Relationships

The Flexible Style

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Course II – Unit 8, Lesson 3
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"If any person be in Christ, he is a new creature..."
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

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This lesson will look at how Christ modeled different types of behavior and how we can model our behavior after Him. Before continuing, please write your thoughts on how you might express the four different types of behavior in your life. **Write your thoughts on the enclosed** Response Sheet **and then put it out of your sight until the end of this lesson.** Next we recommend that you read the entire lesson through once without looking up any of the scriptures. Finally go back for a more in-depth study before completing the Response Sheet.

I. Introduction

In 1 Timothy 1:16 Paul says that Jesus is an example for those who believe in Him. What do we see as we look at the type of earthly life that Jesus lived? He had parents, brothers and sisters, cousins, neighbors, and countrymen. He had a job, and for most of His life He helped support His family.

We see that after He began His public ministry, He traveled through the countryside making disciples, friends, and enemies. With Jesus there was no middle ground. The people either loved Him or hated Him.

He was an extremely powerful speaker and attracted vast crowds of people to listen to Him. Everybody, both friend and enemy, realized that He was different from other religious teachers. In Matthew 7:29 His teaching is described as coming from His own individual authority. Also, in John 7:45-52 the temple guard was sent to arrest Him but were so awed by His teaching that they returned empty-handed and declared, “No man ever spoke like this man.”

The problems that Jesus faced in life are no different from those we face. He felt pain, sorrow, rejection, anxiety, anger, love, and happiness. He was tired, hungry, and thirsty. He was subject to temptation. *Where the difference came in was that Jesus accepted these as part of living and did not yield to temptation* (Hebrews 4:15).

If we wish to know how to establish and maintain effective relationships, the best example we can have is Jesus. When we model our life after Him, we become transformed into His image.

Modeling our life after Jesus' earthly life is not enough. Jesus' life on earth was filled with the spiritual. When we bring both our physical behavior and our spiritual lives into the same harmony that Jesus did, then we are following Him. We become children of God (Romans 8:15-17).

II. Christ-Oriented Behavior Model

Christ-oriented behavior is following the attitudes and behavior of Jesus. It is an eight-step model. Figure 8-1 gives an overview of the model.

A. Step 1 - Health

Our physical well-being (health) is the basis for all other aspects of our life. When our physical needs go unmet, we are unable to think about the higher aspects of culture and often spirituality.

Health is more than the absence of illness. It is having food to eat, water to drink, clothes to wear, and freedom from bodily illness and harm. It is having the basic survival needs met.

This is a time in which we can either depend on God or on ourselves. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus (Matthew 6:25-34) tells the crowd not to worry about food, drink or clothing. God knows that we need them and will provide them. He goes on to say that if we fail to believe God's promise to care for us and worry about it, we are the same as unbelievers.

God's promise does not mean that we will have the finest of food, drink, or clothing. He will provide the necessities.

B. Step 2 - Security

Once we have our basic health needs met, we have energy to use in meeting our need for security. These needs are closely associated with our health needs but are more than just survival needs. They include a feeling/desire for physical protection, a safe place to live and a sense that someone or something will not harm or kill us.

Our health and security needs are motivated by fear of harm or dying. At this level of functioning we focus totally on staying alive. We turn inward and are “self oriented.”

C. Step 3 - Relationships

Once our basic physical needs of Steps 1 and 2 are met, we can turn to the next higher level. This level is motivated by relationships. It is “us oriented” and includes Steps 3 through 5.

