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(WTB)

Intentional Relationships

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**Scripture Reference:** Romans 4:12 (NKJV); Romans 4:12 (MSG); Romans 4:20-24 (NKJV); Romans 4:20-24 (MSG); Luke 1:26-38 (NKJV)

Praise the Lord. Glory to Jesus. I mean, you want to just run and jump and shout and scream. Hallelujah. Glory to God.

Well, it's like, I've heard some ministers say, if this doesn't set you on fire, then your wood's wet, you know. Your wood's wet and there's nothing that can raise you from the dead, except the Holy Ghost. Hallelujah. Glory to God.

Won't you agree with me that the Holy Spirit have His way here today and that everything that we say and everything that you hear will be anointed and will allow us and cause us to go to a higher level; the highest level attainable for us, that we can have the maximum in our lives. Hallelujah. And that everything that you receive into your heart today will bear much fruit and will cause you and I, collectively, to go forward together. Do you agree with that today? Hallelujah. Amen. Then I want you just to greet someone and say, "Put a smile on your dial, be happy," and then you may be seated. Turn to someone else and say that again. Hallelujah.

So there's Message Moments this afternoon, five o'clock. On the 29th of April, there's our Slipstream Waterlectric Race that is being run here in the Franschloof Farm, and entries are open and available online or talk to anybody that's from the MiXchange and they will be able to tell you. This afternoon there's a Slipstream Crit happening at three bells. So that means you can do the Slipstream Crit for an hour, race home, shower, and come for Message Moments. What an afternoon. Condition yourself physically and then you condition yourself spiritually, and then you go to sleep and you condition yourself in rest. Amen. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

Well, it's always a joy for Pastor Sharon and I to go and be with Brother Jerry and to be with all of the wonderful people that are partners with him in his ministry, in particular, people that partner with him in missions in America. Essentially, that's what the President's Cabinet meeting is all about. And then, for a little bit, we stayed on afterwards, and it was good to have some fellowship with him and with Miss Carolyn, and some of the people around Brother Jerry, and it's been a wonderful time for Pastor Sharon and I. Hallelujah. We even got to spend some time together just looking into each other's eyes. Pastor Sharon would look at me in my eyes and swipe the credit card this side. [Pastor John imitates Pastor Sharon swiping a credit card] "Hey, baby." And I would look back in her eyes and say, "Go for it, baby." Hallelujah.

We had a wonderful time but I'll tell you, it's good to be back. It's good to come to be where the people are that God has called you to. People that you're assigned to, you're assigned with. And there is no better place on earth to be where God's will has intended you to be. It doesn't matter where you go on Earth. It doesn't matter how extravagant the places you go to, how exotic, how romantic, how special, how exciting the places are that you can go to on the earth. They become empty without the assignment of God and without God's people that are supposed to be around

you. It's very quickly, it's got glamour, but it very quickly becomes empty. Hallelujah. So praise the Lord. It's good to be back with y'all. Amen.

I believe that we are heading for very, very wonderful, amazing, exciting times ahead. It's very real to me, we had some really good conversations around signs of the times - let's put it this way - while we were away. I can say this to you with as much revelation as I have about it at this point in time that it doesn't matter what the signs of the times are or what the signs of the age are, God's grace is there for His church. No matter what's happening out there, God's grace is here for the Church. That's a fact.

I contemplated showing you a clip, a YouTube clip, where there was a panel of people talking about what's going on in America right now. And if time permits it and circumstances permit it, I will show it to you at some point in time. But the panel talks about the fact that they have never seen any single product ever, in the history of America, accelerate in price the way that college tuition has. And so they were talking that 25 to 30 years ago, and some of the people on the panel were older people and now contributing back to America. They were talking about the fact that they paid for a whole four years worth of degree, they paid 12,000 US dollars. That same degree, not at an Ivy League university, just a normal state university, that same degree now costs \$90,000.

And so, you know, they were talking about that there are 11 million unoccupied jobs in America at the moment. There are people who want to employ people, but they just can't employ people that want to work. In fact Pastor Sharon and I experienced it many, many times, many times, you go into a restaurant and you order food, and first of all you have to wait to order your food. Secondly, your food takes much longer to arrive than it normally would. You just observe, this is not the case in every restaurant but it's the case in many restaurants, where it just takes time. It takes much longer to get the kind of service that you would use to get. Sometimes you would get into a restaurant, and they would just say, "Sorry, that's unavailable. Sorry we don't have that, or we're out of this or we're out of that." You walk into some of the biggest names of stores in America, clothing stores, and big brand stores. And there's just very few people on the floor to serve you because they don't have people. People just don't, are not in that space where they want to work.

I'll tell you, South Africa is in a much better state because there's a lot of people that want work here. I was talking about it to Brynn and Miranda, who came to fetch us at the airport, and I was saying, by comparison, South Africa has many, many people who want to work and they will work. They will work. In America, there is this lethargy where, "Well, the government has paid us all this money, through COVID, and we're used to staying at home and spending money and so we don't want to work." It's a real problem. It's a real problem.

