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Relationships Matter

Lead Article by Todd Pruitt
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Keep your contact information current. The lifeline of communication to our members is through correct contact information, i.e. key contact names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses. Send all updates to patti@churchco-op.org. Help us keep you informed of the latest in events and savings from our vendors.

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From the Director

Another meeting? Is it really necessary for us to meet so often? Do I have to attend? Those are three questions that I often hear at business luncheons or social gatherings. For some, it is a matter of the length of the meeting and that they could be more productive back at their desk doing what they call “real work.” Others feel they do not really need to be in the meeting because it does not concern them in a direct way.

At the CO+OP, we have our “pop-up” meetings when we gather for specific input from team members, but we also have our regular weekly meetings that are unique because they cover more than goals and accomplishments. They are centered around relationships.

We care deeply about those we serve. When our Relationship Managers learn of a ministry need while they are out visiting, they take that personally and bring it to the team for prayer. We pray for our Board of Directors and Vendors by name. We pray for each other and our families. Why? Because Relationships Matter.

The more we know each other, the deeper and stronger the relationship. It has been my experience over the past 48 years in ministry that organizations develop deeper connections among team members when we do more than work together. We must also play together. Sometimes that means an entire day outside of the office with team-building fun. Other times it may be an ice cream social break or a round of a fun game.

Whether you are struggling in your relationship with a spouse, having a tough time dealing with criticism, or struggling with a broken relationship, I hope you find this issue of *CO+OP Magazine* helpful. This is one of my favorite issues because it touches on the core of every human being—the need for healthy relationships. God intended for us to be relational.

Do not miss what a vendor and a member have to say about their relationship with the CO+OP in the “Something to Talk About” section beginning on page 34. You can also learn more about our newest team members, Melany Sanchez (Marketing Manager) and Reagan Bon (Staff Editor), on page 37.

Discover more about our newest Vendor, Goff Companies, LLC. They have been to our annual conference for a few years now as a sponsor, and I had the privilege of visiting with them at their office in Dallas a few times. They have a ministry mindset and come with high recommendations from those who have utilized their services.

Find your favorite quiet space, unplug from technology, and enjoy reading some fantastic thoughts on building stronger and healthier relationships.

Patti Malott, CEO/Executive Director



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- Acting as a liaison and advocate in time of need
- Providing relevant educational opportunities at a reduced rate through the annual Texas Ministry ConferenceSM
- Providing professional networking experiences
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Ministry-Focused: *We are solely focused on helping ministries such as churches, schools, and nonprofits.*

- We are focused on saving ministry dollars.
- We are focused on providing quality education.
- We are focused on connecting people and resources.
- We are focused on vetting vendors that are committed to serving ministries.
- We are focused on maintaining a ministry-focused atmosphere within our organization.

Committed to Serving: *We are committed to expressing an internal motivation of putting others before ourselves.*

- We are committed to serving God.
- We are committed to serving by putting each other first within our organization.
- We are committed to serving our members as we connect them with resources.
- We are committed to serving our vendors through communication, networking, and connections with members.
- We are committed to serving the broader faith-based community.

Devoted to Excellence: *We are devoted to putting forth quality effort in all that we do.*

- We are devoted to bringing on vendors with high-quality products, services, and education.
- We are devoted to excellent communication, both internally and externally.
- We are devoted to excellence in our efforts to serve our vendors, members, and prospects.
- We are devoted to excellence in producing an instructive, cohesive, and professional magazine.
- We are devoted to excellence in producing a relevant conference focused on education, networking, and resources.

Faithful to Integrity: *Because we answer to a higher calling, we seek to do what is right -- even to our own disadvantage, if necessary.*

- We are faithful in honoring God above man.
- We are faithful in treating each other with integrity.
- We are faithful in being transparent with our members.
- We are faithful in dealing fairly with our vendors.
- We are faithful in not compromising integrity when faced with competition.



Dealing with Criticism

I imagine most have heard the saying, “There are two things certain in life: death and taxes.” I might add that in your life — a life built around relationships — you could easily add “criticism” to the list of things certain. No matter who you are or what you do, criticism is unavoidable. The kindest, most easy-going pacifist alive cannot go unscathed by criticism. Even when you feel you are at your best, someone will find a reason to complain and make his disapproval known. Maybe you’ve been that person. Perhaps even as you read this article, you can think of someone you’ve recently criticized, whether you vocalized it or not. Sooner or later, you will once again be on the receiving end of criticism. How are you going to respond? How can you demonstrate wisdom in the face of disapproval and censure?

First, it’s wise to consider the source of the criticism. Make it a habit to simply ignore any criticism that comes anonymously. If someone is not willing to put a name and face behind the critique — to own up to his words — don’t feel obligated to put much thought or weight to it. Give yourself permission to dismiss the anonymous critic. The same can be said for the antagonist, the individual that is simply mean-spirited or always finding something negative to say. But what if the source is an ally? These are friends, trusted brothers and sisters in Christ that have proven their love for you. Their criticism may still sting a little, but it is often given with a kind heart and the best intentions. When an ally speaks, listen closely and believe they have your best interest at heart. Proverbs 27:6 says, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.”

Second, consider the content of the criticism. You must be brutally honest with yourself, knowing that our human tendency is to immediately dismiss any and all criticism

as untrue, unnecessary, and unworthy. Is the criticism factual? While this is more often the case when the source is an ally, even the antagonist can give you criticism worth contemplating. Whether or not the criticism is given with the intent to hurt or mock you, if you respond with humility and thoughtfulness, you might find something worth applying to your life. God uses many different people with many different motives to mature His children. However, if — after honestly examining the content — you can, with a clear conscience, identify it as false, dismiss it and move on.

Third, consider your response to criticism. Seldom do you get to control the timing or the content of criticism that comes your way, but you ALWAYS get to control how and when you respond. James 1:19–20 says, “Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” When criticized, it’s easy to give way to heightened emotions and elevated blood pressure, and to form an immediate rebuttal. In contrast, be quick to hear. Be wise enough not to interrupt your critic. Let him finish his thoughts instead of immediately firing off defensive words, which often makes the other party respond likewise. Before you know it, both of you are acting and reacting in anger, and nothing is getting accomplished. Be slow to speak. I suggest you wait 24 hours before responding to criticism. During that time, pray for your critic; often you will find it is hard to remain angry when you are honestly praying for someone. The way you respond to criticism will leave a lasting impression. Wouldn’t you prefer to be remembered as gracious rather than bad-tempered, close-minded, and self-centered? Proverbs 15:1 reminds us, “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” Be slow to anger.

