

Finding the Good Life Series Slide

Spiritual Connection
Deep Relationships
Transcendent Purpose

We're talking today about Deep Relationships

DR 6 Slide

I love you
I'm Proud of you
Im Sorry
I forgive you
Thank you
What do you think?

Moment of Silence

Good Life Series Slide

The St. Lucia Parrot exists only on the Island of St. Lucia. Its a stunningly beautiful multi-colored tropical bird. In 1977, only 100 of them were left on the island. They were doomed to extinction by the year 2000 unless something changed.

That's where a very unlikely savior stepped in. A 21 year old college student from London named Paul Butler who had recently spent 5 weeks on the island studying the parrot.

Butler was asked by the islands forestry department to return to St Lucia to try to save the Parrot.

But he had a very low budget and not much public influence at all.

So, he started the St. Lucia Parrot puppet show for kids and performed all over the Island- with the St. Lucia Parrot ask the star, of course.

He had T-shirts and bumper stickers made in support of the bird and volunteers passed them out all over the island. He got a local band to write songs about the bird that played on there radio...he even asked island pastors to preach to their congregations about their responsibility to be good stewards of creation...and God had entrusted them with this beautiful bird!

Over a few short months, St. Lucians stated to embrace the parrot as a part of their national identity- like Americans would the Bald Eagle.

As the years passed, the dying species came back as poaching stopped almost completely. Paul Butler was awarded St. Lucian citizenship along with the St Lucia Medal of Merit- one of the countries highest honors.

So what made the difference for St. Lucians in the way they thought of this bird?

Paul Butler connected the Bird to the people through a sense of pride in their identity. Once the Bird became part of what it means to be a proud St. Lucian- there was really only one thing to do. Protect the bird.

Title Slide “I’m Proud of You: How to Use the Power of Relationship & Identity”- 2 Corinthians 7

I can’t think of a phrase that is more connected to the words “I love you” than the words “I’m proud of you”

I told you last week, that “I love you” is THE foundational phrase of a deep relationship.

But not far behind it in importance is “I’m proud of you”.

Where I love you says “I see you”- I’m proud of you says “I WANT to be seen with you”.

I love you says “I’m with you”.
I’m proud of you says “I believe in you”

Pride is an identity statement. To be PROUD of someone is to make a relational connection. That thing...like Paul made the St. Lucia Parrot to St. Lucians... is connected to you personally. Its well being and accomplishments are connected to you.

Additionally- saying “I’m proud of you” is to affirm that someone is living up to a set of expectations that come from their being identified with you.

Paul Butler could look at the St, Lucians and say, “I’m proud of you”...just as they looked at him and said that by giving him a medal and making him a citizen. You have acted like a true St. Lucian.

Paul Butler is not the first “Paul” to understand the power of Relationship and Identity to help people change. In fact, the Apostle Paul himself uses “I’m Proud of you” with the Corinthian church to bring about deep and needed change in their lives.

- Plant church
- They start acting foolish
- He wrote 3 letters to them
 - 1 Corinthians - Confront

- Severe Letter- It was a rough one
 - Like when you've had 3 shots of espresso and you've had it
- He feel bad and write 2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 7:2-9 & 14-16

2 Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, corrupted no one, taken advantage of no one. 3 I don't say this to condemn you, since I have already said that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. 4 I am very frank with you; I have great pride in you. I am filled with encouragement; I am overflowing with joy in all our afflictions.

5 In fact, when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest. Instead, we were troubled in every way: conflicts on the outside, fears within. 6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the arrival of Titus, 7 and not only by his arrival but also by the comfort he received from you. He told us about your deep longing, your sorrow, and your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more. 8 For even if I grieved you with my letter, I don't regret it. And if I regretted it — since I saw that the letter grieved you, yet only for a while — 9 I now rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance. For you were grieved as God willed, so that you didn't experience any loss from us.

For if I have made any boast [to Titus]about you, I have not been disappointed; but as I have spoken everything to you in truth, so our boasting to Titus has also turned out to be the truth. 15 And his affection toward you is even greater as he remembers the obedience of all of you, and how you received him with fear and trembling. 16 I rejoice that I have complete confidence in you.