There are signs, everywhere you look, there are signs of darkness. There are signs of the different spirits that have been in earth for 1000s and 1000s of years that have worked through men. Those spirits are still alive, they are just demonstrating and manifesting themselves in different ways today. Through technology and through different things, they're demonstrating themselves. We would be foolish if we kept our eyes closed and say, "Well this is just the way life is or it's just a cultural thing, or

it's a new trend." Trends begin because there are spirits that work through men who begin the trends. Unless it's the church that's setting the trend, then it's the Spirit of God who's working through people. Hallelujah. And so we endeavour to be that church, we endeavour to be the church that is a trend-setting church. It's not a human trend-setting church, it's a God trend-setting church. It sets the agenda for God. If the church doesn't know what God's agenda is, then the church can't set God's agenda trend. We as a church should never take our trend-setting from other people. Certainly, we should not be looking at other churches and say those churches have the answer to God's trend because then it just becomes another human self-fulfilling function. That church has got a successful formula, let's do that. That's not necessarily what God's called you to do, or called us to do. So we got to know what the trend, what God's will is for us, and His design for us to be able to live that way.

So, one of the things that has really blessed me while I was away, was number one, to experience relationships in America, the way that we did. It's marvellous to me to be loved, to be appreciated, to be honoured, to be respected, and to have a family across the waters that have my interests at heart. For me, and Pastor Sharon, it's a beautiful thing to experience. It's a beautiful thing to experience being able to give the same. Amen.

It has always been this way with me and if you've been around me for long enough, you'll know that I'm a very deeply relational person. The foundation of everything that I do is about relationships. It's not about how good you are, how talented you are, how alike we are. It's about connecting with the foundation of God's Word that glues us together. That's the real deal. When you have the foundation of His Word, His assignment, and you say, "I'm going to go for God." I say, "I'm going to go for God." We're supposed to go for God together. That's a very relational foundation, that's something that works. You can count on that.

If I developed a ministry, if we worked on a ministry that was about how much talent you've got, how well you perform, how much effort you put in, how often you show up, or you don't show up. If we built a ministry on that, then there would never be, then it's always who is doing the best work. And so, if the ministry is always about who's doing the best work, then it's all about a demand-oriented organisation.

Now, any relationship that has demands in it, has a flawed foundation. Because if I demand something from you, then it means you have to perform something to satisfy my demand. So demanding relationships are not solid, wholesome relationships. It's about how well you're performing. Performance is a measure that can shift and change. One day, it can be satisfying, another day it can be unsatisfying. One month, one year, couple of years, couple of whatever, it can change and shift. And so certainly, the way God has called me is for us to and I've said this about everybody that's coming to my life, and never expect anybody to leave my church. Never. I never expect anybody to leave my ministry, my life, my calling. Why? Well, because I'm not trying to get you to come to this church through a program. Because if I get you to come to the church through a program, then I've got to keep the program hot. Yes? Because then it's about satisfying you to get you here. And then I must make sure that I'm satisfying you and you satisfy me and we do that all in the name of

Jesus. Doesn't matter if we do it in the name of Jesus or not. The basis of it is still demand.

God didn't call, He didn't make any demands on us. Did He? He just said, "You need help, I'm going to die for you. You need a Saviour, I'll be Him. You need life, I'll give it to you." Did He make any demand from you? Only thing is; trust Me, believe Me, receive Me. From that level onwards, you have grace. When you receive Him, He gives you grace to live in a life of relationship where He still makes no demands on you. He gives you all the power for you to live free. To live free from what? Demands. I'm already teaching very good this morning.

So, over the years, I've ministered often that if you want to have an intentional relationship, and that's what I'm talking about today, intentional relationships. If you want to have an intentional relationship, then you have to intentionally do things. Not based on demand or performance, but you have to do things intentionally. If you don't do things intentionally, what's the alternative? The alternative is that you allow things to happen. You just allow things to happen. Hallelujah.

I had opportunity to talk over this period of time and just reminisce with Brother Jerry, on some of the activities and some of the places that we've been over the last - just since 2016. Just some of the places that I've travelled and been with Brother Jerry from 2016, to date. And in that period of time, it included two opportunities for me to go and be in America for five weeks, and then seven weeks with Brother Jerry. And none of what I did was because he demanded it. Everything about it was my intention to draw close to him. So, one might say, but you know, a relationship has to be reciprocated. Well, that's just a demand. You're saying, "I'll give you if you give me."

God's relationship with us is intentional. He intends to love us forever, no matter what. He intends to give you all of Himself, no matter what. Come on, does He intend to give you all of Himself regardless of how well you perform? I can honestly say He's already done that. He gave you His best; Jesus, He died on the cross, He raised Him from the dead, then He gave you the next best, which is the Holy Spirit and none of what He gave you was because you demanded it. All of it was given because He wanted to do it intentionally. So, He made it His intention to close the gap that had come through sin nature of men, through the fallen state of man; through the works of men, the law, many things that came in between us and God. He said, "I'm going to close the gap by sending Jesus intentionally."

So, Pastor Sharon and I stayed on in America for a couple of days because there was an Easter weekend, we had an opportunity. What was our intention? Our intention was to close the gap between us. We made time that none of you could interfere with. We made time and we made it clear to Brother Jerry and to all the other people who wanted us to come and do things in America because we're staying on now, we're not staying on for ministry. We're not staying on to have appointments. From the first time, "When are you going home?" "Later." "Where are you going?" "Away." "What are you going to do?" "Things somewhere." At first they, "Alright, John and Sharon are a bit... But what are you really doing, Pastor John?" "Well, we got a hotel booked and after that we are going to hang out and be together. We got a room. And we have a 'Do not disturb' sign on the room." *A room.* [Pastor

John talks in a funny accent] Those people who know Pink Panther will know. *Does your dog bite? Ouch. Not my dog.* Oh boy, that's a blast from the past. We were intentional about what we were going to do before we went there. And then when pressure of circumstances became known to them what we were doing could have altered our course of action, we used the wisdom of God and a steadfast resistance to say, "We love you but we love each other more. We love you but this is our time. We love you but do not disturb." And so we just went to be together. You have to make intentional time otherwise circumstances will always be the thing that you respond to, other than you intentionally do something. So in relationships, if you have relationships without having intentional components to it, then relationships can just drift and become all kinds of different things. So you have to become intentional about your relationship. So, of course, the first thing you have to do is you have to be intentional about your relationship with God.

