

Now in part 5 we talk about

/// 5-1 ///

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COWORKERS

1) Interdependency--the Trinity's demonstration

The 12 "one anothers" in the New Testament are specifically applicable here.
An extra "Opportunity Sheet" is provided for those of you who would like to explore this issue further.
God's design is interdependency.
We see this design in the earth, moon, and sun relationship.
We see this design in the microscopic functions of the cells in our inner bodies.
We often ignore that or take it for granted, but let one tiny body part be ill and our whole body aches.
Interdependency is mysterious.
Only God can bring about a spiritual rebirth, yet God's design is to limit Himself to believers to do the advertising (the preaching) for him.
Purposefully God has limited Himself to work with and through men and women.

He not only made Adam a spiritual being but also created him uniquely to be His overseer of all happenings on earth.

Even more mysterious is God's own nature.
Interdependency is built within God's own nature.
We refer to it as the Trinity.
God is not a dictator God.
He is a relational God.
So we read that within Himself God sought counsel and made decisions mutually.
The resurrection of Christ is stated to be an act of each person of the Trinity.
The outcome is that what God does is "very good" Gen 1: 31.
It is immeasurably better than we can even imagine Eph. 3: 20.

This is the foundational reason why God wants us to be interdependent upon one another.
This is the foundational reason for God's strong antagonism to pride.

Interdependency requires relationships.
The better the relationship the better the interdependency.
The better the interdependency the more beautiful, the more grandiose the result.
A good illustration of this is an orchestra.
Each individual person and each individual instrument must be fine tuned.
Not fine tuned *just for itself* as for a beautiful solo. No even much **more** explicitly, much **deeper** than that.
Beside being fine tuned for personal effectiveness, both the person and the instrument must also be very finely attuned to several other instruments.

This is the kind of interdependence that God desires in church leadership.
This is also the kind of interdependency that is almost unheard of in Ukraine.
Under former governmental and social structures this almost did not exist in our country.
We did not grow up with it, I did not grow up with it.
I was raised to believe that I was important and that I must make things happen.
My background was "I", "I", "I", and "I".
It has taken me a lifetime to learn that inter-dependency is much, much more effective and produces far greater and more beautiful results.

2) Separation – the Pastor's Trouble Maker

The great sin--basically the **ONLY** sin--is this separation, the breaking of relationships.

Satan was successful in breaking Adam's relationship with God.

Adam's initial act of independence resulted in running away from God as far as he could.
After sin Adam did not want to be with God. Before he had desired God's fellowship. Not now, no longer.
He wanted to be alone.

Pride says "I", pride separates and makes us loners.
Pride is a lifter up of self and pride is a denouncer of others.
Human pride is based on being derogatory, disparaging, and belittling.
Pride is a major factor in dictatorships.
Pride is one of the ground issues that some people as nations have to struggle with.
Pride expressed as dictatorship is the single major source of weakness in churches.
God hates pride.
God's design is for interdependency.
God very specifically did not give all talents and capabilities to one pastor.
That means no pastor can do a good job alone.
Working alone will always result in neglecting or offending some church member or overlooking an important aspect of church leadership.
God purposefully designed us so that by ourselves we would fail.
God designed team leadership. Eph. 4: 11.
Such a team, functioning in unity and harmony, can activate the whole congregation. 4:12.
When a congregation turns from being spectators into participants the whole church will gloriously reach the complete fullness as intended by Christ. 4:13.

When our children do wrong, they do not want to be with their parents. They want to hide, they want to be alone.
When spouses quarrel and each wants to be right, humility is destroyed and pride is lifted up.
The result is a cooling of their relationship.
Each wants to go their own way.
Men tend to express it by the words, "Leave me alone!!!"

Oh how we ache and suffer when a son or daughter's marriage struggles.

We deeply hurt, because deep within us we sense that peace, unity, deep intimate relationships belong to a good and beautiful marriage.

Yet at the same time we often struggle with relationships ourselves.
Relationships are one of the **neediest** elements in our lives which we need to develop, to grow, to beautify, to make active.
It is a lifetime task.

It is common for pastors to want to be alone.
Relationships with elders are often held to a very minimal, doing business type nature.

Numerous pastors want to keep relationships with their superintendent to a minimum.

Provincial superintendents want to do their own things and only minimally follow guidelines from the president and often only reluctantly participate with the team in the Head Office .
(Just a simple example of that is that many church leaders still don't want to help the Head Office financially! That lack of financial sharing is just one sign that you don't really *care*.
You don't treasure the relationship.
You are not a participant but just a recipient.)

3) Pastors as Flowers in God's garden

My dear Brothers, God wants to change all that. He wants you, me, us, church leaders, Kingdom leaders, spiritual participants with Him to develop relationships.

God wants us to be interdependent *like flowers upon bees* for pollination.
Right now we want to discuss interdependency and relationships.
It is not something one person can tell another how to do it.
It is **too** intimate for that.
Interdependency and relationships is only something we can explore together.
Then later on those of you who want to become more Christ-like in your church management style can begin to practice it at home.

