

Intentional Relationships Part 6: Mercy, Judgement, Tolerance, Grace

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21 May 2023

If you're intentional, it means that you have a plan. It's not just haphazard. It's characterized by persistence and it has the implication of involving a lot of work or activity, normally done in a short period of time. Intentional means that you keep going at it until you recognise that which you're intentional about, you're seeing the results.

Judgment is a decision of the law court or a judge in its very simplest terms. If you have an opinion about someone, it's a form of judgment. Almost always when you pass judgment on somebody, it's because you feel you have the superior perspective. Yet, oftentimes our sense of superiority stems from fear, from a sense of rejection or potential failure. God doesn't give you the right to talk about someone else, you have to give yourself the right.

God gave all of humanity mercy in the form of Jesus Christ whom He judged on behalf of all of mankind. God gave us mercy because He had a plan of intentional relationship with humankind. Mercy was needed because judgment was exercised.

The church is confused between tolerance and grace. The world out there only understands tolerance and they will shift the legal goalposts and the guidelines of social morality to accommodate tolerance where it suits them.

Grace is God giving us the power of the Holy Spirit, the tools to live glorious living. It's not overlooking sin or the legal system. The church cannot identify with a world system that permits tolerance. We have to identify ourselves with a system of God's grace that empowers us to live differently. The tools that God gave us is the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, the Body of Christ, the gifts of the Holy Spirit and covenant relationships - so that your human life is raised to the level of the Spirit life that God has paid the price for us for.

There's a fast-disappearing standard in our society and it is strong men. The biggest threat to society now is strong men, is what they say. The measure of what a strong man is has been tainted by this perspective of tolerance, because if you're strong, you can't be tolerant. And so, all of the young men growing up in their 20's and 30's now have an identity crisis because they feel like they 'grabbed their privilege illegitimately'.

God the Father represents not only a strong male figure, but also a strong female figure, which is why the tolerance for transgenderism is so big today. The very image of God is under attack. Why is this important? Because as we continue to grow in society, if I'm going to be intentional about my relationships, I've got to have a God perspective of my relationship, not some perspective that the world demands.

I have to assess as a Christian, how to live in this tolerant world and yet maintain my standards of strength. The way I have to do it is to walk in the love of God, because the love of God doesn't pass an opinion on anybody. Our job, therefore, is not to judge the behaviour of other people, but neither do we have to tolerate their behaviour.

God is the standard of life, not tolerance. I have to keep living the standard of God, which means I always exercise the love of God. If an ambiguous sexual person comes into my world, I love them the way God says, but I don't tolerate them. I don't change my behaviour. You might say, "But you're being tolerant." No, I'm being kind, I'm being gentle. I'm being steadfast in who I am in Christ. I'm exercising the mercy of God to that person's ambiguity. I'm not passing judgment on who they are, I'm passing the love of God to who they are.

God doesn't tolerate substandard life choice – or sin. He judged it. Jesus' blood has washed away all our substandard choices. And He sent the Holy Spirit so that you can stop making substandard choices and live the highest kind of life that God has. That's not tolerance, that's grace that comes from mercy.

So, you want to have an opinion about somebody? Shut it, while you are talking about them. Proverbs say that a whisper between friends will even separate close friends. It's a choice that you have to keep making daily in every conversation, and where you get it wrong you've got to keep correcting yourself by His empowerment, called grace.

If the devil comes into the throne room of God and brings an accusation against you, God the Father will turn and say, "Jesus, tell him," because Jesus is now the judge, and the intercessor. The Holy Spirit is the case maker and they've already thrown the case out of court. Because judgment has been passed, mercy has been applied and now the power is given to be set free. Every time your choices want to put you in jail, plead the blood, plead the power of the Holy Ghost to set you free.

If I (Pastor John) see things wrong in your life, I will allow the love of God inside of me to be exercised continuously towards you. I give you space to grow. I give you space to sort yourself out. That doesn't mean to say I'm tolerating you.

You see, part of what the enemy wants us to do is he wants us to live in this place of tolerant and intolerant and marginalization of issues. So that we are afraid to walk amongst each other - in case they talk about me the way I've talked about them.

See how deep this thing goes? Where does it start? At home, in the school yard. Nursery school kids are talking about each other. And from that age onwards, tolerance, intolerance, judgment, criticism is already happening. And it's impacted all of our lives.

Here's the tool that we live by; love. For love, (1 Corinthians 13), it's not haughty, it's not puffed up. It brings no attention to itself. It doesn't parade itself and make a big noise about how great itself is. Why? Because love says, "I won't tolerate you but I will give you space to grow."

2 Timothy 2:1-2 TPT. We have to give space to a younger generation to come and teach us this. Because the younger generation is learning to not tolerate what the world has presented to them as life. They have already made a choice that they don't want to settle for an inferior life. They want to press for the God kind of life. They already understand how to step into the space of God empowering them to make better choices. So, we must give ourselves to hear what their choices have presented to us. Because it will challenge us no matter our age.

John 5:19 (TPT). He is talking about a unity that is with one being for eternity. God the Father was not experimenting with other gods. And He didn't create man to experiment with other gods. Sex outside of marriage is a man-made god that people want you to worship and say this is the highest form of pleasure. In the meantime it tears away at the fabric of your soul and the essence of your unity with God. It tears away at the very identity that God has given every person at birth to follow their assignment in life.

The book of James says the marriage bed is undefiled. When two people get married and they have the confidence and the grace to talk about what they want and how they can go about enjoying each other, there is a power and a freedom there that the Holy Spirit gets involved with and you live on a higher dimension because it is not just physical intimacy, it is spiritual intimacy. It is emotional intimacy, and the integration of the three represents the Godhead and He comes with His presence and He fills all those spaces and your joy is full.

The moral fabric of our young people in society is being torn apart because they want young people to be exposed to the question of what is your sexual identity at the age of ten. If you don't think that the devil is after the next generation so that perverse living can happen in them, so the church can be more tolerant. A tolerant church has no foundation of moral strength and spirit power to make a stand on. Our life is not to be tolerant, our life is to walk in kindness, and grace, and to walk with the power of love of God that He has shed abroad in our hearts for everybody.

When I asked the Holy Spirit what I should preach about today, I sensed Him saying, "This is one of those marker messages, John." This is one of those standard messages that elevate the level of what church life can be." We are not going to be in judgment of people who have ambiguous lifestyles of any sort. But we are going to let the love of God be the standard. It draws them. In which case they will be free. Or alternatively set the standard to which they are so convicted and then they've got a choice to make.

Anybody who walks away from their assignment and the people that they're assigned to and the divine connections that God has placed in their lives, they're splitting the church and the order of God. It's like a divorce. It has the same consequences.

I say: "I'm not going to make any sub-standard choices anymore. I depend on the grace of God, the power of the Holy Spirit to help me to make the best God-kind of choices for my life, in every area of my life. I'm intentional about my relationship with the Lord Jesus, with the Holy Spirit, and with God the Father and His church in Jesus' Name. Amen."