

the Boss of me

Study Two "Bossing" Relationships

*written by
Hal Gaudet*



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Introduction & Review

Last time we discussed Jesus' teaching about the MINDSET that every Christian should approach life with. This mindset is based on the ROLE or position we play in our lives and the ROLE or position that God holds in His creation. We determined that Christians must see themselves as MANAGERS of the things God has entrusted to them. God, as Creator and Savior, holds the rightful position as the BOSS of each one of us and the rightful OWNER of everything we are responsible to oversee.

We also saw that DILIGENT managerial styles are practiced when we remember the Boss could show up at any moment to inspect our performance. And while something can be said about fear as a motivator, the benefits that come from a proper mindset can actually be a better incentive for improving our management skills.

You see when Christians arrive at the conclusion that everything they "have" is really God's and that they are only responsible for managing His things, then they immediately experience a number of **BENEFITS**.



Group Review Question

What do you think some of those BENEFITS might be?

- Freedom from worrying about the outcomes of things
- Less stress from trying to control everything
- Peace with God as the Boss over our submissive hearts
- No guilty feelings that He'll be disappointed when He shows up
- No intimidation that He might show up at any moment
- Peace because all is in order from His perspective despite ours
- Others?

Transition So last week's study laid out the foundational attitude or mindset that will be the THEME for this study series. And having a proper "management mindset" of God's stuff still leaves us with a question.

How does God want us to manage the various assets He has entrusted to our lives?

So this week we're going to look at an *eternal asset*, something that can go into eternity with us, RELATIONSHIPS.

The title of our study today is, "Bossing Relationships."

And while we understand God is the Boss of us, and He doesn't want us to assume the role of boss in this life, He DOES want us to be PROACTIVE and to exert some COMMAND in our relationships. God expects us to EXERCISE INFLUENCE as we MANAGE our relationships.



But if the Boss were to show up right now to do a *performance review* on how we are managing our relationships, how would He evaluate us? What would be the standard by which He would assess our progress? What approach to relationships would He be pleased with?

Question

How does God expect us to MANAGE our RELATIONSHIPS?

Obviously in a 40 minute study session we can not offer an exhaustive study and remedy all of the ills our relationships can be plagued with, but we can definitely pick up some reference points today that will give each one of us a sense of whether we are moving in the right direction or not in the management of the relationships He's allowed us to be in.

Transition Keeping things in broad terms, there are TWO KINDS of relationships that all people are responsible to manage. If you have your Bibles, turn to **Matthew 22:36** and let's see what insight Jesus offered on the subject of managing relationships.

Passage

Passage Background Here is a passage many of us are familiar with this morning. We are well into Jesus' 3 year public ministry. And this is one of those times where the religious elite were trying to look good in front of the crowd while at the same time attempting to trip up the Messiah and catch Him in some doctrinal or interpretational problem.



The particular Pharisee that asked Jesus the question was an expert in Jewish Old Testament Law and was quite able to debate matters of the Law and was probably used to winning such debates. **Starting in verse 36 of Matthew 22:**

Matthew 22:36-40

22:36-38 Master [literal word: teacher], which is the great [greatest or most important] commandment in the law? **37** Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. **38** This is the first and great commandment.

In keeping with our theme, the Pharisee asked, "Teacher, what does the Boss want most?" "If the Boss was going to show up right now, right here, today, what is most important to Him?"

THINK of all of the things that Jesus could have said to the Pharisee.

Jesus could have said:

"Pharisee, if the Boss were to show up right now, the first thing He's going to check is the **cash register**. All the **money** better be there; and you better not have gotten selfish with it and taken any of it to spend on yourself." But He didn't.

Jesus could have said:

"You better get **reading the Scriptures** and making sure you are changing your ways and starting to **act holy** because when the Boss shows up He's going to be checking you're behavior." But He didn't.



Jesus could have said:

“When the Boss shows up He’d better find you out somewhere **spreading the good news** at the top of your lungs because He’s counting on us to get the word out.” But He didn’t.

You know what Jesus DID say?

He said, “Love God with every part of your being.”

He said, “Do whatever you need to do, to have a close – CLOSE relationship with your heavenly Father.”

What’s most important to the Boss?

That we are in a close, loving relationship with Him.

Passage Question

1. Of all the things Jesus could have told that Pharisee, why do you think Jesus focused on a loving relationship with God? *When we are in a caring RELATIONSHIP with someone, we go out of our way to do things that will PLEASE that person. (It’s much easier to practice Jesus’ teachings when our relationship with Him is growing closer.)*

*But Jesus’ answer had a “part B”, another piece of understanding to be added to the mix. **Jesus went on to say in verse 39:***

22:39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Now if Jesus had just left well enough alone with the first part of the answer He gave to the Pharisee we could all go home and be done with our study today.



- ✓ Hey, “love God”, sure we can do that. After all, He’s done so much for us, what’s not to love?
- ✓ But then He had to go attach that other thing that’s so important to the Boss, that “love others” thing.
- ✓ “Love God with every fiber of your being AND love others the way you love yourself.”