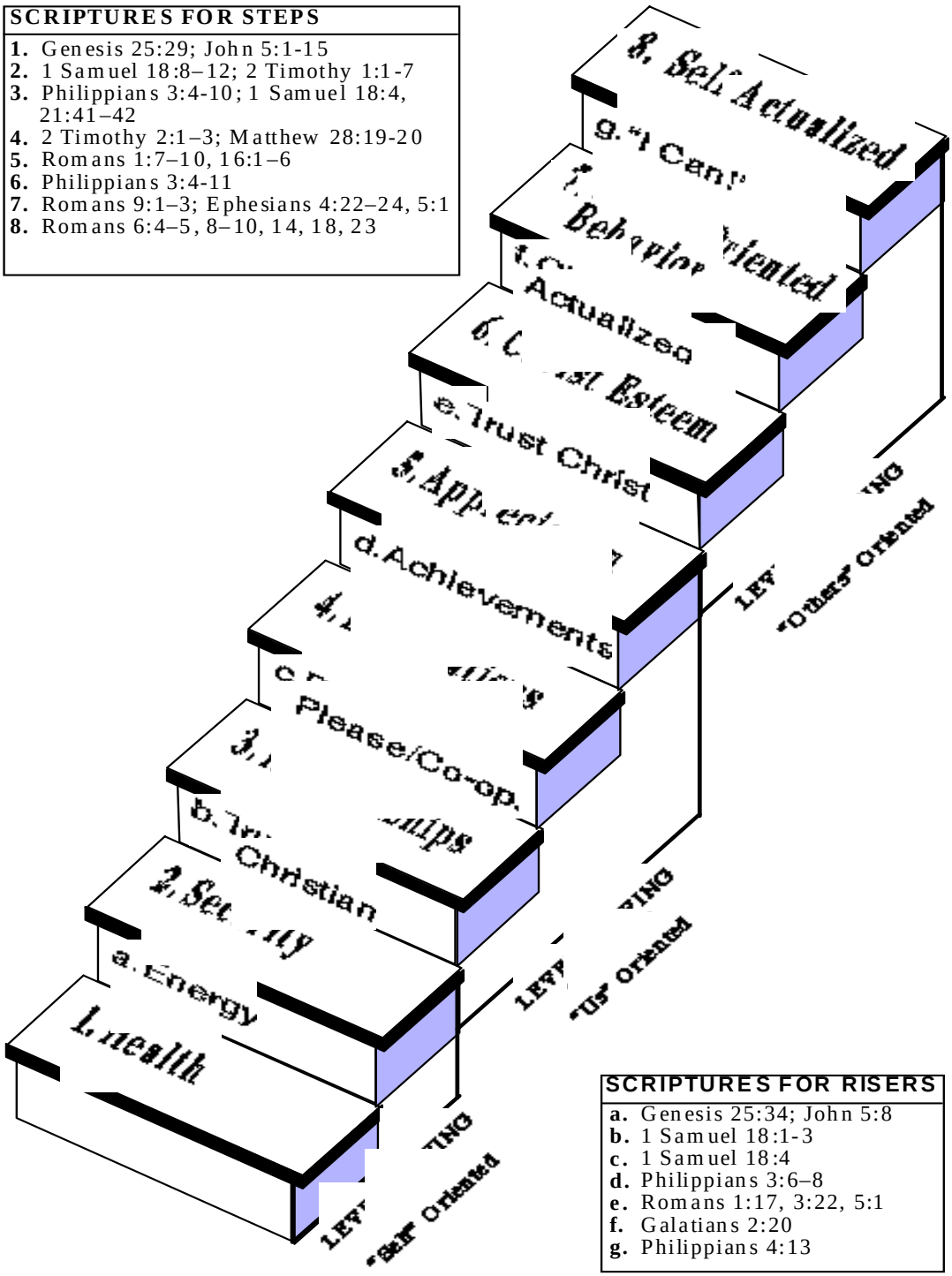

Figure 8-1. Model of Christ Oriented Behavior.

Relationships are associations in which the members, more or less, meet each others' needs. It is in relationships that we begin to project the image of God that is within us. It is in our relationships that we move from total selfishness to showing love and concern for others.

D. Step 4 - Expectation

When we deepen our relationships, we develop the desire to please those with whom we have a relationship. This desire to please causes us to expect certain advantages from the relationship. It is normal as long as we also are prepared to provide our relationship partner with the advantages that he expects. Such expectations can become wrong and harmful when we demand too much from our friend or spouse. We need to be sure that our expectations are appropriate with our level of relationship. We would not expect unconditional trust from someone we had met only recently. Unconditional trust comes only in the deepest of relationships, the caring and intimacy level. When we keep our expectations at the right level for the relationship, we are allowing our relationship to develop. Also, we will not be disappointed if our expectations are not met.

E. Step 5 - Appreciation

When we meet one another's expectations, we have achieved a major goal in developing a deeper relationship. We learn to value our partner. This is the idea of feeling comfortable in the relationship. We enjoy being with him and accept him for who he is. We are thankful for his being there to help and encourage us, while we do the same for him.

F. Step 6 - Christ Esteem

Once we can learn to accept and appreciate others then we can move to the next level of behavioral growth. We become “others oriented.” At this level we are motivated by love.

We can only trust God when we have learned to trust one another. 1 John 4:20-21 asks the question, “How can you love God whom you have not seen, if you do not love your fellow man, whom you have seen?” Of course, the answer is that you cannot.

As we develop and maintain positive relationships with one another, we can develop and maintain a positive relationship with God. These positive relationships help to

create and reinforce our own self-worth. We need to remember that our self-worth is not based in ourselves, but in Christ.