If you're not intentional about your relationship with God, I can tell you for sure, the relationships that are around you will not stand the test of time. Because the intention will become fluid, it will become compromised. I can tell you this for sure that everybody that came to join our ministry at some point in time, and I can say this, same as Brother Jerry. Brother Jerry has said this many times, he said it from this pulpit sometimes. If everybody who came into his life came and said, "I love you, I'll be with you. I'm called to you. I'm supposed to be with you." If all those people stayed with him, he wouldn't have enough churches to fill buildings, to house those people. But what happened is what they intended at first was not really an intention, it was momentarily intentional until something else became more important. Every person who's left our life, something else was more important. I can tell you with confidence that Brother Jerry and I, we've talked about this many times. You can look back, Brother Jerry is very intentional about his relationship with the people that God connects him with, and he is as strongly covenantal as we are. It's no surprise that God called us to him and him to us. Because in that way, we have the same recognition of the value of relationships. If it was up to him, there would be no one that came into his life that would leave his ministry. No one, no one, because if you have the love of God in your heart, you can work it out. But if you allow something more important than the love of God to come into the relationship, then that's something that's more important is going to drive you. And so, it is with a marriage relationship. If you say this is my partner for life but something else comes in that's more important, then you can be distracted from that, then this intent starts to waver - depending on how much credit you give the other important stuff.

None of us are perfect. An intentional relationship doesn't require perfection. It does, however, require the love of God being the foundation, and then your intention to be, remain steadfast. And that's where Brother Jerry ministry really comes in strong. Over all the years he has preached; having done all to stand, stand. Having an intentional relationship requires having all done to stand, stand. But two cannot walk together unless they agree. Hallelujah.

So, what is the devil's number one priority in your life? He wants you to disagree with the Bible. The minute you disagree with something that's in the Bible, then he can undermine your intentional relationship with Him. Some of the biggest ways that he does is he tries to undermine the integrity of God's Word through circumstances. Look at that person. Look what happened to him. Look what happened to them. Look

what happened to them. They prayed, God didn't come through. They've got some other external reason the devil brings it into their heart and then that becomes the biggest issue, then they don't trust God, they trust themselves. So, then you're always intentional about serving yourself. That has got to be the most fluent situation on Earth; is to be intentional about serving yourself. Because the minute you do that, you always have to find a way of satisfying yourself. Huh. This is good, hey?

So, Romans chapter four, verse twelve, I'm going to read it to you out of the New King James, just one verse so that you can get the meaning of the verse in the King James Version and then I'm going to read you the scripture in The Message Bible. The New King James says, <sup>12</sup> **And the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but will also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised (Romans 4:12 NKJV)**. So, there's a lot I didn't want to read or get into today, which is why I chose, by the Holy Spirit, to start reading this scripture. I'm wanting you to see that the way Abraham walked with God, that God didn't demand circumcision from him in order to have a covenant with Him. He made a covenant with him and then asked him to circumcise to ratify the covenant. But Abraham believed God through faith, not because of a demand. Now, I'm going to read it to you, we read this before I left to go to America. I'm going to read it again to you out of The Message translation. I know, we listened to Message Moments, and we listened to Pastor Garth and Pastor Christi. I mean, wasn't it amazing teaching? *Have faith in God*. Pastor Christi taught on words, the power of words, we got to stay steady with our words. I mean, just wonderful teaching. Hallelujah. And so you know, we stay connected to all of you, all the Message Moments, we watched you go at it and do all your stuff. It was wonderful. We felt at home while we were away.

So, Romans chapter 4, verse 12, and some of you in Message Moments spoke about this scripture, <sup>12</sup> **And it means further that Abraham is father of *all* people who embrace what God does for them while they are still on the "outs" with God, as yet unidentified as God's, in an "uncircumcised" condition. It is precisely these people in this condition who are called "set right by God and with God"! Abraham is also, of course, father of those who have undergone the religious rite of circumcision *not* just because of the ritual but because they were willing to live in the risky faith-embrace of God's action for them, the way Abraham lived long before he was marked by circumcision (Romans 4:12 MSG)**. In other words, this was an intentional relationship, and God intended to mark us in our hearts without an external ritual of circumcision. He intended to mark us in our hearts and so while we were on the "outs" with God, He called us into, and many before us; He has called us into, be willing to live in the risky faith-embrace. The risky faith-embrace of God's action for them, for us.

So, to many people, faith is, "What is this thing of faith? What is the thing of faith?" Faith is only something that you can intentionally live, and then intentionally have a relationship with Jesus. Otherwise, faith just becomes a function of going to church and being involved in church. Amen.

