



Episode 1 Transcript - Maintaining Peace in Relationships Transcript

Tim [00:00:00] Welcome to the relational Impact Group podcast. We're here to help you grow in your relationship with the Lord and in your relationship with others.

Tim [00:00:20] Welcome everybody to the relational impact podcast. This is Tim and Elaine Russo. And we have started this podcast because we want to talk about stuff that pertains to you and your relationship with the Lord. But also in your relationship with other people. So we're going to be having conversations along the way. And we're having so much fun.

Elaine [00:00:42] We're laughing a lot at each other because this is new to us and we're not sure how to do it all but we've made ourselves a cup of coffee and we're trying to relax and just enjoy having this conversation together with one another and hopefully with those of you in your home. Whether you're having a cup of coffee with us or playing with the kids and have earbuds in your ear at home at your gym just wherever you are we're just glad you're here listening to us today.

Elaine [00:01:15] So we're talking about relationships and you know relationships come in all shapes and sizes and some of those are intimate with our family members or with spouses with children parents in-laws etc. but it spreads out you know we have relationships across the board and I think the Lord uses relationships in our lives maybe more than any other thing to teach us more about himself and to help us to see how we need to grow in character and to become more relational in the opportunities he gives us to grow.

Tim [00:01:49] I was just looking through the New Testament about what we call one another passages and here's some of the things I found. Love one another. Of course is in John 13. Here's some other things: except one another just as Christ accepted you be patient bearing with one another in love. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other. All of these all of these instructions are to help us to have more productive more fulfilling relationships. And there was about 60 of these one another passages in the New Testament. And so I mean we could say that relationships. You know that's kind of what life is all about. The whole gospel was couched in the context of relationships.

Tim [00:02:39] There's a father and a son and then we're adopted into the family some relationships we just permeate our lives. But relationships are not always easy. We're here to learn and grow and share with one another learn who we want to hear from you as well. On what what you are learning in your relationships.

Elaine [00:03:00] Yes and I think that word that you use to grow is so key because that's what this is all about. I know for us it's very intimidating to get on a podcast and talk about relationships and how to do them because sometimes we literally feel like we're still in kindergarten in some areas but we're continuing to move forward and learn and grow. I do love the passage. Tim in Ephesians 4 versus 1-3 that says, "I Therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called. With all loneliness and gentleness with long suffering forbearing with one another in love endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." And that's really what it's all about. And that's what we're talking about today maintaining peace in your relationships and that can just be difficult.

Tim [00:04:02] Well difficult because sometimes it's difficult to be humble. Sometimes we're not gentle when we're exchanging our thoughts and opinions with each other and sometimes we're not patient. We don't bear with the other person long enough. We get impatient and we can be critical and judgmental and we bring all sorts of things to a relationship and we may not be paying attention to how those negative inputs are impacting the relationships.

Elaine [00:04:33] Yes. And I I really do think that these things, these character traits of humility gentleness patience and bearing with one another, they're essential in cultivating safe healthy nontoxic relationships and it's really hard sometimes to find other people who want to walk that path with you. I mean some people just, they love drama and they're they're always looking for ways to cause conflict and then others it's just habits bad habits that they've developed. And for myself, whenever there's conflict in a relationship whether it's Tim and I or me and a daughter or me and a friend or a family member I've just made it a point to just step back and ask myself, What is this about Lord? What am I doing? Am I being humble? Am I being gentle? Am I being patient?

Tim [00:05:36] Am I bearing with this individual through this difficulty? And almost always I have a confession and I have to ask for forgiveness because most likely I have not been those things and that's why there's a lack of peace. I think it's important for us to ask ourselves that question you know that's a litmus test for us. Those four things right there that Ephesians is telling us about or the apostle Paul is telling us in the book of Ephesians on how we can gauge ourselves.

Tim [00:06:11] Yes so those four things just to remind us is humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing with one another. So you just describe what we could call personal responsibility. It reminds me of that version Romans 12 or Paul says if it is possible as much

as depends on you live peaceably with all men and we could put anybody in the blank; live peaceably with your spouse; live peaceably with your children with your your parents etc..

Tim [00:06:47] Paul seems to put the responsibility on you and I and you need to do what you can because it's easy to blame the other person, it's easy to see the other person. I mean it's like the pastor who said you know we would have a great church if it wasn't for all these people with problems.

Elaine [00:07:07] Well but it's so difficult tim because I mean we all have situations in relationships where we find ourselves hitting those same obstacles over and over and over again that disrupt peace. And I know for myself, I love peace. I mean I live my life in a way that I want there to be peace always because I don't do well with conflict.

Tim [00:07:37] And so like even in your home yes you like everything to be in its place decorated nicely warm and inviting.

