

THE RELATIONSHIP CLOCK

By Pastor David Towner

The Pharisees were all about "what we do". The Sadducees were all about "what we know". But believers are all about "who we are" in Christ. The Relationship Clock gives a visual of the relational discipleship model of Jesus Christ.

The clock represents five purposes seen in The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40) and The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

The face of the clock represents our worship to God. In Matthew 22:37-38, the first half of The Great Commandment, our Savior commanded everyone to Love God better every day. The relationship clock reminds the believer to strive to make every hour, minute, and second an act of worship in devotion to our Lord.

The 12:00 o'clock position represents authority and the importance of being "Accountable to Someone". Authority is the key to discipleship (Matthew 8:5-10). The apostles were under the authority of Jesus Christ. He was their spiritual mentor. Every believer needs a mentor to become more Christ-like and fulfill their God given purposes.

The 6:00 o'clock position represents humility and the importance of being "Responsible to Someone". To grow in our faith, we must humble ourselves in order to be open to learn from and be responsible to another. The mentee places the mentor in authority over them. The apostles were responsible to

Jesus. He challenged, encouraged, and lived out His five purposes in front of the apostles (mentee's). The apostles watched Christ's life and therefore what they learned was more caught than taught. They caught the importance of loving God (worship) and being under authority and learning from others (discipleship). They caught the importance of loving others by meeting the needs of believers and unbelievers (ministry) and hanging out with friends who are believers (fellowship). They also caught the importance of praying for and leading unbelievers to salvation (evangelism). The goal is for each believer to be a mentee and become a spiritual mentor to another.

The center of the clock represents ministry. The second half of The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:39-40) tells us to love others better every day. As we learn to love God better (worship) we develop an attitude of Christ (Philippians 2:5-9). We learn to love others as Jesus



loves us; sacrificially, selflessly, with a servant's heart, and in full submission to God. The mentor encourages the mentee to love their family members, co-workers, teammates, neighbors, and those they just meet as Christ loves us.

The 3:00 o'clock arrow represents fellowship and the importance of "Hanging Out with Someone". The mentee is encouraged to be in community through small groups to develop closer relationships. Every believer needs these "refrigerator friends"ⁱ to do life with to grow in the faith. The mentor challenges the mentee to continue to nurture these friendships. There are many examples of these kind of friendships. The apostles had each other. David and Jonathan were great friends; protecting, encouraging, and enjoying each other's company (1 Samuel 18). And many believe Lazarus was a great friend to Jesus (John 11).

The 9:00 o'clock arrow represents evangelism and the importance of "Rescuing Others". The mentee is challenged to daily pray for at least eight people in their sphere of influence that do not know Christ or are far from Him. This is called our "MY8" list and is central to the relational part of evangelism. The mentee is encouraged to do *good deeds*, to produce *good will* within their sphere of influence, so they can eventually tell the *good news*.

The mentor prepares the mentee to give good answers to those they pray for (1 Peter 3:15). The mentee is challenged to develop and memorize a short testimony and learn a simple gospel presentation using four verses.

- Romans 3:23
- Romans 6:23
- John 3:16
- Romans 10:9

And the mentee is challenged to do life together with their unbelieving friends through "one on one connections" and "Matthew Parties"ⁱⁱ for adults and for teens.ⁱⁱⁱ Through relational evangelism every believer becomes a soul winner within their sphere of influence. The hope is many will come to the saving knowledge of Christ. Some will accept Christ quickly while others, like Nicodemus (John 3), will take time to follow.

DAILY/WEEKLY/MONTHLY EVALUATION

Use the relationship clock in your daily time with God. If your daily time is in the morning (like mine), then use the clock to evaluate the past day. If your daily time is in the evening, then evaluate that day. I journal so I draw a circle with vertical line and horizontal lines going through it to like the relationship clock. Then I put a number down from 1 (low) to 10 (high) for each purpose for that day. If I had a very low or high number I explain how I came to that evaluation. You can also do a weekly and monthly evaluation using the same number system. I suggest you write down how you came to each evaluation number for each purpose when you do a weekly and monthly evaluation. These are the question questions I ask myself while completing my evaluation.

1. Did I love God today (this week/this month)? How? (Worship)
2. Did I pray for others to know Christ or tell others about Christ today (this week/this month)? How? (Evangelism)
3. Did I connect with God's people today (this week/this month)? How? (Fellowship)
4. Did I love others like Christ loves me today (this week/this month)? How? (Ministry)

5. Did I connect with my mentor today (this week/this month)? How? (Discipleship)

Unfortunately, many don't believe self-evaluation is a worthwhile spiritual practice. They would be wrong. Self-evaluation is Biblical.

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test! (ESV)

Lamentations 3:40

Let us examine our ways and test them and let us return to the LORD. (NIV)

Psalms 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me and lead me in the everlasting way. (NASB)

Self-evaluation takes guts. It's practicing transparency with God and with others (mentor and accountability partners) you trust so you can cultivate a healthy spiritual life. It takes time. It takes effort. It's not easy. But the rewards will positively affect your life and relationships right now and for eternity. Enjoy using the Relationship Clock and cultivating your relationship with Christ and others.

ⁱ Refrigerator friends are those who feel comfortable enough with you to let you just come into the home, open their fridge, and enjoy. Refrigerator friends are family and treat each other as such.

ⁱⁱ One concern of reaching out to the lost is the possibility of being drawn back into our old sinful patterns. We are called to build relationships with the lost. We are shown in Luke 5:27 a way to reach out to our lost friends without falling back into sin. After Levi, who later was called Matthew, accepted Christ as Savior and Lord he soon invited Jesus to a party. The party included his non-believing friends. The Pharisees disapproved of Jesus attending the party but he came with a purpose; to save. The key is Matthew and Jesus controlled the party. We must consciously design get-togethers and events that would draw our non-believing friends in order to expose them to Christ. Just like Levi, the believer controls the party, protects themselves from falling back into sin, and opens the door to tell their friends about Christ.

ⁱⁱⁱ For students this is very important. A student may want to go to a party with his or her lost friends with the good intention of cultivating the friendships. Before the student attends the party he or she should talk to those in authority (parents, mentor, Christian friends) and ask if this is a good idea or not. If those in authority suggest to the student not to go to the party, then he or she should heed the advice. Rescuing someone should not be license to hang out and sin. And spiritual growth is hindered if the importance of authority is not fully taught and caught. Students, parents, youth leaders, and the OWC church leaders must make a conscious effort to set up "Matthew Parties" where students can invite their lost friends to cultivate these friendships and to hear about Jesus in fun and relevant environments.