G. Step 7 - Christ-Oriented Behavior

Faith in Christ allows us to live the Jesus-modeled life. When Jesus lived on earth, He showed us how to live as God intended. Jesus' life was more than a physical existence. It also had a spiritual side. Jesus modeled both for us. He was a complete, mature, holy person. He calls us to be complete, mature, holy people.

H. Step 8 - Self-Actualized

Man without God is incomplete. It is only when we allow ourselves to become transformed into the image of Christ, Christ-oriented behavior, that we can become self-actualized.

The worldly person sees self-actualization as becoming almost god-like. Through his own power and abilities he can overcome all obstacles. He is above the toils and tribulations of life. Frank Minirth says that the worldly self-actualized man "will ultimately fail. Man in himself has neither the capability nor the goodness necessary to solve his own problems and overcome the evil within him—the mind is dishonest and tricky."

In the Christ-oriented behavior model, *self-actualization is being the person God created us to be!* It is living in an intimate relationship with God. It is being able to have mature, caring, intimate relationships with other people. It is facing and conquering the trials of life and Satan's temptations with the power that God bestows upon us.

III. Christ Modeled The Flexible Style

Being flexible is not being blown about or taken in by every new idea that comes along. Being flexible is having a solid set of values and beliefs while being able to act and think in different styles of behavior.

Although the DISC style of behavior (Unit 8 - Lesson 2) indicates that we have a primary style of behavior, it also says that we have three other possible styles of behavior. Being flexible is being able to use these other styles of behavior when needed.

When we look at Jesus' dealing with people, we see that he used all four of the DISC primary behavioral styles at different times. Refer to Unit 8 - Lesson 2 for characteristics.

A. High D

Remember the High D behavior emphasizes shaping one's environment by overcoming opposition to achieve results.

In Matthew 4:1-11 we see Jesus' being tempted by Satan. Jesus has the choice of either giving into Satan's temptations or rejecting them. Jesus chose not only to reject them but commanded Satan to be gone. Here we see Jesus accepting a challenge, taking charge, solving problems and getting immediate results.

Also, we see Jesus acting as in a High D behavior in Matthew 9:9 when He called Matthew to be His disciple. We see it in Matthew 28:19-20 when He commanded His followers to go and lead the lost to Him. Finally, we see it in John 21:15-17 when Jesus restores Peter.

B. High I

High I behavior emphasizes shaping one's environment by bringing others into alliance to achieve results.

In Matthew 8:5-13 we see Jesus acting as a High I when He heals the centurion's servant. We see Jesus out in the world contacting people and generating enthusiasm. We see Him making a favorable impression on the crowd with His message and His desire to help them.

In Matthew 28:20 He tells His disciples, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." In the Great Commission, we see Jesus functioning as both a High D and a High I. Other times Jesus functioned as a High I was in John 11:35 when He wept at Lazarus' tomb and in John 14:1 when He comforted His disciples at the Last Supper.

C. High S

A High S emphasizes cooperating with others to carry out a task.
In Matthew 9:20-22 Jesus heals a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for 12 years. Jesus comforts her and commends her faith. We see Jesus

demonstrating patience to the woman, being a good listener to her and then calming her excited state.

Other High S behavior Jesus modeled is in Matthew 19:13-15, when he blessed children. Again in Luke 22:41-44, Jesus prayed in the garden the night He was betrayed. A fourth example is in Luke 23:39-43 when Jesus promised the repentant thief on the cross that he would be with Him in Paradise.

D. High C

A High C emphasizes working with existing circumstances to promote quality in products or services. In Matthew 4:4, 7, and 10 we see Jesus modeling High C behavior when He refutes Satan by quoting scripture. We see Him complying with authority (the Word of God), paying attention to key standards, and using critical thinking.

Other High S behavior is in Matthew 15:1-9 when Jesus was critical of the actions of the scribes and Pharisees. In Matthew 21:23-27 the priests and elders question Jesus' authority. He in turn refuses to answer their questions until they acknowledge that John the Baptist's authority came from God.

IV. Our Use Of The Flexible Style

If we are to follow Jesus' model, we need to operate from a position of confidence. We need to focus on the needs of others. We need to feel, think and act in love for others (Luke 10:30-37). We need to love others as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:39). We should express joy and sorrow with those who are happy and those who are sad (Romans 12:15). Not only does the flexible style exist between men, is also exists between man and God. In Matthew 5: 16 we are told to let our “light shine before men in such a way that they will see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

V. Conclusion

The flexible style is to be all things to all people. It is to meet people where they are in life and bring them to God (1 Corinthians 9:20-23). A secondary purpose is to meet people where they are and help them live a better physical and mental life.

Now, please start over and study the lesson and the related scriptures. **When you finish your in-depth study, return to the enclosed Response Sheet and write your answers to the study questions about this lesson.**