A fourth consideration — arguably the most important thing to consider when criticism comes your way — is the person of Christ. If there were ever a man who had the right to fight back, to mock the scoffers, and to defend Himself, it was Christ. 1 Peter 2:21–23 wonderfully proclaims, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” If Christ was mocked and ridiculed, what makes you think that you are above criticism?

In considering Christ, consider also the command to love. The second greatest commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself. Who is your neighbor? You do not get to choose your neighbor, and there are no stipulations tied to that command. Christ reminds you in His modeled prayer, “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14). Remember to look to Scripture as the most important resource for life and godliness. Want to be a better parent? Look to Scripture. Want to make better decisions in life? Look to Scripture. Falling into sin? Looking for grace and need encouragement? It’s found in Scripture. Scripture should be our first thought, but often it is our last resort. Might I exhort you to allow God’s Word to be the foundation for how you handle criticism?

Finally, when faced with criticism, consider the bigger picture. Criticism is real, and it can hurt; but we must find comfort in what Christ said in John 16:33: “I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” ✦



CJ Malott

CJ Malott is a staff elder at Founders Baptist Church in Spring, Texas. His current role as the Family Pastor allows him to provide leadership to the families at the church by overseeing the Preschool and Children’s ministry, while investing in the spiritual growth of the parents. CJ has served as a pastor for over 23 years, but most recently served as the Chief Operating Officer of the CO+OP prior to joining the staff at Founders.



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The Influence of Technology on Relationships

It was the evening of June 11, 2016. I sunk into my lounge chair with my cell phone. I logged on to eHarmony and began searching for the girl of my dreams. After fifteen minutes of swiping, I came across a profile that stopped me in my tracks. August 30th of this year, Melissa and I celebrated six years of marriage. Without the use of technology, I would not have found the girl of my dreams.

As evidenced by the actual story above, technology plays an increasingly prevalent role in 21st century society. Technology's dominance in our everyday lives touches not only work, business, and travel, but also our personal relationships. It's common today for people to meet one another online and carry on entire conversations before ever coming face-to-face with each other. However, technology may interfere with developing these relationships as well.

For many of us, **a typical day begins by reaching for our smartphone** soon after we wake up to check email, respond to texts, review the weather, adjust the thermostat, and check on traffic. The rest of the day, we're continuously on a tablet, mobile device, laptop, or desktop for personal and/or professional use. We are messaging, browsing, friending, tweeting, and sharing throughout the day. It has gone so far that many will confess secretly that their cell phone is their friend in the restroom too.

Advancements in technology have changed how people communicate, giving us many options such as chatting, text messaging, email, social media, and video calls. **People all over the planet can connect and build relationships faster and more effectively.**

The ubiquity of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have paved the way for various connections and relationships. Dating websites such as eHarmony are also regularly used by people interested in

finding love in non-traditional manners. The ways in which modern-day relationships are approached have been largely influenced by the existence of information technology.

But these technologies often come at a cost. Even though the borders between technology and relationships have become blurred, it's important to remember that technology in and of itself is not evil. Technology is a tool that has added many benefits to society, but it also brings its share of challenges to relationships. Let's explore some of the pros and cons between technology and relationships.

Technology and Relationship Pros

Relationships Are Strengthened

In many instances, technology brings people closer together and strengthens relationships. An example would be two people who met one another online and then later go out in person for coffee or a meal. In such cases, people develop ongoing relationships with individuals they would never have met if not for technology. I am a great example of this, having met my wife online six years ago. I would have never found her if it were not for a social media website.

Development of Professional Connections

Individuals who build entire careers from working online, as well as freelance workers, are direct offshoots of technology. In both instances, professional relationships are imperative to success, a dynamic that has only come about due to technology. It is not uncommon for influencers on social media to make six figure salaries. The opportunity to find large financial gains has exploded due to technology.

Distance Barriers Are Reduced

In the past, methods of developing and maintaining long distance relationships were limited. Back in my day, the

most common method was to correspond with each other by letters that were delivered by post offices. Now, being thousands of miles apart does not have to stop individuals who truly want to be in contact with one another. Zoom, Facebook, Instagram, Skype, FaceTime, and so many other platforms provide opportunities for people to remain connected in real-time via video without the need to travel.

Preparation for the Future

Technology's influence on our everyday lives is not going away. In fact, it's increasing as various forms of artificial intelligence are developed and integrated into society, causing a greater effect of technology on relationships. For these reasons, individuals of all ages and backgrounds need to understand how to use technology to remain connected with other people. Finding and securing an office job these days largely depends upon the technology savvy of the seeker. If you are not up on technology, your chances of being a top candidate or top performer are much lower than in years past.

Technology and Relationship Cons

Avoidance of Real-Life Interactions

Technology can be used to avoid having uncomfortable real-life conversations. It's easier to type a passive-aggressive message than to sit down with someone and have a face-to-face conversation about a difficult topic. Steering clear of uncomfortable interactions in real life may seem harmless, but in most cases, it can be problematic later down the line.

Can Lead to Internet Addiction

Because technology is so pervasive, too much intake has the power to ruin lives. Too much of a good thing is almost always problematic, and technology is no exception. Spending a fair amount of time on social media platforms is one thing, but when technology begins to interfere with individuals' abilities to engage with others in the real world, this is when issues arise. As much good as technology can do, it should never become so powerful in someone's life that he or she is psychologically dependent upon it.

Real Life Distractions

Complaints about people using their phones or tablets at inopportune times such as dinner, meetings, etc., are almost universal pet peeves. Sometimes, individuals can become so preoccupied with checking the news or reading their Google alerts that they neglect the relationships and people that mean so much to them. Next time you go out to eat, pause and

look around. You will see entire families on their phones, not conversing at all. This is inherently problematic and can certainly lead to fractured relationships if the behavior is habitual.

Fake Identity Creation

For the most part, the internet allows users to present themselves any way that they choose. Since so many sites permit anonymity, unscrupulous individuals can present themselves as someone totally different than who they are in real life. It requires more wisdom now to filter out those who seek to portray themselves as someone they are not. Of course, the scammers out in cyberspace keep up with technology too. They are constantly coming up with new, crafty ways to trick innocent users. When in doubt, don't click, and certainly don't enter your password.

Exploiting Technology's Influence on Relationships

Understanding the differences between the pros and cons of technology on relationships is an important first step. However, everyone is responsible for his or her own experiences and outcomes.

The positive impacts that one person has from technology don't necessarily apply to someone who abuses technology or uses it in a manner that isn't conducive to his own wellbeing. Similarly, an individual who uses technology to further himself professionally will have a different outcome long term than someone who becomes a social media addict. It's entirely dependent on the ways technology is used.

