelings
- Engage your covenant partner in what you do
 - Is it possible God speaks to you with suggestions about what you're doing?
 - Communication is essential in any relationship
 - Col 3:15(a), "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts."
 - "rule" (Gk, v, *brabeuo*): (1) rule, control; (2) to be the factor determining an outcome (as if arbitrating)
 - Father speaks to us in variety of ways
 - God is your spiritual Father, also your covenant partner
 - Why not ask his opinion, even if you already "know" what to do?
 - The tasks we do are contexts God uses to do his work in us, which includes improving our relationship with him

Collaboration

- Topic: Working with God as a partner, considering him an expert consultant
 - collaborate: to work together, especially in joint intellectual effort
- Jer 33:3, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."
 - "call" (Heb, v): to make an appeal or request for help or information
 - "answer" (Heb, v): to react verbally as to a question, or with some other kind of response
 - "great" (Heb, adj): (1) an act held in esteem and honor; (2) great in magnitude or extent; (3) important
 - "unsearchable" (Heb, adj/verb): not capable of being reached or grasped
- If we ask him, he can show us things we could never find on our own, no matter how much effort we put into it because they're unsearchable
 - How does this apply to everyday life?
 - Can you describe such an experience?

- Mt 7:7-8, ⁷ “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”
 - “ask” (Gk, v, *aiteo*): to ask for, to demand, to plead for
 - “seek” (Gk, v, *zeteo*): to try to find, get or reach something
 - “knock” (Gk, v, *krouo*): to rap with the knuckles to signal one’s presence
 - all are present, continuing tense
 - Persevere; keep asking, seeking & knocking until you get a response
 - Jas 1:4, “Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”
 - Perseverance is essential to our spiritual growth
 - character is a function of your spirit
 - God always does what’s best for us & works everything we experience for our good
- Jas 4:2(c)-3, ² “You do not have, because you do not ask God. ³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”
 - “ask” (Gk, v, *aiteo*), same word & grammatical tense as in previous verses
 - If you are asking but God’s not responding, what is a potential problem according to verse 3?
 - Self-centeredness violates covenant!
- 2 Th 1:11, “With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.”
 - “power” (Gk, n, *dynamis*): controlling influence or ability
 - “fulfill” (Gk, v, *pleroo*): to satisfy, complete, make full (as if filling a container completely)
 - “purpose” (Gk, n, *eudokia*): a delightful, fixed intention of benevolent favor
 - “act” (Gk, n, *ergon*): (1) work, deed; (2) work that a person is obliged to perform for moral or legal reasons
 - “every act prompted by your faith” (NIV)
 - “every work of faith” (ESV, NASB95, NKJV, etc.)
- We act in faith & he produces extraordinary results, more than we could accomplish on our own because they’re the result of his power, which is beyond our ability & comprehension

CIwR (cooperative, interdependent working relationship)

- “Father, show me what you want us to do today and how to do it. I want and need to foster our cooperative, interdependent working relationship so we can work together effectively. Holy Spirit, please guide everything I do. What I do today can affect people now and for eternity.”
- This absolutely requires us to:
 - Know his voice, trust what he says & respond faithfully
 - Love him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength; that’s covenant
 - Set our heart and mind on things “above”
 - Become so kingdom-minded we excel in earthly life
- Rational human thinking concludes we should focus more and work harder on what we’re doing to make better progress
- The way to make better progress & results in our work is to spend more time focusing on Father
 - That’s counterintuitive to worldly thinking, but perfectly rational to kingdom thinking
 - We need to change our perspective from “my work” to “kingdom business”
 - We may wind up doing exactly the same things, but for very different reasons and in very different ways
- This is a step up from covenant relationship, in which each partner serves the other
- This is teamwork, a practical application of covenant, with Father and you actively engaged in what the other is doing

Here’s the Big Picture

- God created us in his image & likeness, the pinnacle of all creation, to be higher than all the angels, to rule & reign with him
 - He adopted us as his children, granting us rights, privileges & responsibilities in his kingdom
 - Then he gave us the kingdom, including full access to everything in it
- This is not something we should only anticipate after the Lord returns
 - We’re to be learning how this principle applies to us even now in this fallen world system
 - The opposition we experience now helps us grow stronger & more mature; in part by showing us the results of not living in Father’s kingdom, so we’ll be motivated to repent & be transformed
 - This is a great strategy God created & he’s more than willing to collaborate with us in absolutely everything
- We are currently in training for our eternal roles in Father’s kingdom
 - We learn primarily through first-hand experience in this life, and I believe that will continue in eternity