Elaine [00:07:45] Absolutely. And I don't think people go out looking to dis disturb or disrupt peace. I just think we get caught up in our own ways and our own selfish desires sometimes and don't realize how our selfishness is affecting the people in our life. There are several reasons why this is so hard and I just want to start by talking about differences because the fact that we are just different can cause a lack of peace.

Tim [00:08:22] Hey we're pretty different right.

Elaine [00:08:23] Yes we are. And through the years we've learned how to embrace those differences and not think of them as being demonic. You know we've learned how to say you know Tim is a laid back easygoing kind of guy and I'm kind of intense. I like lists and I like to accomplish tasks. And so when our two worlds collide sometimes there can be quite a bit of conflict or tension and lack of peace.

Elaine [00:08:56] And so I think respecting our differences even if you have things in common with someone you're also going to have differences and it's so important to just respect them.

Tim [00:09:10] So these differences show up. I mean every strong quality kind of has its negative counterpart right. So for a person like me laid back you know not really detailed and not the most organized kind of person more artistic in the way I think. So my weakness would be, not being responsible, not paying attention to details and that runs somebody like you crazy right.

Elaine [00:09:44] There have been times when you have run me crazy but because I have chosen. And that's another point and I'm sure we'll talk about that in another episode but that's where commitment comes in. Because you have committed yourself to the relationship you choose to bear with one another. You choose to figure out ways to resolve those

conflicts. If there were no commitment between us, why would I ever invest the time and energy it takes to learn how to embrace those differences.

Tim [00:10:24] Well so just to point out that bearing with another person does not mean avoiding that person, ignoring that person, wishing that person would go somewhere else. Bearing with with has this commitment that I'm in this with you. We're going to get through this together and relationships, especially differences in relationships challenge us. It takes us out of our comfort zone. It demands something of us that we don't naturally think we have. And that's when we need to lean heavily on the Lord in that moment.

Elaine [00:11:05] Well I remember a time early on in our marriage when our differences became so evident. And I remember thinking Oh no he has got to change. He has got to change and be more like me. And how many of us do that? How many of us think that our way is the right way? And if you can't do it the right way you need to hit the highway. You know that. Isn't that how people resolve conflict today? It's like play my way or get lost. And unfortunately that's not the right way. And that brings us into the next point of obstacles.

Elaine [00:11:47] The next obstacle I would I would bring up is expectations and how we have expectations of the people we are in relationship with. And often those expectations cause us to be very disappointed.

Tim [00:12:05] Well I think it's connected to the differences because we expect people to think the way we think. We expect people to have the same values we have. We expect that everybody knows this. Like why aren't you getting with the program. And when people show up and they say well I don't agree with that or I don't think that's the way it ought to be, if we take that personally, now we're going down a very negative path. Whereas the differences, if we approach those with respect, we can say "Okay, let's see how we can work." And you're really good at that actually. Let's see what we can do to work around this.

Elaine [00:12:49] Yes and expectations not being met can bring a lot of chaos to a relationship. And I've been able to get to a place in my life where, I just automatically have expectations. I'm I'm just confessing that to all of you.

Tim [00:13:08] I think we all do.

Elaine [00:13:09] I have expectations but I have learned to let my expectations be of the Lord. In other words Lord, what are your expectations in this situation and not just elevate my own. And so when I'm disappointed, when I when I have an expectation and I'm disappointed, instead of sulking, instead of getting angry, instead of withdrawing, I'm learning to just push through that and say well this is what I thought should have happened but it didn't. And choosing to not disrespectfully judged someone. But to take the opportunity to just respectfully try to persuade.

Elaine [00:13:57] I think it's so important that we have that mutual respect in the relationship and we learned to navigate this disappointments.

Tim [00:14:05] Well and it gets more complicated when we do not communicate with the other person what our expectations are. I think a common example of this is the new wife whose dad was a you know repair guy, he fixed everything around the house marries a person who doesn't do that. And so she just naturally brings that expectation that that's what they had to do, that's what husbands do. And when he doesn't meet that expectation she can feel like not only disappointed but she can feel like you know you're cheating me that this is what you're supposed to be doing you need to you need to man, up you need to get with the program, learn how to do these things because that's what husbands do, which is not necessarily accurate. So one of two things has to happen in that scenario. He either has to change and become a fix it guy or she has to lower her expectations or change them, adjust them, to what the reality is in that in that relationship.

Elaine [00:15:10] Yeah. And I prefer to think of change it rather than lower it because I think that's where we get in trouble sometimes. Because we think our expectations are the Highlands. And anybody with less than our expectation is on the low ground. And so we start judging. We start judging one another based on those expectations.

Elaine [00:15:30] So we've talked about three obstacles to peace. We've talked about our differences our expectations and disappointments. And so as Paul said in Romans 12:18 if it is possible as much as depends on you live peaceably with all men.