The bottom line is that everyone is responsible for his or her individual outcome. Being aware of the many ways in which technology can help or harm your relationships will prove valuable as you navigate life in the 21st century. Like all tools, technology can reap great benefits or tragic consequences. Some people have found that fasting from technology for a period of time can be very helpful in analyzing the impact technology has on one's life and relationships. +



Doug Reed

Vice President and COO
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It's not easy to find vendors you can trust. And when money is on the line, it's even more important to make sure you won't be taken advantage of. That's why we vet our vendors very carefully, and we make sure they're a good fit for our members. We've done the due diligence so you can make decisions quickly and with confidence.

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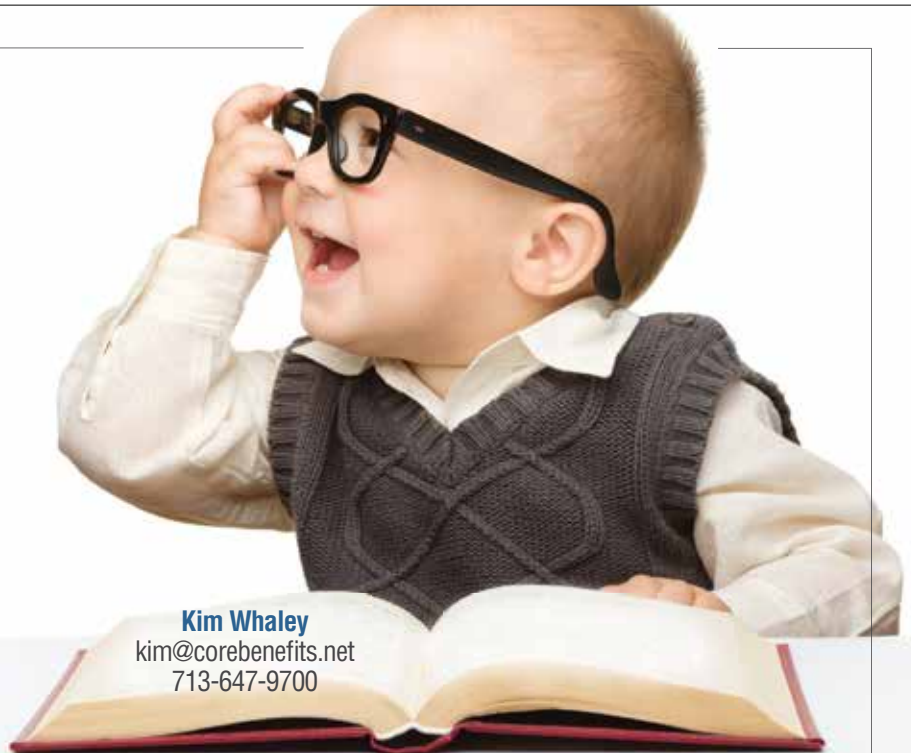
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**Renewing the
Foundations:**
How to Flourish
in Your Marriage

Phillip & Cheryl Marshall



Our oldest son wanted to study business in college but was unsure whether to major in accounting, finance, or management. A trusted friend and businessman suggested accounting since it was the foundation, the language (as it were), for all other areas of business. Someone trained in accounting is prepared not only to interact with, but also to branch out and succeed in, other business-related fields.

Marriage is sort of like that too. Our human existence consists of intricate networks of relationships at varying levels of depth: with parents, children, passing acquaintances, best friends, schoolteachers, church members, pastors, bosses, co-workers, civil authorities, and so on. But the marriage relationship occupies a central, foundational position vis-à-vis the range of other human connections. Flourishing marriages have a tendency to underwrite flourishing in other areas of life: children feel secure, neighborhoods thrive, churches stabilize, schools educate.

At the same time, we also can see how the deterioration of marriage is undermining these same spheres of life. Overcome with a haunting sense of futility, we too might exclaim with the psalmist, "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Ps 11:3). What we can't do is pretend that foundations are useless (Matt 7:26) or tear down our houses with our own hands (Prov 14:1); instead, we must commit ourselves to renew and fortify the time-tested, trustworthy foundations that our Lord has given us in his Word (Matt 7:24–25). In this article, then, we want to remind you (and ourselves) of some of those basic, foundational truths about the marriage relationship. These, if understood and received, will lead to a holy flourishing in this most fundamental of human relations and, in turn, will spill over into great blessings for those with whom your lives intersect.

A Foundational Relationship

The fact that marital relationships function as the foundational social units of society is clear from the first pages of Scripture. In the creation summary of Genesis 1, we discover that man as "male and female" are the image of God and constitute the pinnacle of his creative work. Throughout this chapter we hear the familiar ring that "it was good," but when mankind finally appears embodied in complementary genders, the evaluation is heightened: "Behold, it was very good" (Gen 1:31).

In Genesis 2 the wide-angle lens now zeroes in on humanity's relationship to everything else. What we hear in the garden is startling. Something is not good: "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen 2:18). Adam's naming the animals leads to the conclusion that there is no helper corresponding to him. God already knows this; the exercise is designed to help Adam realize that as he names the beasts who exist in male-female pairs, such a counterpart does not exist for himself. And so, God fashions out of man the first woman and presents her to him, thereby instituting the first marriage and laying down a programmatic statement for all other marriages until the eternal state: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen 2:24).

Consider this: if God designs marriage generally to be the foundational human relationship for human flourishing, then he intends for your marriage in particular to be a fruitful source of blessings for others. Tend the garden of your marriage well.

A Permanent Relationship

God has not only designed marriage to be a permanent institution from creation to consummation; he has also designed your own marriage to be permanent during your lifetime. We saw that the paradigm of marriage in the garden involves the process of leaving behind parents to create an enduring marriage. What is the significance of this? For one, it means that our own children are with us on loan from God. If you have children, there was once a time when your marriage predated them, and there will once again be a time when they've grown up and left you and your spouse to yourselves.

When the nest is empty, the marriage relationship remains. What kind of relationship will that be? Sadly, many couples quit nurturing the marriage, instead making child-rearing the



basis of their married lives together. When the kids are gone, what bound the parents together disappears as well, leaving them to wonder what they have in common anymore. It doesn't have to be this way. Continue pursuing and investing in an ever-deepening relationship of love with your spouse.

You probably know someone who genuinely feels a greater bond with a child than with his or her own spouse. Have you ever stopped to think about the paradoxical way that Scripture applies the expression one flesh? The phrase is used of the husband-wife union, but never of the parent-child relationship. Of the two sorts of relationship, we might have expected it to be otherwise. After all, there is a literal flesh-and-blood sharing between parent and child, whereas husbands and wives arise out of different flesh-and-blood family units. What does it tell us about marriage, then, if God describes husbands and wives as "one flesh"? Here is a physical, social, legal, and emotional unity that supersedes all other human relationships and persists until death.

