

CHIEF

MINISTRIES

April 2026

This month, we will continue our study of family and the importance of those relationships. Just a short recap of last month, we all need community, family, and in that setting, we learn about each other, share things, and grow. We learn what is important and what it takes to protect it. But along with everything good associated with families and community, there is another side, and that is what we are going to discuss this month.

I've discovered that if people are not on my heart, they're likely on my nerves. I'm sure I am just talking to myself here, but in case others are reading this and can relate, let's be transparent together. If you don't have your spouse, kids, friends, or cellies on your heart, they can start to get on your nerves too.

The reason so many marriages struggle is that spouses often react to each other from their minds rather than their hearts. When your wife says, "I feel depressed," listen to her; it's legitimate. When your husband says, "I don't feel this is the right thing to do; we ought to do it this other way," listen to him. Remember the things that make an awesome family and how those create an opportunity for growth. Heart love begins with understanding why someone feels the way they do. Ask questions and then listen. Hear the hurt, look at the problems from their point of view, and work to know what makes them tick. Try to understand the temperaments of the people in your life and why they act the way they do. If you care, you'll be aware. This is also possible in community, how many times do you go to chow or a church service and see someone from another line or dorm and ask how they are doing? Their response is ok, when in actuality they may have just received a 3 year set-off or word that a loved one was just hospitalized. Sometimes we don't share how we really feel because we think "nobody cares, or I don't want to seem weak!" Well, a friend, someone who has relationship with you asks because they care, they want to help, they want to be there for you. They want you to get through this crisis.

Sometimes it's a struggle to love the people closest to you, even when you're working hard to understand them. So how does one do it? *"God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 1:8 NIV). In Greek, the word *affection* is the word for intestines. The Greeks thought that the seat of emotion was in your stomach, your liver, and your internal organs.

Paul was saying, "My love for you comes from a gut feeling." That is not a natural kind of love. It is supernatural. That's why Paul said it's not from himself, but it's the affection of Christ Jesus.

Human love wears out. It dries up and dies on the vine. The only kind of love that lasts in spite of heartache and difficulty and tough circumstances is God's love—the affection of Jesus.

So how do you get this kind of gut love? *"God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us"* (Romans 5:5 GNT). God's love is not something you work to build up. It is something that is poured into you by the Holy Spirit as you let him live in you day by day. Spend time with Him, ask Him to put those in your path that need to hear a word from Him, encouragement, or just an ear to listen.

Awesome families teach their kids that they're not the center of the universe. They help their kids understand that God made them and shaped them for a mission. They model dedication, service, generosity, and prayer. *Average* families don't do those things. *Awesome* families do. God does that with each of us, if we let Him.

A good example of this is Cornelius' family in the book of Acts: *"He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly"* (Acts 10:2 NIV). What a great legacy!

Wouldn't you like to have people writing that about you and your family one day? Whether you have children or not, God wants you to leave a legacy like that. You'll find people younger in age - or younger in the faith - all around you. Will you take the time to help them learn to serve the people around them? Many times, our testimony is our lives being watched by others, not what we say, but how we live. Think about that.

Pride destroys relationships. It shows up in a lot of different forms, like criticism, competition, stubbornness, and superficiality. The problem with pride is that it's self-deceiving. When you have too much pride, you don't see it in your life - but everyone else does! Proverbs 16:18 says, "*Pride leads to destruction; a proud attitude brings ruin*" (NCV). I love that same verse in The Message paraphrase: "*First pride, then the crash—the bigger the ego, the harder the fall.*"

While pride destroys relationships, humility serves as its antidote, and relationships are built instead. Philippians 2:3 tells you how to combat pride by choosing humility: "*Be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves*" (NCV). 1 Peter 3:8 gives more details: "*Everyone must live in harmony, be sympathetic, love each other, have compassion, and be humble*" (GW). I know this may be a little more difficult in prison but God wants to use you to change the world. At this time that is your world....Go for it...God will make a way!

How do you grow in humility? You let Jesus Christ begin to control your thoughts, heart, attitude, and reactions. Ephesians 4:23-24 says, "*Let the Spirit change your way of thinking and make you into a new person*" (CEV).