King Saul did not know how to be a good leader. He did not have a group of counselors, a team of advisors.
Saul was a successful ruler, but a dictator-type, and that eventually ruined him.

David developed a group of wise men around him, counselors, advisors, and he also had a team of 30 valiant men who really made things happen.

Doing this made David dependent upon many others.

Ultimately David became known as a man of humility and therefore God raised him up to become the pinnacle of Jewish leadership.

Solomon had such overwhelming wisdom that others simply could not help.

Yet without a team of advisors Solomon not only ruined himself.

He did worse than King Saul because Solomon also caused the ruin of the nation.

The Bible has much to say to spiritual leaders about their need for counselors.

Here are just a few verses from Proverbs for you to begin your own study. Prov. 11: 14, 12: 15, 13:10, 15:22, 20:18.

These verses emphasize the need and safety counselors provide a pastor.

Several verses include references to war.

It is well to remember that a pastor's main job is NOT only to preach and **not** only to make sure there is a nice comfy Sunday morning worship service.

As God's leader of the local church a pastor's most important job is to spiritually feed his members Psalm 23; Eph. 4: 13. It is also the pastor's job to protect his members (1 Sam. 17:33-36). The church leadership is to help believers who struggle with false cults, alcohol, drugs, immorality, divorce and so on until they all reach Eph. 4:13-16. So the scriptural suggestions that pastors are to be at war are very applicable Eph. 6:10-18.

4) God's grace, like water, flows to the lowest place.

But there is a difficulty in building such relationships and receiving counsel from others. *The difficulty is the **conflict between pride and humility.***

In the pastor's relationship with his elders or assistants, or coworkers the conflict between pride and humility plays a major role.

Before we can benefit from our counselors or from advice shared by others we as pastors must commit ourselves first that if at all possible we will set aside our own feelings, set aside our own plans, set aside our own desires.

Such an attitude, such a commitment, conditions our hearts and spirits to become receptive to what others have to contribute.

This is the spirit of David in us, the spirit of humility that our Lord loves so much.

This is why Jesus plainly demonstrated His desire for this form of church leadership in John 13: 12-17 and Luke 22: 25, 26.

I am sure that you as a pastor would like to imitate David. You would like to become successful as David, and you would like to have a reputation like David.

5) What needs to be done?

You need to build relationships, close relationships, with your elders or co-pastors.

Close relationships develop trust.

Without trust it is impossible to please and help each other.

Trust, peace, unity are built through **intimate** personal relationships with your church leaders.

Relationships consist of:

Proximity, being together — spending much time together individually and as a group

Listening to the other person with focus — listening to the details, discovering hidden hurts, listening to their advice and suggestions.

Meeting that person's need — ministering to others — meeting a need demonstrates your love, your thoughtfulness, your prayer and concern for him.

Love is giving, love is action, love is doing something for another person **without** them having to ask for it.

Relationships also include:

Receiving — desiring and accepting help from others.

Desiring their suggestions, their wisdom. Accepting even correction.

Being a person of mercy — Being trustworthy with people and relationships, being a safe person--for instance... being a good "confession" taker... responding to a confession of sin, or confronting sin in a gracious Biblical fashion/with love for the person, and not just contempt for the sin...

It is more than simply listening well. It is building trust by showing the person that you will hear their broken hearts in their sin, and be more concerned with healing them than "fixing" their sin.

Being someone that others know they can turn to and will receive love / acceptance / and building up instead of condemnation.

This is probably the most difficult thing for people to do. It's something that a person with the gift of mercy is naturally good at (others struggle).

Broken people confessing their horrible sinful lives need to hear, "***Neither do I condemn you.***"

Some of you have come already a long way along this road.

/// 5-2a /// Make a list of what personal help you have extended to your elders — when?

/// 5-2b /// Are you interested, ready and willing to make new efforts to follow advice from your elders rather than doing it all on your own?

Yes ... / ... no ... / ... not yet ... (*circle one*)

/// 5-2c /// With which elder would you like to begin building a closer personal relationship? _____ (*write initials*)

/// 5-2d /// Which elder can you assist to be more successful? _____ (*write initials*) in what area?

/// 5-2e /// How would you go about it? _____

/// 5-2f /// With how many elders do you feel free to share your personal aches and pains so they can pray specifically for you? _____ (*write in a number*)

/// 5-2g /// How many elders would trust you with their personal money? ____ (*write in a number*)

My dear Brothers, I wish I could help you specifically with some of these applications.

I can't. I am only a half-baked Ukrainian. I am only a foreign reject.

But there are several good men among you, good pastors who have learned this dependence upon God and their fellow church leaders.

I'll name just one example but there are many. One pastor built a strong church in a small village. This pastor went early in the morning and prayed with his unbelieving neighbors.

That pastor has also developed and trained many men to be coworkers.

He is a pastor who invested himself into men.

It is a church based on men. The men love him and relate to him.

Now he has a church that can be passed on to the next generation.

That pastor is older now, but that pastor is *finishing well*.

I want to introduce you to one of my spiritual heroes — Vasily Romanuk.

Let us clap for that pastor and say thank you to him and to all the other pastors who are doing such an xcellent job with their elders.

PRAISE GOD