Did you know that the Bible also describes marriage in covenantal terms? Interestingly, two passages that reprimand marital unfaithfulness frame the moral character of that act as betrayal of "your wife by covenant" (Mal 2:14) and as forgetting "the covenant of her God" (Prov 2:17). As a covenantal institution, marriage involves making solemn and lifelong commitments both to each other, and, more importantly, to the Lord himself. Sometimes we have counseled couples whose marriages were so painful that they had bought into the lie of the false dilemma: either we get divorced, or we co-exist in a pathetic marriage. With God's grace and help, there is a third option: instead of allowing divorce to be an escape hatch, commit to working on your marriage until you are honoring God and each other.





An Intimate Relationship

Sometimes marriage is considered from a purely functional viewpoint in light of the creation mandate of Genesis 1: procreation and exercising dominion. While the marriage relationship includes these functions, it encompasses much more. The marriage bed, for example, by God's design produces not only children, but also mutual pleasure for the husband and wife (Prov 5:15–20; 1 Cor 7:2–5). Such physical intimacy and affection should be pursued and not withheld or used as a bargaining tool.

In addition, social intimacy characterizes the marriage relationship. The same passages which speak of the covenant of marriage also speak of the companionship of marriage. Mal 2:15 confronts the husband who is faithless to his "companion and . . . wife by covenant," and Prov 2:17 admonishes the wife "who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God." What this means is that our good God has chosen to resolve the problem of human loneliness by providing a relationship marked by the deepest social bond, one which shares every area of life and which exercises and sanctifies the full range of human interactions.

Ultimately unable to hide when living in such close quarters, husbands and wives are forced to learn how to speak truth in love, to confess sin and seek forgiveness when they have wronged the other, to extend forgiveness and be reconciled when they have been wronged, to share resources and work together toward common goals, to seek God's will together under a shared commitment to love the Lord more than they love each other, to die to self. Thus trained to interact in godly friendship at the most intimate levels, you find yourself modeling and passing those skills on to others in your sphere of influence.

A Mysterious Relationship

A final characteristic of marriage is that it points beyond itself to spiritual realities. In Ephesians 5, the Apostle Paul explains that the one-flesh relationship exemplified by a husband's self-sacrificing love and a wife's respectful submission ultimately reveals the mystery of the relationship between Christ and church. Husband, if the watching world gained their understanding of Jesus by studying how you lead your wife, what kind of Christ would they come to know? Wife, if the world came to understand what the church should be like by watching how you follow your husband's leadership, what vision of the church would they gain?

Unredeemed men and women are powerless to reflect these spiritual realities, but through the grace of the gospel, Jesus makes them willing and able. Have you noticed from Ephesians 5 that each party's responsibility in the marital structure is grounded in Christ? Husbands and wives are each accountable directly to the Lord, and motivated by the Lord, to fulfill their roles. The Christian husband loves his wife as Christ loves the church; thus, every act and attitude of leadership is for the good of his wife. The Christian wife respects and follows her husband as unto the Lord; thus, when looking to her husband, she looks beyond him in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ who leads them both.

God's grace changes everything. When our Christian marriages flourish according to God's foundational purposes by the power of the gospel, we will experience the good blessings this relationship brings, and in turn, others will be blessed as well. ✦

Phillip & Cheryl Marshall



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*Made for
Relationship*
by Todd Pruitt



Relationships are, in a way, the water in which we swim. We cannot adequately conceive of life apart from relationships. If asked to describe ourselves, we will inevitably refer to ourselves in relation to others. We are someone's child, friend, or neighbor. Most of us are, or will be, someone's spouse and parent. We are each part of a particular nation and family. For Christians, we are part of a church. Each of these categories represents networks of relationships. In fact, try to describe yourself without any reference to any relationship, and you will find the description inherently lacking precisely because relationships are so fundamental to who you are.

Have you ever thought about why this is? Why are relationships not merely incidental, but essential to who we are? The answer to that question is theological. Humanity's essentially relational quality owes to our being made by God in His image. So, to fully understand and appreciate why we are inextricably tied to and in need of relationships, we must look to who God is and what He is like.

The Bible begins, appropriately enough, with the account of God making all things out of nothing by the power of His Word. The Book of Genesis tells us that when God completed His work of creation, He pronounced it all "very good" (Genesis 1:31). How could it have been anything

less than very good? Who of us living east of Eden can imagine the sheer goodness of creation before the fall? There was no sin, no decay, and no death. There was no enmity between the man and his Creator, only unhindered communion. The garden paradise was the verdant temple of the Lord's glory. The man was given the sacred duty to tend and expand the garden's borders across the face of the earth. In Eden, the man's work was only ever satisfying and fruitful. Everything he put his hands to responded willingly. No wonder those of us who live in this tragically fallen world cannot escape the feeling that something is deeply wrong. We long for that "city with foundations whose designer and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

Interestingly, in the account of the "very good" creation, there is one thing that God pronounces "not good." Specifically we are told: "Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him'" (Genesis 2:18). As Adam surveyed all that God had made, he noticed that among the animals, each was matched with others of its own kind. This was the one thing the man lacked. And he felt its lack. The man without the company of a fellow human was the only "not good" thing present in an entire cosmos that was otherwise only "very good."

Don't misunderstand. God did not fail to foresee the deep need of the first man to be in relationship with another human. This detail of the man's need described in Genesis is given to us so that we may be instructed. And what God would have us know is that even in paradise, man could not flourish so long as he was bereft of relationship with a fellow human. Even in Eden, the man was not entirely himself so long as he was without another person who was like him, a fellow image-bearer of God.

What this tells us is that the human need for relationships is not a relic of the fall or a consequence of sin, as though being without sin would make men and women fully independent of one another. No. The human need to be in relationship with others is God-given. It is a part of our humanness. In other words, our need for relationships is part of the very goodness of our original design.

Relationships and the Triune God

To grasp why God made His image-bearers fundamentally relational, we must look to God as He is in Himself. God is undivided and eternally one in essence. Christians can gladly confess the Shema as did the generation under Moses: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4). Nevertheless, the one and only God is not a singularity or "monad" as in the brand of monotheism observed in Judaism or Islam.

The one God – the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God revealed in Jesus and confessed by the Apostles – is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To use the historic language of the church, God is one in Essence and three in Person. A mystery to be sure. But it is a mystery clearly and progressively revealed in Scripture beginning in the creation account when God states, "Let Us make man in Our own image" (Genesis 1:26). Given that humanity is

made in the image of God and not angels, this statement should be understood as an intra-Trinitarian dialogue. This is relationship at its most glorious and mysterious. Though we cannot wholly comprehend it, there is something profoundly relational about God's very essence.