Transition:

1) "I'm Proud of You" is motivation through relational identity: "You belong to me Now go and live like it!"

When people make choices they tend to rely on one of two basic models of decision making. The Consequence model or the identity model.

The consequence model is your your classic "pros & cons" list. Do I stand to gain more or lose more from this behavior? Its very rational and analytical- left brain kind of stuff.

The other way- the identity model- is far more powerful. It asks the question- WHO AM I? and What kind of situation is this? and What does someone like me- who belongs to the people I belong to- what do WE do in this situation.

Take a look at what Paul does with the Corinthians here.

v 2-3

Make room in your hearts- we have already made room in ours for you!
Listen to the relational appeal! We are totally committed to you. Corinthians- Me and Titus and Timothy- We are your RIDE OR DIE. You belong to us. You're one of us!

v 4

I'm very frank with you- Look- I didn't hold anything back. I told you the truth. In other words- I know the worst stuff about you...I know how awful you guys have been- AND I'm still connected to you. Im PROUD to be seen by you. I'm encouraged by who you guys are becoming. Even in the hardships I've had with you- It brings me great joy to be in a relationship with you.

Paul is motivating them through a relational identity. You belong to me- to US. And people like us- specifically those who belong to Christ- we carry ourselves in a certain way- we act a certain way. And I believe you guys are going to make the right choices.

This doesn't just pop up here for the first time.

Genesis 1:26 & 2:25

God creates humans in his image- and from that relational identity- comes an expectation of action and character. Ruling the earth in a way that shows God's character.

And in that identity- they were completely trusting of one another and they were "unashamed". that word unashamed- it means Proud...in the best way.

They knew who they were and what was expected of them.

Guilt- You've done something wrong. Out of step with your identity.
Shame- You are something wrong. What you did confirms that.

Healthy shame- YOU AREN'T ACTING LIKE WHO YOU KNOW YOU ARE.

Matthew 3:16-17

16 When Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water. The heavens suddenly opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased."

Note- this is before Jesus has started his ministry- in preparation for what is to come. Tempted in the desert by satan- and you know what that temptation was- a TWISTING OF IDENTITY- IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD.

1 Timothy 1:18

18 Timothy, my son, I am giving you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies previously made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the good fight

Devil starts with what you did, and tears down who you are.
Holy Spirit starts with who you are- to change what how you act.

Just before this passage we read in 2 Cor 7

2 Cor 6:14 & 18-7:1

14 Do not be yoked together with those who do not believe. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?

18 And I will be a Father to you,

and you will be sons and daughters to me,

says the Lord Almighty.

So then, dear friends, since we have these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from every impurity of the flesh and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

- Point out a couple of things NEXT SLIDE WHEN STORY STARTS

Back to 1)

In the 1960s an executive at IBM made a decision that ended up losing the company \$10 million.

That's about \$105 million today.

Tom Watson, the CEO of IBM called this failed executive into his office at corporate headquarters.

He goes in- head low, shoulders drooped- expecting the worse.

Watson asked, "Do you know why I've asked you here?"

The man replied, "I assume you're going to fire me."

Watson looked surprised and said,

“Fire you? Of course not! I just spent \$10 million dollars educating you!”- Tom Watson

In the novel Les Miserables by Victor Hugo- Jean Valjean is a convict who has recently been released from prison. He is taken in by a kind Bishop who feeds him and gives him a place to sleep.

But in the middle of the night- Jean Valjean attacks the bishop and steals a bunch of silver items from the house.

In the morning he is arrested and brought back to the Bishop’s house by the police. The police ask “We found this man with all this silver- and he says you gave it to him.”

The Bishop, knowing that if he presses charges that Jean Valjean will go back to prison says, “Just one moment.” He goes back into the house and gets the silver candlesticks, puts them in the bag and says “You forgot these.”

The police turn him loose into the Bishops care.

The Bishop then looks at the criminal and says...

“Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. With this silver, I have bought your soul. I have ransomed you from fear and hatred and now I give you back to God.”- Bishop Myriel

In both situations- its an act of sacrifice- LOVE COMES FIRST- that gives the ability to say- “im invested in you- now I’m calling you to live into the identity I’ve given you”

Back to 1)

I’m proud of you always seeks to stay connected.

No matter what- I’m happy to be seen with you. Because you belong to me and I belong to you.

I’m proud of you not because of what you have done- but (as i used to say to my boys when they were younger)- I’m proud of you because you’re mine. You bear my name. You are an Atwood and always will be. ..now- here’s how we act. As Christians. As Men. As Atwoods

My Dad going to School: Remember WHO YOU ARE and WHOSE YOU ARE.

He expected me to remember my identity and to who I belonged- and act from those identities.

Transition: But we quickly forget who we are...and that's why for those we love- we need a boost along the way. We need someone who wants to be seen with us- to see what we're doing and affirm when we are acting like who we are.

2) "I'm Proud of You" is the reward along the way. "I see what you've done. You're becoming the person I always knew you would be!"

2 Cor 7:14-16

Paul is proud of what they did
Braggs on them already and then they acted from their character
V.16 Paul encourages by saying he has confidence in them going forward

Everybody wants to hear "I'm proud of you"

And yes- we need the relationship and identity establishing- "i want to be seen with you"...but we also need to know that when we are living out of that identity- that the one who gave us the charge and the instruction and the identity sees it. Notices it. and is telling us YES! you are on the right track! YES THIS IS WHO I KNEW YOU COULD BE ALL ALONG! KEEP GOING!

Jesus tells a story in Matthews gospel about a master with 3 servants.
Each to his own ability. In other words- the master knew them- and gave each one what he knew they were capable of handling. He called them to live up to who they were. 2 did just that. and look what he said to those 2.

Matthew 25:21

"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master's joy.

Well done "I'm Proud"
Saying I'm proud of someone's actions is about developing stewardship
Helping someone focusing on obedience rather than outcomes
He celebrates them but then sends him to do more.

Don't wait!- Parent on deathbed

Back to 2)

The people in your life need to know you are proud of them. Not only in the sense of an identity- but in deep relationships we notice those we love along the way...and how they are living into who we know they are...and we say something about it.

A lot of you are trying to earn an “I’m Proud of You”

Maybe you never heard it from someone you desperately needed to hear it from
Maybe you only heard it when you achieved something

The most important “I’m proud of you” in the universe...is the one the one you don’t have to chase

God is already saying this to you

“Well done. Good and faithful servant.”

Isn’t that what you have always wanted your boss to say to you?

You remember at Jesus’ baptism when Jesus comes out of the water and he hears that voice-

“This is my son that I love. I am well pleased with him.”

Isn’t that what you have always wanted to hear from your father?

2 Corinthians 5:20-21

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf, “Be reconciled to God.” 21 He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Theres this thing in theology called IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS.

It just means that Jesus- before you could lift a finger- He did everything right. Everything according to his identity as a beloved son of God.

And still- he was shamed. Toxically.

Left alone- abandoned. But not because of something he did.

Because of what we did. In our sin.....we abandoned God.

And he gave us his righteousness. That’s what Imputed righteousness is. ALL of Jesus’ good- is credited to you. So that your identity as a broken- sinner is now drowned in the waters of your baptism- and now you bear the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. You belong to him.

And you get all his reward. You get the I’m proud of you. Before you ever do anything. Doesn’t that motivate you to live like he calls you.

Paul- with all he knew the Corinthinas had done...all of their foolishness- he opens both letters by calling them- SAINTS.

You see what he was doing all along. He's saying "I'm proud of you." Now- you guys aren't acting like the saints you are. You aren't acting like the beloved Children of God that you are.

Some of you need to be reminded about who you are. You are God's child and he is calling you to live for more than for what you are right now.

Some of you need to hear God say to you for the first time I'm proud of you, you are mine.

We have two prayer counselors up front who would love to help you take the steps to hear that from him.

LORDS SUPPER