The basic law of relationships is this: You tend to become like the people you spend time with. If you spend time with grumpy people, you get grumpier. If you spend time with happy people, you get happier. If you want to become a new, humbler person, you need to spend time with Jesus Christ, because he is humble. By building a relationship with him through prayer and reading his Word, you'll get to know him and become more like him. Philippians 2:5-6 says it like this: "*You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to*" (NLT).

Jesus is the ultimate example of humility. He came from heaven to earth to become a man, live for you, give his life for you, and be resurrected for you. When you spend time with him, it makes you humble. That humility, in turn, builds your relationships.

"*For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.*" 2 Chronicles 16:9 (NIV). Most people get to watch history; very few choose to make it. But I believe you can be a history-maker.

A thousand years before you were born, God knew you'd be right where you are today. He knew you'd be reading this newsletter. I believe it's because God has something special, something unique in store for you. You're not sitting where you're sitting by accident. You haven't had the experiences in your life by chance.

God designed your life to make a difference in the world. No matter where you've been, what you're afraid of, or what sin is in your rearview mirror, God can still use you to make a difference in this world. What he needs from you is a total commitment to him. God wants you to be all in on his plan for you.

God is less interested in your *ability*; he cares about your *availability*.

God is looking for people to use to change the world. The Bible says, "*For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.*" 2 Chronicles 16:9 (NIV). God is looking for you - *yes, you* - so he can strengthen you and use you to make an impact.

And it all starts with a committed and available heart. You can start today. Let God know that you're committed to doing whatever he wants with your life. Tell him you're available for him to use you, and then watch how he answers your prayer.

Are your relationships characterized by freedom or by fear? If you're like most people, you find yourself in a dilemma: You *long* to be close to other people, but you also *fear* being close. You want the freedom of intimacy with others, but you're also scared to death of it.

Fear often causes a battle for control in relationships. When you're afraid, you're insecure. And insecurity makes you try to control others - and resist efforts to be controlled! As a result, you can't get close to other people because you're just battling back and forth for control. So, insecurity prevents intimacy and destroys your relationships. If insecurity destroys relationships, then what builds them? Love! Love builds relationships.

The Bible says in 1 John 4:18, "*Love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid . . . this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love*" (NLT).

Love expels fear by taking the focus off of you and putting it on others. People often ask me, "Do you ever get nervous when you're talking to a lot of people?" The answer is, "Of course!" But here's what makes the difference: I take the focus off of myself and focus on the people in front of me instead. If I stood there thinking about what they thought of my hairstyle or my way of speaking, I would be afraid. But the minute I start thinking about how much I love the people I'm with, the fear leaves.

It's the same in any relationship. Focusing on the other person gives you the power to throw fear out of your life. How do you find that power to focus on other people? You start by realizing how much God loves you. The moment you begin to understand how much God loves you, you don't have to prove yourself anymore. Because you're secure in God's love, you don't have to spend your life trying to impress other people.

Do you know how freeing and enjoyable it is to live life that way? When you're secure in your relationship with Christ, you're no longer pressured by everyone else's expectations. Your identity and self-worth are in Christ—not in what others might think of you. God's love frees you to love others fearlessly.

- What insecurities or fears are keeping you from opening your life and heart to someone, whether it's a friend or family member?
- When have you experienced freedom in a relationship? What characteristics in you and the other person helped that relationship be free of fear?
- How do you think God feels about you? How could that understanding change your relationships?

I encourage you to spend some time on these questions. Be prayerful and seek Him for the answers, be real with Him and yourself. Find someone to discuss your findings and develop a plan to keep each other accountable to living for Him and changing the world as you were created to do.

Remember as part of God's family.....YOU ARE PART OF AN AWESOME FAMILY!!

God bless each of you, and may the Lord continue to shine His face upon you. We at Chief Ministries pray for you daily and are believing God's best for each of you.

Ms. Chief (aka Ms.G)

If you want to know more about CHIEF Ministries or would like to be a part, please go to www.chiefministries.com

Christ's Heart In Every Felon



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