Self-Sufficiency

God's essential "threeness" helps explain His perfect self-sufficiency. Though God is, within Himself, an eternal relationship between Persons, we cannot say that God needs relationships. He has no needs outside of Himself because He has always existed as an eternal communion of perfect love within Himself. God's "threeness" belongs to His eternal essence, not as a response to some need within Himself. God, unlike His human creatures, depends upon nothing outside of Himself. When Paul spoke to the gathered philosophers in Athens, he stated:

"The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:24–25).

None of this suggests that God is some impersonal, unmoving, inanimate object. Far from it! God is Persons in relationship. He is dynamic but never changing. God's self-sufficiency is that of the Father, Son, and Spirit in eternal and inseparable communion. God did not create mankind because there was anything lacking in Him. He was not lonely, for He has always been the Three in One.

But God did not design His human creatures to be self-sufficient. He designed us to live in networks of relationships. And while this represents a need on our part, it does not represent a flaw. Indeed, as we saw

above, even in paradise man was missing something so long as he existed only unto himself.

God Is Love

Scripture tells us that “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16). God does not merely do loving things. Rather, He is love and has been for all eternity. But love requires giving and receiving. And it is precisely God’s Triune nature which explains how there is giving and receiving, and therefore love, within the one God. In His very essence, God gives and receives perfect, holy love between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So, God is love in the most relational sense that love can possibly be.

In order for us to love, we must be in relationships. Love presupposes the kind of giving and receiving upon which relationships depend. Love requires specific actions toward others. We can never love as we ought to if we live in isolation from others. And since God is love, He has called His image-bearers to love. Indeed, Christians are expected to love even our enemies (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27).

The Sum of the Law

The Christian life is characterized by a variety of virtues, but the highest of Christian virtues is love: “...but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13). As we noted above, love requires attitudes and acts toward others. Love cannot grow or be properly expressed in isolation. Relationships are the air that love breathes, the soil in which it grows.

There is a fundamentally relational calculus in everything God commands. In reference to the Ten Commandments, theologians speak of the two tables of God’s moral law. The first table consists of Commandments one through four. The second table of the law consists of Commandments

five through ten. The first table of the law governs our relationship with God, while the second table of the law governs our relationships with others. Isn’t it remarkable that God’s everlasting moral law, the law which is to be honored here on earth and in eternity, makes sense only in light of our relationships with God and others?

Do you see the connection? Having no other gods, being free of idols, hallowing the Lord’s name, and honoring the Sabbath are ways that we love God. Likewise, honoring our parents and abstaining from theft, adultery, bearing false witness, and coveting are central to how we love our neighbor properly. The everlasting moral law of God is all about love, and love is inextricably tied to relationships.

Indeed, God’s eternal moral law is summed up in the command to love. Jesus quoted the words of Deuteronomy 6:4 when asked what the most important commandment is: “And He answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself’” (Luke 10:27). The essence of God’s law is to love. And we cannot love apart from relationships.

One Another

It is difficult, if not impossible, to think about relationships and not think also about pain and loss. Sometimes the challenges are so great and the costs so high that we wonder if relationships are worth the trouble. Paul Tripp and Tim Lane write:

Some of our deepest joys and most painful hurts have been in relationships. There are times we wish we could live alone and other times we are glad we don’t. What is certain is that we all have been shaped significantly by relationships that are full of both sorrow and joy.

In the hands of God, our relationships are means by which He sanctifies us. God uses the good, bad, happy, and sad experiences in our relationships as means to make us more holy. Think of the wealth of instructions given to us in Scripture about how we are to treat one another, even those who mistreat us.

Consider the many ways we are instructed in the New Testament with regard to “one another.” We are to love, comfort, care for, serve, instruct, forgive, welcome, submit to, admonish, be patient with, share with, speak gently to, be kind to, fellowship with, live in harmony with, encourage, build up, exhort, confess to, and honor one another. There is simply no way to conceive of the Christian life apart from the complex of “one anothers” with whom we are called into relationship.

Relationship with God

Of course, of all our relationships we must consider first our relationship with God. Indeed, apart from an actual growing relationship with the Lord, everything else in our lives will be a loss. From the beginning, God made man for fellowship. Prior to the crushing disaster of the fall described in Genesis chapter 3, the man and woman enjoyed unhindered communion with their Creator. Sin broke that fellowship and placed mankind under the curse of judgment.

The Scriptures teach that because of sin, mankind is now born into a state of enmity with God. Rather than being born as children of God, we are born “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:1–3). But in His grace, God was determined to redeem what had been destroyed. He would restore the beauty of what sin had vandalized and corrupted. Most essentially, God would restore a people to a right relationship with Himself. The story of human history may be properly

understood as the account of what God has done and will finally do to make sinners His sons and daughters.

And this is precisely what Jesus accomplished in His death and resurrection. When He was nailed to a cross and lifted above the killing grounds of Golgotha, Jesus was paying the ransom price for our souls. He was paying the price that divine justice demanded to not only remove the curse of sin, but to transform sinners into sons and daughters.

J.I. Packer writes:

You sum up the whole of the New Testament teaching in a single phrase, if you speak of it as a revelation of the Fatherhood of the holy Creator. In the same way, you sum up the whole of New Testament religion if you describe it as the knowledge of God as one’s holy Father. If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. ✦

Todd Pruitt



Todd Pruitt has been the Senior Pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church (PCA) since 2013. Originally from Houston, Texas, Todd was raised and educated as a Southern Baptist. He is a graduate of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City. In his free time, Todd is a cohost along with Carl Trueman of the Mortification of Spin podcast and blog. Since 1990, Todd has been married to Karen, and they have three children.

¹ Tim Lane and Paul Tripp, *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making* (Greensboro: New Growth Press, 2006) p. 6

² J.I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove: IVP 1973) p. 182

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MENDING BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS



by Arlen Busenitz

Relationships bring some of the greatest joys in life, but also some of the greatest heartbreak. From the home to the church to the workplace, the world is littered with broken relationships and relationships on life support.

We would love a three-step plan that would fix any relationship in 15 minutes or less. Because of the sin nature and the complexity of human nature, there is not a set formula. However, the best option is to dive into God's Word to see what principles and commands apply, and to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit to walk through the process.

Here are seven principles to prayerfully apply to your relationships:

Principle #1: Prevent relationship breakdown.

I grew up on a farm where I quickly learned that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” The same principle applies to relationships. Preventing breakdown is far easier than fixing it.