Romans chapter 4, verse 20, <sup>20</sup> **He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, <sup>21</sup> and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. <sup>22</sup> And**

therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.”<sup>23</sup> Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him,<sup>24</sup> but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, (Romans 4:20-24 NKJV). Now, this passage of Scripture, we read again before I left and some of you talked about it in Message Moments.<sup>20</sup> **He didn’t tiptoe around God’s promise asking cautiously skeptical questions. He plunged into the promise and came up strong, ready for God, sure that God would make good on what he had said.** Sure that God would make good on what He said. Amen. Sure that God would make good on what He said. Right here is where most of our faith is undermined. The devil’s number one strategy is to make you go from sureness to unsure. Are you really sure that God will deliver on what he said? Are you really sure? Can you really trust Him? Are you really sure?

So I'm going to finish the scripture and then I'm going to go back to this because I need to finish what the rest of the scripture says.<sup>21-24</sup> **Sure that God would make good on what he had said. That’s why it is said, “Abraham was declared fit before God by trusting God to set him right.” But it’s not just Abraham; it’s also us! The same thing gets said about us when we embrace and believe the One who brought Jesus to life when the conditions were equally hopeless. (Romans 4:20-24 MSG)** The same things get said about us when we embrace and believe the One who brought Jesus to life when the conditions were equally hopeless. When the conditions seem hopeless, that is the moment when you are less sure. It is also the moment when you have to have the most trust. It is also the time when you have to be the most intentional. If you don't, if you're not intentional about something, then you are going to waver. So are you sure that God will make good on what He had said? Are you sure that God would make good on what He has said? I'm so sure of it that it doesn't matter to me whether I see the end of my faith or not; I'm going to live by it. And to that extent, you know, some of the fathers of our faith have said, “You got to make a decision to stand in faith, no matter how long it takes.” No matter how long it takes, and then you will find that it won't take very long. Why? Because you are intentional about staying the distance in faith. You have to have an intentional relationship.

So you know, it's just marvellous for me, it's marvellous for me. What can I say? We were hanging around a bunch of people and this was before Pastor Sharon and I went away and had a “do not disturb’ sign on our days away. It was before that. We were hanging out with a bunch of people and so we would come down from our hotel room and we would come into the lobby where people were and I don't want to go into too much detail because there's too much to say. So I'm just being, I've got headlines here. Okay, so just work with me. Going to the lobby and so Sharon I would come into the lobby, and we would have our arms around each other and people would say, literally, they would make this comment, “Here comes the honeymoon couple. Here comes the honeymoon couple.” This was before ‘Do not disturb,’ they even knew about ‘Do not disturb.’ They would make comments, “Here comes the couple that are swooning over each other.” I said to Sharon after a few comments of similar nature, made by different people, I said to Sharon, I said, “Babe, how cool is this? How cool is this?” They got to touch our marriage for brief moments in a setting where there's lots of people and they already talk about the quality of what they can see. You know, I said, “They don’t even have a concept that we’ve been together for 43 years.” Because many, many of the other people that were

around us had been married for a long time. They're not behaving like honeymoon couples. Why not? We - I don't want to say why not for them - I want to say why we are talked about is because we are intentional about our relationship. Because you all know that I've said this for years, what does it take to make a good marriage? One day at a time. Just one day, one day at a time is what it takes to make a good marriage. So what does it take to make a bad marriage? One day, just one day at a time. So, if you have that as a revelation, then you understand that you cannot let a day go by where something else is more important than your marriage. "But Pastor John, that's not real life." No, that's your revelation of what real life is. I have a completely different revelation of what real life is. If you say to me that's not the way real relationships work, I'll say to you, "Says who?" Says who? Who says what real relationships should look like after 30 years? Says who? Well, life. I live life intentionally in my relationship. So, it never gets to, oh, we're part of that crowd that all say the same thing. Are you hearing me?

So that's how it goes with walking in faith. There are many, many, many, many, I can tell you 10s of 1000s of people. While we were away, I was taking some of our time, when we spent time just being with the Lord and I took some of my time and I was watching some meetings by Kenneth Hagin, that were - in our lives they were marker moments. We had been watching Kenneth Hagin for a long time, being part of his life and he had spoken about these meetings that God had told him were going to be the most significant meetings, and they were in the St. Louis area, and it was 1997. He had been in meetings and he said, "We are experiencing 30% of the anointing of God in these meetings." Then he prophesied and he said, "When we go to St. Louis, in those meetings we're going to get to 100%. God is going to show up 100% anointing in those meetings." It didn't happen in the first one. It began to happen in meetings after that. And then one meeting Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, and all of the big-name ministers that we know, they all came and sat in those meetings because of what he had prophesied. And I've never ever seen Kenneth Copeland so out of control - rolling on the floors, laughing. I have never seen Gloria Copeland - she was hardly out of control - but I've never seen her that much out of control. And many other big name preachers all along with them because the power of God showed up in that meeting and it was just marvellous. I was watching some of these services. Just looking at the faces and the names and the people that were there, it hit me how many of those faith preachers that were in those meetings are no longer preaching faith. They've moved on. Why? Because they were not intentional about sticking with the one who brung you. Sticking with a message that God saved you with that He's given you to live by all these years. They moved on to a more 'me too movement.' Hello. I'm not talking about Kenneth and Gloria, you all know that. How many of those people have moved on? Why? Because something came into their life that looked better because everybody else is doing it. I believe that one of the greatest deceptions that has come into the body of Christ is that people follow other people and all it takes is a movement. Someone to be successful at something and everybody says, "If I can emulate that success then... What do you do to be successful?" And they go to that minister's ministers conference to find out what he is doing to be successful, and they say, "Okay, he's doing this kind of music, they're doing this kind of ushering, they're doing this kind of thing, they put this on the stage, they do this kind of stuff. If we do all that ..." And then they do all that and so they get more people. "Yeah, it's working for us too." If I was the devil, all I've got to do is make sure that somebody is being successful somewhere in the church and just a