Tim [00:15:48] So let me come in on disappointments. What I do with a disappointment is is really going to be determined by my heart, my worldview. So if I think you did this to me You disappointed me therefore you did this to me then I may have that whole scenario in the wrong context. Number one, is this appointment that I'm expecting something we both agreed on or that I just imposed that on another person. And then, if it is a true disappointment then I need to be able to accept you know, it didn't happen the way I expected. I wished it was different. But I'm not going to allow this to create division and put a wedge between me and this other person.

Elaine [00:16:42] Let's talk about that verse one where it says to walk worthy of the calling. So that is our ultimate goal right. In relationships our ultimate goal is to honor God and to bear examines. Because the relationships that we have are supposed to be a picture of how Christ and His Church are connected. Right. But even in our brotherly and sisterly relationships we're supposed to be displaying God's love to the world around us.

Tim [00:17:16] Because Jesus said they'll they will know you're to my disciples by the love you have for one another.

Elaine [00:17:21] Right. And so walking worthy of the calling could be equivalent to walking in peace with one another and in unity. And that's not you we can't do that when we're self serving. So let's talk about conflict.

Tim [00:17:38] All right so you know this thing of blaming the other person when things go wrong seems to be our natural reaction. So we've been married 39 years, we've known each other for like 44 years or something. So we know each other pretty well. We don't necessarily agree with everything that we do, and we have differences. And I think that is where we have to learn how to communicate clearly. We're all busy. I mean a lot of times we get in trouble, we lose the peace in our relationships or in our relationship when we are too busy. We don't take time to reconnect during the day and we are like ships passing in the night. We just get too busy, we don't communicate clearly and completely. You know, "if you would have looked at the calendar this wouldn't have happened", "if you would listen and be fully present", whatever our complaint is, we tend to blame the other person. And sometimes that's accurate. Sometimes the other person dropped the ball. Sometimes, it's just human frailty and it is something we have to adjust to and navigate through. And so most of the time we lose peace in our relationships I think because we're prideful, we're impatient, and we're not gentle.

Elaine [00:19:03] It's true. And, I think those things, those difficulties, those bad habits that we have are really hard to change. I don't want to get too far into this idea of change because I think, we want to do another episode on that. Or two or three. Yes, because change is difficult but good relationships require change because change is equivalent to growth. And if we're not changing we're not growing. If we're not growing we're not changing. Often change requires tension and conflict in order for it to come to pass. I just want to share with you something that's helped me a lot. When Tim and I first got married I had a really huge issue with anger in expressing anger. And one of the ways that I was able to overcome that is to apply the truth model. So you have a triggered event; T stands for a triggered event. So that could be anything from, "Oh he did not just say that to me." You know and you just get this attitude and it's a trigger. Then you have wrong thinking; he said that because he thinks this and I choose to think something wrong. And then I have an unhealthy response. I respond to him in sarcasm or disrespect.

Elaine [00:20:32] And so what we want to do is turn that around when that triggered event happens. We want to guard ourselves from having that unhealthy or sinful response by applying truth to the circumstance. Sometimes we have to gather more information and ask questions to gather that truth. But we have to apply truth to those circumstances to know how we're supposed to respond in a healthy way. So a triggered event can lead to wrong thinking and an unhealthy response or you can apply truth and have a healthy response.

Tim [00:21:10] And so we have this in the show notes so you can review these passages and the truth model. This triggered event, that's kind of like when I push a button, right? Right! And there seems to be this natural reaction. It's like I don't even have to think about it.

Tim [00:21:27] So when you say change is hard you're talking about it actually taking work for you to stop and realize, I need to think differently about what just happen. Otherwise

I'm just going to do what I always do. So this is one of the ways that God matures us, by helping us to pay attention to what we're actually doing. Because a lot of us live on autopilot and most couples fight about the same things for years and years. And we just live in these ruts. And so if we're going to grow if our relationships are going to be stronger if we're gonna find for more fulfillment in them we're gonna have to apply the truth. And even going back to the one another's, I'm gonna have to learn how to walk in forgiveness toward you or toward whoever I'm in relationship with because we're going to offend one another. That is going to happen.

Elaine [00:22:25] So what might happen if I have in my heart and in my mind that the way I'm supposed to relate to the people in my life is in humility and patience and forbearing and all the things? If I know that and I meditated on that and I've hidden it in my heart, when that triggered event comes and I am tempted, And for me personally I can tell when I've experienced a triggered event because my cortisol levels go up and I'm one of those people that can tell immediately when that's happening. And so if I just stop right then and think " OK how can I respond to this humbly or not thinking of myself so much and just be long suffering or for bearing with this person? And what is the truth? And, ask the questions and say what exactly did you mean when you said that? And I found even in relating to friends and children just to get some clarification makes a world of difference. Because, it's so easy, especially with technology and texting, you know you can't see people's facial expressions or hear the intonation of their voice. Like I mean you picked the wrong emoji.

