

Theme: Relationships are damaged when we act out of the improper motivation to manipulate others to meet our needs, but are repaired when we follow Christ and let our actions be driven by the motivation to minister to the deepest needs of the other person.

I. Relationships - the Series

- A. How many have ever had a slip up in a relationship?
- B. Ever avoided some relationships because of these?
- C. Identifying, avoiding and regaining our foothold
- D. We begin with the foundation of it all - our motives
- E. This problem lies at the root of virtually all other relational issues

II. Spotting the Relationship of Manipulation

- A. Paul is dealing with relational problems in Philippians
 - 1. I have taught on this many times before
 - 2. A lot of teaching on relationships in Philippians
 - 3. Even this famous passage about Jesus serves a purpose regarding relationships
- B. The importance of motives in relationships

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:3-4

 - 1. Paul is here dealing with the critical issue of motives
 - 2. We must not act out of selfish motives
 - 3. Our actions must not be driven by our interests alone but what helps others

- 4. Jesus is then shown as the prime example of this
Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped... Philippians 2:5-6
- 5. Two basic motivations: manipulation or ministry
Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Philippians 2:3-5
 - a. We can act of selfish motives - manipulation
 - b. We can act out of motive to help others - ministry
 - c. Be like Jesus - ministers, not manipulators!

C. Manipulation or ministry as a motivation

| Manipulation | Ministry |
|--|--|
| Trying to get others to behave a certain way for my own benefit and reasons | Changing my own actions to serve another persons deepest needs |
| We become gods who must be served by others | We receive from God so we can serve others |
| We treat the other person like an idol, thinking they can meet our deepest needs | We know our deepest needs are met in Christ, and we are free to serve others |

1. Manipulation is selfish ambition; ministry is love
But to be primarily motivated by the goal of winning a response from one's spouse that is designed to satisfy one's own desires, however legitimate those desires may be, is a violation of love and therefore wrong. Love is essentially defined in terms of preoccupation with the other's needs. Larry Crabb
2. Manipulation is wrong - even if the desired action is good
Whenever the goal of our behavior is essentially to change the other person—whether the change is good or bad—we are wrong. Unless there is the purpose of communicating love based on an awareness of [the other person's] needs, we qualify as manipulators, not ministers. Larry Crabb

III. Avoiding the Relationship of Manipulation

- A. To avoid manipulation - I need to recognize it
 1. Think through difference between ministry & manipulation
 2. Learn to recognize manipulation when it arises in me or others
 3. Understanding this is essential to Christlikeness
Counseling that does not concern itself fundamentally with changing the goals of the [people] from manipulation to ministry and that fails to bring spiritual resources to bear in accomplishing this task amounts to nothing more than instruction in congenial manipulation. Larry Crabb
- B. To avoid manipulation we look to Jesus!
Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but

also to the interests of others. ⁵ **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:** Philippians 2:3–5

1. After identifying the problem, Paul points us to Jesus!
2. Jesus is the example of ministry rather than manipulation
Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! Philippians 2:5–8
 - a. Jesus looks out for our good rather than His own
 - b. He does not manipulate us - He ministers to our deepest needs
3. But more than example, we are pointed to a vital relationship with Jesus
If you have any encouragement from being **united with Christ**, if any comfort from **his love**, if any **fellowship with the Spirit**, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Philippians 2:1–3
 - a. Notice the relational terms - relationship not just idea

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to **work out your salvation with fear and trembling**, ¹³ **for it is God who**

works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Philippians 2:12–13

- a. This section relational problems closes with note about sanctification
- b. God is the source of strength for our change

IV. Regaining Your Foothold

A. Key is to move from manipulation to ministry mindset

B. When I am the manipulator

1. Pray - Ask Jesus to show me what 'god' is causing me to behave this way?
 - a. What do I think I need that Jesus does not provide?
 - b. What do I fear that causes me to manipulate others to get my way?
 - c. Examples: abandonment; or 'God will get you'
2. Make a conscious decision to recognize the underlying cause and not act on it but look to Jesus
3. Pray and look for concrete ways to serve others
4. Repent to others when I fall back to manipulation

C. When the other manipulates me

1. Realize I can not meet the other persons real needs - don't be codependent
2. Pray for the other person - take their needs to Jesus
3. Point the other person to Jesus who can meet their needs - encouragement or evangelism

4. Set clear boundaries and do not cross them

D. Trust that God will honor ministry rather than manipulation

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9–11

1. Jesus put our needs before His own - to death!
2. **Therefore** God exalted Jesus
3. Realize this might be in eternity - that is ok!

V. Applying the Word - Communion

A. We all have application for this week from items above

B. But application starts here at the Table

1. Our essential need is Jesus & His Gospel
2. Today we come to the Table to receive grace
3. We ask that we realize His grace is enough

Manipulationslips

Philippians 2:3-11
April 27, 2014
Communion
Numbers 6:24-26

24 The Lord bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24–26

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:3–11