little bit by little bit move people away from the divine connections and the divine assignment that God's called each pastor to do. They might have the view of being successful. I don't care what you do, doesn't matter how many people you get in your church, it doesn't matter what you do. If you're not fulfilling what God called you to do and being with the people God's assigned you to be with, you are missing the mark. And it doesn't matter how justifiable your actions might be. You have allowed something else to be more intentional than the relationships that God has put you with. Amen. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

So we got to close the gap all the time. We've got to close the gap. I'm smart enough to know this, that even though I have a very close relationship with Brother Jerry, he touches many churches, many people's lives. He goes, and this is the way he has to be. I mean, even as I'm coming home on the aeroplane, he's preaching in other churches. What happens when he goes into that church? He starts to focus on what God's got for him to preach, the message that God's given him for the year but to these people in the way that these people need to hear it. I would expect nothing less from him to be focused intentionally on what God wants to have happen for those people. Is he now thinking about me? No. When he leaves that church and he goes to another church; same pattern. I've been with him many times, I've watched that happen. So I know that if I want to have an intentional relationship with him, it's up to me to get close to him, not to wait for him to come to me. Ja, nê. So it doesn't matter how much he responds to me or he doesn't respond to me. If I get offended by that, then I'm not really intentional because I've allowed something to offend me. If I had to be like all other people, "Well, he doesn't make as much time for me as I make for him." So what? So what? That's just a pride thing. Don't look at me now because I'm preaching the truth like that. It's a pride thing. It's an ego thing. "I'm just as important in my world. So doesn't he see how important I am *nogal* in my world. My world, I'm really important in my world, and he doesn't recognise my importance. And if you knew just how good I was, how much respect I command and how influential I am, wouldn't he also just recognise and come in, you know, make more effort to come and be in my world? Well, I think I won't go and visit him as much. I think maybe I'll just let him do his thing. Then I'll do my thing." This is not uncommon. Let me tell you, this is the most common thing that happens. So I say to heck with my pride and my ego. I'm going to get in his face as much as I possibly can. I'm going to be around him, I'm going to just, even if I'm just around him doesn't matter. Hallelujah. And so now, praise God, it's like when I'm not around, if I'm close to him and I'm not around him, he is looking for me. Why? Because he picked up on my intentionality. He says, he could see, "John's got an intention to be close to me." He understands and recognises honour. He recognises what I have and he wants everything I've got. And so, because he's after it, I'm going to let him have it. And so, he doesn't... Sometimes it's not even... it's just, I'm a hungry mouth, "Feed me". I'm a hungry relationship, I'm intentional about this. How do I sustain it? Because I'm intentional about God. I'm intentional about the Holy Spirit working inside of me. I'm intentional about stuff. Hallelujah.

And then every now and again, I'll be around him and suddenly the Holy Spirit's there, and suddenly He's speaking words, and just like that the anointing is there because there's a flow of two assigned humans, two assigned spirit-beings, two eternal spirits coming together because they've made intentional time to be together. And suddenly, in that moment, there's a combustion, and words get spoken, and

things get discussed, and things happen. And suddenly, wow. You say, "But you've got to go through all of that to get those few words?" Priceless. Priceless.

Why do you think we have Message Moments on a Sunday afternoon? Because I don't just stand here, bringing a message to you, that is like a nice message. You all know me better than that by now. If I'm going to stand on your toes, I'm going to do it intentionally, because I have an intentional relationship with you, that I will touch you, and I will teach you, and I will train you. And then I'll transfer responsibility to you when you're trained. That's called discipleship. So that's what God does to me; He touches me, He teaches me, He trains me, and then He transfers authority to me. If I break the link in the chain to God, then He's got to wait because He's not breaking the link to me. He's got to wait for me to... then the Holy Spirit comes into my life and touches me again and He says, "Now, John, let Me teach you what you did here, you did wrong here." "Yes, Sir." "Now, I want to train you on how you can handle this better." "Yes, Sir." And sometimes He'll do it through people. Hallelujah.

I've made some adjustments in my life. In the last couple of months, I've made some adjustments in my life because I heard conversations happening with Brother Jerry and Joe and in certain company, I heard conversations happening. They were just general conversations about general things and when I heard it, the Holy Spirit - I shared this with you when I came back from America - the Holy Spirit said, "Pay attention, John. Pay attention. There's some corrections you have to make here." Why? Because I was intentional about listening about whatever this relationship means. Hallelujah.

I trust that after today you will become more intentional with the relationships that are around you. So for married couples here, it's never too late. I don't care how many years you've been married. It's never too late to become more intentional. "Well, Pastor John, how can we change it when we become so... when we're living in this kind of relationship?" Well, I'll tell you, the first thing you do is change your words. Going back to Pastor Christi's message; change your words. The reason we have what we have after 43 years is because we changed our words, and we started speaking words of life over each other and we still refuse to speak words of death.