A quick survey of Scripture reveals how God wants us to treat others in our relationships:

- Treat others like we want to be treated (Matthew 7:12).
- Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).
- Overlook wrongs, yet remember there is a time to confront (Galatians 6:1–5, 1 Peter 4:8).
- God loved us when we did not deserve it, and we must love and respect others even when we feel they don’t deserve it (1 John 4:11).
- Treat all people with kindness, respect, and love, because all people are created in the image of God (James 3:9).
- Set boundaries with unrepentant individuals (Matthew 18; 2 Timothy 3; 1 Corinthians 15:33).
- Be slow to anger. Quick to forgive. Treat everyone with kindness (Ephesians 4).
- Take the initiative to reconcile (Matthew 5:21–24).

Imagine if everyone lived like God wanted us to! However, due to “humanness” and sin in the world, we all fall short. That’s why Scripture lays out more principles.

Principle #2: Build up the “relationship account” and plant “good” seeds.

Relationships are like a money jar. Speaking a kind word, keeping our promises, or taking time for people makes a deposit into the jar. A harsh word, broken promises, or miscommunication makes a withdrawal.

Unfortunately, a kind word may deposit 50 cents while a harsh word removes \$5. A strong or full account allows us to have a high level of trust and weather the storms that slam relationships.

A similar concept is the “you reap what you sow” principle. In other words, our choices today have consequences tomorrow. The “seeds” you are planting each day may seem small and insignificant, but they will bear fruit over time (Galatians 6). That fruit could be sweet and nourishing, or it could be immature, bitter, or even diseased. The health of our marriages and relationships today are based largely on the “seeds” or choices we have made each day over the past months or years.

Principle #3: Ask the four “W’s.” “Why is the relationship broken?” “Why do I want to restore it?” “What is the path to restoration?” “What does a healthy relationship with this person look like?”

Why is the relationship broken?

As a pastor, I have seen many people leave churches. Usually, it is not a one-time event. An “event” may seem like the trigger, but most likely it was a series of events that built to the tipping point. The same applies to virtually every relationship.

People and organizations change and may no longer be the best fit at the current time. However, as believers, we should always leave on good terms, and the relationships should not be full of bitterness.

The five main causes of any relationship breakdown are usually:

- Miscommunication
- Perceived or real wrong or hurt (see list from Principle #1)
- Pride (people not seeing or owning up to their own wrong)
- Not seeking to restore the relationship
- Different values

Why do I want to restore it?

Want the right answer? Because God wants me to. Romans 12:18 states, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” It may not be restored because the other person is unwilling or unrepentant. If we have adequately tried, and the other person is unwilling, don’t worry about it. The above verse gives freedom. Many times, we would rather not go through the pain of restoration, but God wants us to. Again, this will look different in every context.

What does the path to restoring the relationship look like?

Sometimes it is a simple phone call. Other times it could require an arranged series of meetings with outside help.

Sometimes it takes church leadership and counselors (Matthew 18). But get on the path to restoration.

What does a healthy relationship with this person look like?

This takes wisdom from above and sometimes counsel from other people. If someone switches churches, he may no longer regularly fellowship with the people in his previous church, but it is unhealthy if he is going out of his way to avoid them. That could be a warning sign that unforgiveness has reared its ugly head.

If someone has wronged you and not repented when given the chance, a healthy relationship may mean you are still friendly but not spending time together.

Principle #4: Own up to my sin and mistakes.

Having sat through numerous counseling sessions, I have noticed a unique pattern. Person A thinks the relationship problem is 90% the other person's fault and only 10% Person A's fault. Person B thinks it is 90% the other's fault and only 10% Person B's fault.

Jesus is clear (Matthew 5). Own up to your 10%. Even though you may think it's the minority cause, resolve your 10%. It's amazing how, when I resolve my portion, the other person often resolves his part.

Don't wait for the other person to come to you. Take the initiative to repair the relationship and own up to what you have done wrong.

How do we practically do this when we have messed up or sinned against another person?

Principle #5: Use the "Triple A" to resolve your mistakes and sin.

The "Triple A" gives a framework that must be adapted to each situation. For example, being late to an appointment will need to be handled differently than a series of wrongs.

Admit you were wrong in your actions, attitude, and/or how you handled the situation.

Take the initiative to repair the relationship and own up to what you have done wrong.

There is something powerful about just saying, "I was wrong," without giving excuses or blame-shifting.

Apologize.

An apology with "I was wrong" is powerful.

Acknowledge the hurt and pain the other person has experienced and commit to restitution or change (repentance).

As a real estate agent, I nearly lost a deal last-minute. The lender messed up majorly at the 11th hour and put the deal in jeopardy. I applied the biblical principle of seeking to resolve conflict and called the president of the department to explain the situation. His response was priceless: "We messed up. We caused you trouble. We will fix it." There were no excuses or blame-shifting. There was 100 percent ownership and a commitment to take care of the problems. They did.

Owning up to our problem, apologizing, and then changing honors God. Now, sometimes the relationship may not be restored. Perhaps the other person still has hurt he needs to work through. We may need to give him space and just pray. But it's important to remember that by owning up to our part, we have honored God and been a success in His eyes.

Principle #6: It takes one to forgive. Two to reconcile.

Forgiveness is different from reconciliation.

Forgiveness is choosing not to hold a grudge or bitterness towards a person. Forgiveness is forgiving as Christ forgave us and choosing to accept or bear the pain and consequences the other person has caused (Ephesians 4). The offending party can't "pay" or take away the emotional damage. Sure, they can apologize and try to repair damage, but the damage is done. You can either hold a grudge or find freedom by forgiving and letting it go.

With these principles and
God's help, we can seek
to mend our relationships
and honor the Lord.



We should always forgive, primarily because it is commanded of us. God has forgiven us thousands of times, so we should forgive others. The consequences of our not forgiving others include hurting our relationship with God, internally destroying ourselves, and tearing up the church. Bitterness is like drinking poison and hoping the other person gets sick.

Yet, remember that forgiveness is related to, but not the same as, restoration and reconciliation. For two people to be reconciled, both have to admit to their wrongs and repent. Read Matthew 18 for more information about this. I can forgive and should, but the relationship cannot be restored until the other person also owns up to his actions.

Joseph forgave his brothers and did not hold a grudge, but the relationship was not restored until the brothers owned up to their mistakes and rebuilt the trust. As part of forgiveness, Joseph gave them the chance to be restored (Genesis 37–40). Don't fall into the trap of waiting for the other person to come reconcile with you. You have the obligation to go to them.

Principle #7: Embrace the pain to experience the peace.

Admitting we are wrong is painful. Taking actions to resolve conflict is outside of our comfort zone. However, walking through that process produces spiritual growth, honors the Lord, and brings peace. That peace may come from the restored relationship or just from knowing we have done our part.