And just in case some of us hardcore believers want to love and obey God without loving others Jesus drove it home in verse 40:

22:40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Jesus *didn't* say on this first commandment hang all the law and prophets, but on these TWO commandments hang all the law and prophets.

Passage Questions

2. What did Jesus mean when He said, “The whole Old Testament hangs on these two commandments”? *That success or failure in performing all of the Boss’ wishes, hinges on the QUALITY of two RELATIONSHIPS: our relationship with GOD and our relationship with OTHERS.*

3. Can we have a quality relationship with God while allowing our relationships with others to stay in disrepair? *NO. The quality of our relationship with God HINGES on the quality of our relationships with other people.*

Jesus had taught this concept before. At the beginning of His three year public ministry, during the familiar “Sermon on the Mount”, Jesus introduced this unpopular connection between our horizontal relationships and our vertical relationship. **Turn back to Matthew chapter 5 and verse 23.**



Matthew 5:23-24 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee [*or has something against you*]; **24** Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Okay, you're minding your own business at church, you're giving an offering to God, you're attempting to show your love to God and obey God and suddenly you remember that someone has a "beef" with you. What's Jesus' instruction here? *Stop what you're doing, and go fix the problem with the other person.*

Passage Questions

4. Isn't our relationship with God supposed to be our ultimate priority; isn't God more interested in our getting right with Him than in getting things right with our fellow Christians? **Our relationship with God can not be "RIGHT" until we have made our relationships with others "RIGHT".**

5. What does "be reconciled with your brother" mean? **It means the DAMAGED relationship is now RESTORED, and GROWTH in that relationship is now POSSIBLE.**

This doesn't necessarily mean that things are instantly returned to "warm and fuzzy", *but the potential for growth in the relationship has been restored.*

Now there's one more instruction from Jesus we should look at just to make sure we are grasping this CONNECTION between our relationship with God and our relationships with others. Turn to Matthew chapter 6.

This is a familiar passage where Jesus is teaching His disciples how to pray. And there is one verse in particular that drives home the big idea of today's study, **Matthew 6:12.**



6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Passage Questions

6. We are to seek forgiveness from God in proportion to what? We are to ask God to forgive us to the **SAME DEGREE** we are forgiving others.

7. What principle do we draw from this verse? We can not resolve our differences with **GOD** if we are **UNWILLING** to resolve our differences with **OTHERS**.

8. What impact will we experience in life if we refuse to attempt to reconcile damaged relationships while here on earth? If we are **CHOOSING** to not restore our damaged relationships with others, then we are **NOT** in good standing in our relationship with God. Therefore, we will not **EXPERIENCE** His full blessing, protection, and fulfillment in life because He can not reward **REBELLION**.

Summary of Passages



From these 3 passages we can see that the most important thing that the Boss is going to inspect when He arrives is the **QUALITY** of the **RELATIONSHIPS** we are in. Jesus was very clear that our **HORIZONTAL** relationships with people around us are inseparably connected to our **VERTICAL** relationship with Him.

It is impossible to have close communion in our relationship with God if we are refusing to restore damaged relationships with the people around us.

Transition So what is the big idea God would have us come away with from studying these passages this morning?



Application

At the beginning of our study, we asked the question: How does God expect us to MANAGE our RELATIONSHIPS?

The answer is this:

We should manage our relationships with God and with others remembering that our relationship with God and our relationships with others are INSEPARABLY LINKED. I can not seek closeness with God while harboring animosity toward others. I can not seek forgiveness from God while withholding it from those who have wronged me.

We mentioned that “bossing” our relationships is being PROACTIVE in the way we manage the relationships He has us in. We seek to restore broken relationships both with God AND with others. *If we want closeness with God then we MUST pursue restoration not only with Him but with the people in our lives.*

Transition What can we do this week to put these Biblical truths into real life?

Call to Action

Here's what we can do this week, we can E-A-T!

1. **Evaluate** where I am really at with my relationship with God.

A. Is growth in my relationship with God being hindered because I am unwilling to “clear the slate” between myself and someone else? *What will I do if God will help me?*



B. Is growth in my relationship with God being hindered because I am struggling with some sin in my life, or because I am not surrendering something in my life to Him? *What will I do if God will help me?*

2. Act on what the Holy Spirit impresses on your heart to do.

A. If you determine you have hurt someone, go to that person and do your best at seeking their forgiveness.

B. If you feel you've been wronged, just as Christ asked His heavenly Father to forgive those who were wronging Him, do the same. Ask God to forgive them. If they approach you and seek your forgiveness, give it. (Remember, love and forgiveness are choices, not necessarily feelings.)

3. Trust God for the results. We can not control how people will respond to us. But if we follow Christ's advice in the way we manage our relationships, then our conscience is clear before God and our closeness with Him will not be hindered because of our own stubbornness.

Renewing Our Minds with Scripture Memory

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: *1 Peter 1:22*

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