Let me tell you something that happened. We were sitting in a very intimate moment with a group of people, a very intimate moment and Pastor Sharon was being her expressive self. And she was about to head - I thought - she was about to head down the road of sharing some things that were about to happen in our 'Do not disturb' time. And so I just made a movement towards her to put my hand on her hand and she just at that moment, she just didn't know what I was saying and because of her love and respect for me, she just shut down completely and everybody around the table recognised that. When everybody started talking to each other, I turned to her and I apologised to her. My heart did smite me. My heart did smite me because she is so valuable and precious to me. I have such high respect and honour and regard for her that even if she had made a mistake, I should have just let it go. But I was guarding what I thought she was going to compromise our 'Do not disturb' time together. She took it so much in her stride that she said, "John, I didn't even see it the way that you saw it and I didn't take offence to it." I said, "I know, babe, but it's my heart that smites me and I have to ask you to forgive me." And for the next three hours I was apologising to her. Eventually, she turned around

and said, "Shut up. Stop apologising. I didn't even see it the way you see it. Now what are you doing? I love you, babe, I've forgotten about it." I said, "Well, okay, if you really say it like that, I'll have to forgive myself." She said, "That's what you have to do; forgive yourself." "Okay, now I'm forgiving myself right now and we move on." And we did.

You see, after 43 years of marriage, if you've been doing that for 43 years, one day at a time, one day at a time, one day at a time, one day at a time, then when you get into a moment like that, then you have the sensitivity of heart and God can deal with you. We change our words. So, if you've been married a long time, the first thing you have to do is change the way you speak to each other and you start talking about the person in your life the way God sees that person, not the way that you want to see it because it suits you to see the person the way that you want to see the person. "Because it suits me to have harsh words when I want to have harsh words. Because I can get what I want through harsh words, or from withdrawing my presence and for being stubbornly quiet and making you come to me and say, "What have I done wrong?" It's gone quiet in this Presbyterian church. So then we say this whole relationship issue is based on manipulation and demands and control. Hmm. Well, then it's not really intentional for the relationship, it's intentional for me.

I've got something to tell you in your marriage, if that's part of what you do, you will have what you intend to have. In a moment, you will get the control you're looking for but somewhere down the line that control is going to destroy because you are going to re-enforce your control all the time and somewhere, might not happen in ten years, might not happen in twenty years, but somewhere down the line, that thing is going to have a foundation of sand and the thing is going to collapse in on itself. As hard as you work to try and make it, build it up and prop it up, it's going to collapse, then you're going to need a grace intervention.

Most of the time, I can say, most of the time, grace interventions are too late. Because the thing that got you there for twenty years, is so entrenched in you that you're unwilling to let the grace of God come and fix it. It's also the time where most people come to the pastors and say, "Help me fix it." This, that I'm talking to you about in marriage happens in friendships, it happens in business relationships, it happens amongst people in the church, it happens all the time. I don't put God as intentionally first as I should, therefore, I don't do intentionally with those that are around me like I should. Then I'm always pressing for this thing that I'm hoping for, but I never get to. I'm hoping to get to the relationship with God that I always wanted, but I never give Him the control in my life. "Jahh, but what does that look like?" Speak His Words. Don't speak what you feel. Speak what He says. Hallelujah.

Okay, how much time do I've got left here? Only about five minutes. I shouldn't have told you that, I should have said fifteen minutes and you wouldn't have cared. I got fifteen minutes left. I'm going to read to you something, it's in Luke chapter 1, verse 26. This is a very significant, intentional relationship.<sup>26</sup> **Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth.** Who sent the angel? God sent the angel. Who did He send the angel to? A virgin. Come on, everybody just say this word with me; a virgin. ...  **betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph (Luke 1:26 NKJV).** Engagement. Those days, when you announced to the village and you announced to the community that you were engaged to a person,

it was already the substance of a contract that was about to be fulfilled. An engagement wasn't just an intention to think about it. If you've got engaged to a person, you were marked, the whole village knew that you were marked, the two of you are going to be together. You're just waiting for the marriage ceremony to happen. It was a big deal.

**27 ... to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"** Blessed are you among women. This is an amazing thing. Here is a woman who is highly favoured, highly favoured and blessed amongst women. **29 But when she saw him, the angel, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.** Isn't it interesting that this angel comes and says, **28 ... "Rejoice highly favored one. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women." (Luke 1:27-29, NKJV).** That's like me coming up here and standing under the anointing of the Holy Spirit and I say to you, "Hello, Heritage of Faith people. Blessed are you. Rejoice, you should because you are favoured amongst peoples. Highly favoured amongst God." And then you sit saying, "I wonder what he's getting at? I wonder what he's saying here. What does this mean to me? Is he trying to get something out of us? What's his intention?" [Audio missing] She was troubled. Well, this is a big event that has happened, and an angel has appeared. And the Bible says she was troubled. **30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.** So, he soothes her troubles. You can be sure that when God is speaking, He's going to soothe your troubles, your anxiety, your fear, the Word of God does that. [Audio restored]

**30 ... "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and shall call His name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:30-33, NKJV).** Now, this is a big, big message. This is a big revelation. This is a massive, massive event. Right? I mean, this is God revealing Himself of His intention for the ages. She gets very womanly on him. Very practical, "So, angel, how is this possible? **34 ... "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"** "I'm a virgin. How is this possible? How is this possible? You tell me all these grand things that you got for my life, how is this possible?"