Elaine [00:23:51] Yeah.
Yes.

Elaine [00:23:52] So we can really get ourselves in trouble in relationships with technology and so it's so important to just clarify and make sure we have the truth and then we can respond in a healthy way.

Elaine [00:24:05] And let's be honest, even if the truth is bad, even if the truth is I'm mad at you and I just insulted you because I'm mad at you. If that's the truth and we see it, we know and we still have an opportunity to respond in a way that keeps peace.

Tim [00:24:27] So you know we get in the classroom and we learn these things and we talk about being patient and forgiving and bearing with one another and we all agree that's the right thing to do. And it's such a lovely idea until someone pushes our button and it triggers in us this sense of self-defense of self-preservation. So. I think that's where resistance is necessary to make us stronger. And I think about this illustration of a football team and you've got an offensive team, there's 11 guys, they're executing their play. It's beautiful and then they get on the field and there is eleven guys on the other side of the line of scrimmage doing everything they can to stop them from executing their play. Well, at that point they have a couple choices. They can say hey that's not fair I'm trying to do this right

and you keep messing it up. Like I'm trying to live right, I'm trying to be patient but you keep doing that. Or, they could say, you know we need to learn how to execute our play in the face of resistance. We need to learn how to do it knowing there will be obstacles.

Elaine [00:25:43] I think that's a better approach and that's more of a growth oriented approach and that's a good segway into the next point of how do you live at peace with people who aren't interested in living at peace.

Elaine [00:25:58] You know you have gone the extra mile, you've done your work, you're that team player who's run all the laps, you've done all the weight training and you're really working at this but the other person involved is not doing their part.

Tim [00:26:16] And I think that actually brings up another question that I think is important and that is, How do I define peace? How do you define peace? Is the person I'm in relationship with defining peace the same way? Because, if we define peace as an emotional thing that we feel peace between us then that's not technically accurate. Peace by definition is when there's no war. We are at peace but there are levels of peace. And, I think that's where we bring expectations. So if you know, if I'm in a relationship with one guy who we are not only at peace technically but we feel comfortable with one another, we feel we trust one another we feel safe. That's a different level of peace. I may be in a different relationship with someone else and we don't have that. Same environment. I might think, well you know me and the second guy, we don't have peace in our relationship. Well that's not accurate. You do have peace. It's just not at the same level as with someone else. And, I think again we need to be careful and recognize that all of our relationships or many of our relationships are at different levels and I think we probably need to talk about that in another another podcast because I think that's really important.

Elaine [00:27:39] Well it's exciting to get to talk about these things with all of you and we're so grateful that you've been listening and we have a lot more to share. And you know, Tim and I believe that we are just beggars telling other beggars where to get the bread. We by no means talk to you today from a position of knowing it all. We're not experts but we definitely are on a growth journey and we want to share the things we learn. One of our personal missions is to share with others what God has enlightened us with and so that's what this podcast is all about so we encourage you to stay tuned.

Tim [00:28:21] Well let me just. As far as takeaways, you can download the show notes to this podcast and get those passages etc.. But as far as a takeaway, one of the things we mentioned earlier is that one of the things I like to do with couples is to ask how have you personally, individually contributed to the current problem. What tends to happen is when we are able to focus on OK what what did I do wrong.

Tim [00:28:53] Like how did I offend that other person before God? If I can own that, then I can go to work on that. Because I don't have control over what that other person will do or has done. I have control over me and I need to focus on that. And as we n we approach a conflict with someone, especially someone we care about, we need to be able to ask "How

am I contributing to this lack of peace?". What am I doing? What do I need to do? And the Lord may show you something. You may find, Oh, I am not being patient. I'm expecting too much. I've been disappointed. I'm hurt so now I want this person to do something different. These are just good questions that you can ask yourself. Have I sinned against that person? Have I hurt them? How have I offended them?

Tim [00:29:50] These are just good questions to ask. I recommend that you go ahead and make that list and then at some point come together and issue an apology for those things individually. That can have a very positive impact on gaining traction in your relationship because you're, kind of, stating the obvious. The other person already knows. When I say to Elaine "I need you to know I was wrong when I said that" or "when I did that." Well I'm not giving her any new information.

Tim [00:30:22] She already knows that was wrong. These are just some ideas. I'd like to develop that a little bit more. I have a lot more to say about that actually. But not today. So for now, if you would go ahead and go to our Web site relationalimpact.com/podcast and list some comments. Tell us what we can do to make these podcasts more beneficial to you. If you have any questions we'd love to entertain those and try to answer those. If there's a topic that you would love to hear us discuss and bring to the forefront then we'd love to do that.

Tim [00:31:01] So thank you guys. Share, subscribe to our podcast if you haven't already. Share it with a friend. We really are enjoying this and we look forward to our next podcast!