



Week 2: Relationships // Mark Clark // September 20, 2026

Sometimes the places in our lives that most need a reset are our relationships. We can get stuck in patterns of frustration, criticism, impatience, resentment, or simply taking the people closest to us for granted. In Colossians 3, the apostle Paul gives us a remarkably practical picture of the kind of relationships that flourish. And the question isn't simply whether we have the right people in our lives, but who are we becoming in our relationships?

Scripture: [Colossians 3:12-15 NIV](#)

Bottom Line: Healthy relationships don't just happen; they're intentionally cultivated.

Digging In:

1. When you think about your closest relationships, what makes them healthy and life-giving?
2. Mark says, "Hurt is the cost of love." Why does opening ourselves up to love also make us vulnerable to hurt? Have you ever experienced this?
3. Read Colossians 3:12-15 together as a group. Paul begins by describing believers as "God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved" before telling them how to treat others. Why do you think our identity in God matters to the way we relate to people?
4. Of the nine specific qualities Paul lists—compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, forgiveness, love, and unity—which one comes most naturally to you? Which one is hardest? How so?
5. Mark describes compassion as essentially "suffering with" another person. How is compassion different from simply feeling sorry for someone? What might this look like practically in a marriage, friendship, family, workplace, or school?
6. In [Philippians 2:3](#), Paul explains humility as "valu[ing] others above yourselves." Mark talks about it as giving up the need to be the "main character." How would one of your closest relationships change if you intentionally put their needs ahead of your own?
7. Jesus in [Matthew 11:29](#) invites us, "Learn from me, for I am gentle...in heart." What does it mean to demonstrate gentleness in our interactions with others? In particular, how should it change the way we handle moments of disagreement or conflict?
8. Paul tells us to "bear with one another." What does it look like to help carry another person's burdens without trying to fix everything for them? Who could you do this for?
9. Why do you think forgiveness is so central to relationships that endure? Tim Keller talks about the importance, when pursuing forgiveness, of not bringing up the offense to the wrongdoer, to others, or to yourself. How are each of these vital?

10. "Not wrong, just different." Where are you tempted to interpret someone's differences as flaws that need to be corrected? How could recognizing Jesus' priority on unity (see [John 17:20-23](#)) help reset the relationship?
11. Think about one important relationship in your life right now. Instead of asking, "What does this person need to change?" ask, "Jesus, what needs to change in me?" What comes to mind?

Moving Forward:

Choose one relationship that could use a reset. Then choose one of Paul's nine qualities to intentionally practice in that relationship this week. Don't start by trying to change the other person. Start with yourself. Send the text. Listen before responding. Apologize. Forgive. Do something kind. Carry a burden. Be patient. Serve without being asked. At the end of the week, ask yourself: "What changed when I focused less on what I needed from this person and more on who Jesus was inviting me to become?"

Prayer Prompt:

Give everyone a moment to think of one relationship that needs some attention right now.

Then ask them to choose one word from Paul's list that they want God to grow in them: Compassion. Kindness. Humility. Gentleness. Patience. Bearing with. Forgiveness. Love. Unity.

Invite them to silently pray: *Jesus, help me bring more _____ into this relationship.*

Then close together:

Jesus, thank you for the grace and forgiveness you've given us. Help us love people the way you've loved us. Give us humility where we're proud, patience where we're frustrated, forgiveness where we're hurt, and love in everything we do. Reset our relationships by first changing us. Amen.