Come on people. God has announced to this church, for sure, He has announced His intentions in His relationship with us. Has He not? Has He not announced His intention that this year we will go to the maximum, that we will go to the highest level attainable? This year. And you say, "How is this possible? Because the things that need to get done to make a pregnancy, or to make something happen in my world to get maximum? How is this possible?"

**35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing will be**

**impossible.”** <sup>38</sup> **Then Mary said,** come on, the virgin said. Everybody say this with me; the virgin said. Her practical question, ‘how is it possible’, then the virgin said, “I don’t see how this is possible, but I say, **“Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Behold I am a vessel of Your words. Let it be to me according to your word.”** And the angel left her (Luke 1:35-38 NKJV).

What he wanted to hear from her was intentional relationship. “I’m not counting on pregnancy in the worldly sense of a relationship, although I don’t know how it works without that, but you say the Holy Spirit is going to come upon me - that’s good enough for me.” But he gave her a sign; Elizabeth is pregnant and it has been spoken over her all these years that she will be barren and now she has conceived and in 6 months she’s going to bear a son. Because that which people have proclaimed as impossible, nothing is impossible with God. Nothing is impossible with God. If you are intentional in your relationship with God, nothing is impossible. Nothing is impossible. Nothing is impossible. Nothing is impossible.

Okay, are you ready for this? Just a couple more minutes. Before I left here, I said to you, Pastor Sharon and I had been talking and said, you know, we’ve been flying business class for many years, and it’s time for me to fly first class. Me and her. And I left. And so, then I got a message from Miranda to say I have been upgraded to first class and that others have paid for the ticket.

So, I shared that with Brother Jerry. He said, “That’s right, John!” He said, “What you did was exactly the right thing.” We were just five of us driving in the car. He said, “What you did is exactly the right thing. What you did was; you placed a demand of the maximum that you could attain for where you’re at, the highest level attainable. If you don’t place a demand on it, you can never get there.” He said, “You spoke what the highest level was. By speaking it, you started to place a demand on it.” Amen. And now it’s done. I’m going to go and fly with all the people that are going with us on the Chariots tour to San Francisco, I’m going to fly first class.

Thank you. I am led to believe there are even people in America who heard the message that sowed seed into upgrading my ticket. For whoever you are, thank you.

You see, let me tell you how the devil came to me after I spoke it publicly. He said, “Ja John, you’re using your platform to make something happen that you want to have happened. And so now, you can’t really call that faith.” When I got to Brother Jerry and told him what happened, he said, “John, you did exactly the right thing because what you did was, you spoke it out, and then you allowed God to work on people’s hearts. Nobody, you didn’t request anybody to sow seed into that. But God worked on people’s hearts because you placed the demand on it.” If it works like that for me, it’s going to work like that for you. And because I’m making a demand on going to the Highest Level that I can go to, to the maximum and the highest level attainable that we can go to personally and in this ministry, God’s doing something.

So let me give you some other good news. You know, this house across the road here that used to be a tuck shop, the guy died four years ago, and it’s been in a deceased estate. Nobody could ever get it out of the deceased estate because of spluma and various other things, and lots of politics and legal stuff and whatever. Then we got a notification that a court hearing, Highveld Steel and a few other

people had taken the Witbank municipality to court to say spluma is invalid in the way that they are implementing it here. And so there was a window of a couple of weeks, and then they did something and it came back again. But in those couple of weeks, I said, "Let's find out if we can buy this house across the road." Why? Because we are growing. We need a community centre. We need more place for MiXchange people. We need a place for MiXchange business, MiXchange professional services, MiXchange, everything that God is doing. We need space to grow into. I said, "Let's find out."

So we started finding out. Long story, lots of politics. Still can't do it. Eventually, with the right people involved that God said, "Use this person, use that person, work it like this." I'm happy to tell you, we've paid the deposit, the deal is ours, after other people tried to come and disturb it, we now are just waiting for transfer and everything to happen of this house across the road. And it's the first of many. How did we get that? Because let me tell you, when people found out that we made an offer on the house, they came in with counter offers trying to upset us. But God had worked a relationship in our favour, so that when we said we're going to use it for the church, the people, they just said, "We don't care about any other offers, the church has got to have this." The church has got to have this. And so we got it. We are going to the highest level available. We are going to the maximum. Hallelujah.

"So Pastor John, who is paying for it?" God! And there is more news coming. Just wait. I'm pushing. We are pushing. You are all in agreement with me. We are walking out our faith. You better watch out, because we are going to go as hard as we can this year. We are going to go as hard and as far as it can go this year, because we are going for the highest available. How high is that? I don't know, but we've got to push, don't you think? Brother Jerry said to me, "John, you're going back to South Africa, you should have stayed and come and hung out with me a little bit." I said, "I know, sir. I wanted to." I said, "But you know, I've got things to do." He says, "You're going to the highest level, you're going to the maximum." I said, "That's why I've got to go back. There's only things that my feet on that ground can do when I get there, I've got to speak. I've got to be there because we ..." I said, "I'll be back, sir." He said, "I know." Because we're going to the highest.

I've gone on a plane to fly back 27 hours to get on a plane in two weeks time to fly another 27 hours for another two weeks to fly back another 27 hours. What for? So that I could be here to go to the highest level, so that we could be here to go to the maximum. We got to go and do this thing together. Hallelujah.