Broken relationships are a part of life. However, with these principles and God's help, we can seek to mend our relationships and honor the Lord. ✚

Arlen Busenitz



Arlen Busenitz is an energetic speaker who delivers practical, life-changing truths in an interactive and attention-holding style. His passion is to develop strategies and mental frameworks which empower people to operate at a high-performance level and to truly thrive in life using their God-given abilities. He holds a master's in ministry leadership from Luther Rice Seminary.

Arlen has used these strategies in his own life to overcome his fear of water and become an advanced diver, hit fitness and weight loss goals, instill 35 new daily habits over a month period, and attain many business and professional goals. After pastoring for 15 years, Arlen transitioned into business, real estate, and high-performance coaching. He is Chief Operating Officer of Destin Dreamer, a vacation management company in Destin, Florida. Still active in preaching and ministry, Arlen is married with five kids.

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managementmatters

by Jay Harris, MCC

Coaching UP

Coaching is a future-focused process of guided discovery using deep listening, powerful questions, options consideration, and action and accountability to help discover and own courses of action.

There is an inaccurate assumption that a coach tells the coachee how to do his job. This is not true. A coach walks alongside, supporting the processing. He helps the coachee discover his values, strengths, and uniqueness as well as his challenges, limiting beliefs, and misconceptions. He helps the coachee think through the possibilities of action and how he can best move ahead. The coachee is the one who is in charge and who does the heavy lifting, not the coach.

You can easily see how coaching works between the coach and a client. You can understand how you might coach someone under your supervision or even a peer, but how do you COACH UP?

Worst-case scenario — You serve on a “team.” When you get together, the boss gives directions and tells everyone what they are to do. Interaction is not really an invitation to give input, but an obligation to simply agree with the boss. Coaching Up is a challenge in this context, but it can be done.

Best-case scenario — You serve on a Team! Everyone is valued, and each person’s input is needed. Everyone represents differing personalities, experiences, and skill sets. Everyone is passionate about the organization and wants it to thrive. This is where Coaching Up and true Team happens!

To be honest, many bosses are not open to being coached by one of their team. If the boss is open to the input and help of his team, he will accept and even welcome the support. Therefore, Coaching Up needs to be more of an approach to the working relationship rather than a formal coaching agreement.

When the openness to and understanding of coaching is valued within a leadership team, a true coaching culture is created. In this culture, everyone’s input is valued and even expected. Results for the team are improved effectiveness and enriched relationships.

Coaching Up Components

Develop Your Coaching Skills

- **Learn How to Coach**
 - Training Systems
 - Conferences and Workshops
 - Books and Articles
 - International Coaching Federation and Local ICF Chapter
- **Practice Coaching**

Invest in a Coaching Culture

- **Exhibit Trust**
- **Exhibit Ownership vs a Mechanical Problem-Solving Process**
- **Exhibit Team Support vs Siloing**
 - “How can I help you proceed?”
 - “How can I help you succeed?”
- **Exhibit Flexibility**
 - Hold Lightly to Your Questions/Suggestions/Observations
- **Exhibit Involvement**
 - Speak Up! You Are Part of the Team, the Ownership, and the Results

• Exhibit Genuine Interest

- Become a Student of the Organization
 - Leadership
 - History
 - Values
 - Purpose
- Represent the Organization 24/7

Implement Coaching Skills

• Listen Deeply

- Sharpen Listening Skills
- Listen for What Is Being Said and Not Said
- Observe Body Language
- Ask for Clarification

• Ask Powerful Questions That:

- Help Us Go Deeper
- Help Us Dream Bigger
- Help Us See More
- Help Us Understand More Fully
- Help Us Own the Process and Results

• Avoid “Why” Questions — Which Can Be Perceived as Judgmental

- Not “Why do this?”
- Better Is “What is driving us to accomplish this?”

• Ask Questions That Expand

- “What all is involved? Needed? Possibilities?”
- “What else?”
- “If cost were no issue, what could happen?”

• Ask Questions That Bring Focus

- “What is the best result?”
- “What could it look like?”
- “What actions are the most impactful right now?”

Utilize Coaching Tools

• What do we own, and what do we not own?

- Of what do we have full control?
- Of what do we have partial control?
- Of what do we have no control?

• What barriers could be encountered?

• What could the end-result look like?

• What are the measures of success?

• How do we get started or unstuck?

- What could we do this next week that would get us 40% there?
- What by when?
- What is our completion date?

• Who can help?

• Who of us can best make each detail happen?

• How will this action enhance our organization, values, and goals?

• What are we learning from this that will be of value in the future?

Finally, you may possess the title of Senior Pastor, Supervisor, CEO... basically you are the boss. This article is for you as well. Study and apply these points to allow a coaching culture with your team. The results will amaze you and truly be God-honoring!

Servants, obey in all things them that are your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord: whatsoever you do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; Colossians 3:22–23 (ASV) ✦

Jay Harris, Master Certified Coach



Founder of Coach Impact, LLC
Jay@CoachImpact.com

Jay served in ministry for 50 years in church and denominational roles. He challenges and encourages growth in prayer on social media as PrayerCoach. He has been married for 48 years. He and his wife Debbie live in Arlington, Texas, not far from their son, daughter-in-law, and three awesome granddaughters!



somethingtotalkabout

Members Matter

St. Philip Presbyterian Church has been a member of the Church CO+OP since the year 2000. For over twenty years, we have benefited from the CO+OP in several different ways, including the Texas Ministry Conference, the ability to network with vendors, and discounts on goods and services.

The Texas Ministry Conference alone is a good reason for someone to consider joining the CO+OP. While you are not required to be a member to attend the conference, you do receive a discount for this incredibly helpful, informative event. The CO+OP does a great job facilitating learning and relationships through the conference. I enjoy being able to meet and network with people there who are running churches of various sizes. If I don't see a vendor on the approved vendor list, I can call others and ask them what company they are using and how they're solving their problems. The fact that the Texas Ministry Conference builds this network by which I can identify other people as resources is priceless.

The Church CO+OP has enabled us to connect with thirteen different vendors from their approved vendor list. These vendors not only introduce us to products that make our jobs better and more efficient, but they also offer competitive pricing for their goods and services. For our church, these have included HVAC, copy, supplies, signage, janitorial services, and more.

The customer experience at the CO+OP is nothing less than outstanding. I have talked with my pastor about the best skill I have to offer the church, and he has told me, "Lorrie, I can train anyone to do the

computer work, the bulletins, anything... but hands down, your customer service is top."

As a child, shopping and going to restaurants, I learned that customer service can make or break the deal and change the mood of the whole transaction. The staff that I have worked with at the CO+OP has been top notch.

The first time I encountered anyone from the Church CO+OP was in 2015. Gary Blondell had called to let us know that conference registration was available. However, he thought that he was talking to my predecessor, who was also called Lori. Once we had established that I was a different Lorrie, he said, "Well, I would love to come out and tell you more about the CO+OP."