We are intentional in our relationship about this. We are making a demand on our Heavenly Father, our relationship and the words of prophecy that have come to us. We are intentional. Our relationships are intentional. Hallelujah. And so what was this whole morning about marriage and you talking about because I had it in my heart, the Lord wants to unlock this year the maximum level that you can go to in relationship, the highest level that you can go in relationship, all of you people together in body unity together, in connecting together, in establishing covenant relationship, and in marriages and in things that God has got destined for us, wants us to go to the next level, the highest level available, attainable, for gifts and callings to be released and to be manifested. For the work of God to begin to flow and gifts to

begin to be released and things to begin to bubble up and come to their maturity and come to the highest level. Hallelujah. Glory to Jesus. Glory to God.

*Wat sê julle almal?* Are you with me? Are we going to do this thing together? We got to push here people. Hallelujah. We got to push this through, we got to push in every area in every way. Glory to Jesus. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Stand to your feet, please. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. I've got to be obedient to the Holy Spirit because right here in the beginning of the service, the Lord showed me something. And so whoever's doing Marelize's camera, got to release her because I got to speak something over her. Come, Marelize. When you're ready. She's got to take all kinds of gizmos off and... Hallelujah. Just give me a moment here. The Holy Spirit spoke to me in the beginning of the service and I said, "Well, Lord, if You want me to say something today, You must remind me." And so He did. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

So I've got to say something to you. When you were up here on the front, you were using the camera, the Lord said to me I must tell you today that there are gifts in your life that you don't even know how valuable they are to God but He placed them in you and He's going to use them and you are going to shine for Him. It doesn't matter what anybody else thinks, He placed them in you. And He thinks that's very valuable. Very valuable. Very valuable. And we think so, too. And so, now it's time, and so, now it's time. You've got to press into God. You've got to go for the maximum because now God has spoken it to you. This is no longer time for you to worry about this or for you to have those things that the devil comes to lie with you and lie to you about. Huh? I mean, you and I haven't had a conversation about this, but this is all the Holy Ghost speaking to you, today. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. It doesn't matter how many ideas, thoughts, come to you, you say, "Jesus spoke today. Jesus spoke over my life today." Yes. We love you, girl. Ja, and we recognise that God placed you here for a reason. And today He's chosen to just say it over you publicly so that everybody can know that God has marked you. God has marked you. God has marked you and that's all that matters is that God has marked you. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Praise Jesus.

Thank you. Walk back with her. Just walk back with her. Thank you, Melissa. Praise Jesus. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. You see, God is intentional about things. He is intentional about things. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Won't you put your hand on your heart, please? Right hand over your heart. Say, Lord Jesus, today, I am intentional about my walk with You. And I trust You that where I am weak, You will make me strong. And I have to trust You that whenever my intentional fails that You will be there to help me and guide me and strengthen me. I trust You as the Lord and Saviour of my life. I trust You with all of my future, with all of my assignment, with all that You have for me in Jesus' name. Amen.

I want to just share something with you quickly. Sharon and I, when we were flying home we had a long conversation about it, and we talked about Brother Jerry's 53, 54 years. Because you know, for a couple of weeks we go into hotel rooms, hotel rooms, you pack and unpack, pack and unpack, pack and unpack. You travel, you fly, you get in a car, you go to a room, you go do this, you pack and unpack. Every

time that happens to me I have a greater love and respect and honour for Brother Jerry. And I said to Sharon, "You know, Sharon, Brother Jerry has been doing this for 53 years." I said, "You don't do that unless you are intentional about fulfilling the call of God on your life." You know?

To be sure, there have been moments in our relationship where the enemy has tried to separate Brother Jerry and I. But because I was intentional about making my way back to him, it didn't matter what had happened between us, I wanted the quality of relationship that God had always intended. And I am saying this because there are those that might be listening on television, by way of digital, that if God speaks to your heart, there are people that are back in this church that for years had left the church and came back. They will tell you that when they came and sat in my office, and they were intentionally about their repentance, there is a great love in my heart to receive them completely, without condition or without talk about anything that happened in the past. Because that is not the way God treats me. Amen.

But you know, I will tell you, you have to be intentional about it, you can't just say, "Well, I think I will do it and see if it works." You have to be intentional about it. And I said you know, I said to Sharon it doesn't matter how many times it takes for me to fly to America and to go and have this relationship with Brother Jerry, because if he could give himself to the body of Christ for 53 years - in and out of hotels every day. Every day, every day, every day, every day. Twenty days out of every month he is in hotels giving himself to the body of Christ. Then the little bit that I can do is, so what. Don't you think? We got to be more intentional about having a higher assignment, about having more of what God wants for us. Amen.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will rest upon you, that He will guide you and lead you, that no weapon formed against you will prosper. And that the words that have been spoken today, they will make a big difference in your life. They will guide you, they will lead you, they will sustain you, they will make you more productive. Hallelujah. Praise Jesus. And I pray that no weapon formed against you will prosper, He covers you with His Words. His Word and the blood of Jesus surround you. He gives His angels charge over you. Your lives are protected, your income is protected, your relationships are protected, your children are protected, your assignment is protected. Everything that you need, you are covered by the Word and the blood of Jesus. And I declare good health and with long life does He satisfy you and show you His salvation. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

I have got more to teach on *Intentional Relationships*, and God willing in the next couple of weeks will get it done. Thank you for coming. Bless ya. Bless y'all. Y'all have a good day y'all.