Well, he did just that. He was out to my office within a week and told me about all the benefits of being in the CO+OP and attending the conference. He let me know that I could reach out to him if I ever needed anything. Today, Gary still checks in on me every couple of months. Whenever a need arises, I always call Gary to see if the vendor list has updated, if he has anyone in the industry, etc., and every interaction is a great experience. ✦

Lorrie Castle, St. Philip Presbyterian Church

Lorrie is the Office Manager for St. Philip Presbyterian Church. An active member of the CO+OP since January 2002, St. Philip utilizes many of our CO+OP vendors and faithfully sends their staff to our annual conference each year. St. Philip Presbyterian Church is located at 4807 San Felipe, Houston, TX 77056. You can reach them at 713.622.4807.



somethingtotalkabout

Vendors Matter

I was referred to the CO+OP in 2014 by a friend and fellow vendor with Core Benefits. Kim Whaley told me how much they enjoyed their relationship with the CO+OP and that I should contact Patti Malott to see about joining. It didn't take long on the phone with Patti to see that this wasn't just an organization. It was a strong group of like-minded Christians who stressed service in everything they did.

So, I became a vendor as the Medicare resource for the CO+OP members in February 2014. Over the years I have developed great relationships with the staff. They are not just business associates. They are my friends and valued prayer partners.

The annual ministry conferences have been great opportunities to meet members of many of the churches, both through my booth in CO+OP alley and at the Medicare workshops that I was invited to present. This has enabled me to build many new relationships that have helped me develop my business and also enhance my circle of Christian fellowship.

We were not put in this world to be solitary. That was certainly proven in 2020! Our relationships helped us get through those difficult days. My friends at the CO+OP stayed in touch and provided much needed support.

I enjoy working with many of the member churches as their resource for all things Medicare. Whether it involves helping a valued staff member transition to Medicare or presenting an educational Medicare workshop, it's always an opportunity for fellowship. I'm grateful for the opportunity to share my expertise and help members.

I look forward to many years as your Medicare Concierge for the CO+OP! +

Michelle Feagin, Health Insurance Solutions

Michelle is the founder and operator of Health Insurance Solutions, which has been helping people with Medicare coverage needs since 2006. She is an experienced professional that works with quality insurance carriers to help clients find the best fit possible for their health insurance needs. For more information, you can reach her at 713.248.0372 or mfeagin1@comcast.net.

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Meet Our Newest Team Members



Melany Sanchez

Melany Sanchez joined Team CO+OP in June 2022 as the Marketing Manager. She is a graduate of Boyce College with a bachelor's degree in Communications and a minor in Biblical Counseling. Melany is proficient in both English and Spanish in the areas of writing, reading, and speaking. She has a love for nonprofits and making sure the messages an organization shares are personal and clear.

Below are some fun facts Melany shared about herself:

The three words that best describe Melany are loyal, caring, and diligent. She is always smiling, especially when she sees flowers or clouds. Melany does her best thinking when she is cleaning. She also encourages the CO+OP staff to do their best thinking by posting riddles in the breakroom for her co-workers to solve.

If you saw Melany sitting at her desk, you would see that she is always wearing a sweater to keep warm. She believes that there could never be enough blankets. However, Melany's dream vacation would be a trip to Alaska to watch the whales.

Melany also enjoys reading and napping in her spare time and loves listening to podcasts when she is cruising in her car. The last book she read was *When Words Matter Most*.

Melany is responsible for overseeing all the CO+OP's marketing channels including social media. She says that the best thing about her role at the CO+OP is that she gets to work with some fun people! ✦



Reagan Bon

Reagan Bon joined Team CO+OP in May 2022 as the CO+OP Staff Editor. She is skilled in written communication, copyediting, and proofreading. Reagan has experience writing & editing content for websites, radio programs, and various printed materials. Her goal as an editor is to ensure that anything she works on is professional, absent of any embarrassing flaws, and effectively reaching its intended audience.

Below are some fun facts Reagan shared about herself:

When Reagan is cruising in her vehicle, she is usually trying really hard not to get lost. She always smiles when her husband, Travis, comes home from work. The three words that best describe her are old-fashioned, focused, and kind.

The one thing Reagan will not leave home without is her water bottle. And if you asked her what there could never be enough of, she would say, "chocolate in her pantry." You will never catch her eating raw fish of any kind.

Reagan's dream vacation would be hiking or backpacking the Swiss Alps. In her spare time, you will find her reading or spending time with her husband. She also loves reruns of The Dick Van Dyke Show and The Waltons.

Reagan does her best thinking first thing in the morning after she's had breakfast. She says the best thing about her role at the CO+OP is doing work that she loves for an organization whose goal is to serve local ministries. ✦

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We approach every church with a “Ministry Mindset.” Our team of pastors, builders, and designers are well experienced in local church ministry and motivated to help churches continue to grow and increase in health. We understand that most pastors are trained and experienced in building people, but not so much in building facilities. Our team partners with churches to become adjunct members of the ministry staff to add our expertise to the overall process of facility expansion/relocation.

We believe that assisting churches through the facility expansion/relocation process is the ministry to which God has called us. Many members of our team had prior careers in designing or building non-church projects. Others were in full-time pastoral ministry. All have been active in local churches. We believe God brought us together to use the talent, gifts, and experience that He provided in order to help local churches.

Our team has constructed over 600 million dollars’ worth of worship facilities across the U.S. and assisted many more with strategic planning and owner’s representation. As a national vendor, Goff Companies is a licensed contractor in most states and can obtain a license in states where needed. Please see our website at goffcompanies.com for photos of many of our projects. To use our services, contact:

Kerry Jones – Director, Client Relations

214.716.5154

kjones@goffcompanies.com

Normal office hours are 8:30am–4:30pm. However, working only with churches, we understand that some meetings and presentations include volunteers and will need to be outside normal office hours.

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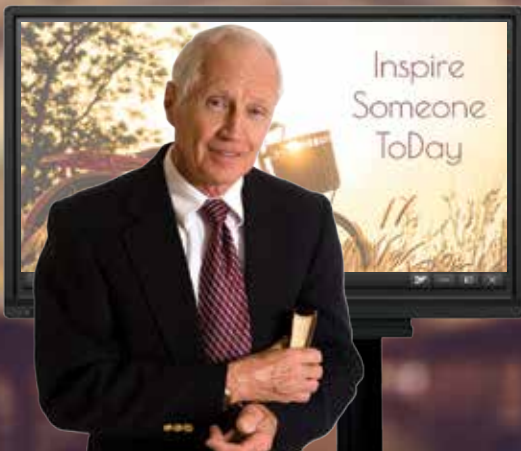
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How can we help you?



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