



SESSION 10 CHAPTER 6 THE WAYS OF THE ALONGSIDER

Pray

Does anyone have a special Quiet Time revelation they want to share?

This week in ALONGSIDER we pick up on what I call the second half of Chapter 5. Chapter 6 again focuses on Relationship, but as you saw a week ago, the author takes us to a deeper level of relationship. In chapter 5 Bill related that to reach deeper levels in relationships we need to be authentic. That authenticity was defined by our actions and displays of transparency and vulnerability that are motivated by the love we share with someone. Transparency can be expressed as we make self-revealing statements. It is our willingness to expose our personal struggles, fears, and life issues inside the safety of a friendship. That gets trumped however when we become willing to go beyond our needs and feelings. Vulnerability lets people enter in my life for helping me with support, encourage, or even correction of me in times of need. In a real sense it's like the pilot of an airplane giving over the controls to the co-pilot. Is it a risk? Absolutely! But it is a risk that we take because of our growing levels of love and trust in God as much as our growing closer in the relationship I share with the person I am discipling.

Bill put boundaries on this relationship level. At the top of page 53 he defined this love as being "both an unconditional acceptance of other people and a volitional choice to seek another's highest good." In other words, this isn't about me; it's about my willingness to model being real for the purpose of helping the other person see another aspect of what it means to grow into greater levels of spiritual maturity.

Jesus had modeled these things every day as he shared his life with his disciples. At John 13: 34, John 15: 9 - 11, and 15: 14, and 1st John 4: 7 we read how our doing these things moved their relationships to an even deeper level. Jesus he told them that if they followed his teachings, these things he had modeled and taught, that they would be called his 'friends'. This is what you'll be doing. As you model authenticity in the midst of discipling, you'll be moving that relationship deeper into a very real friendship.

That brings us up to Chapter 6, 'The Way of Depth', or as I call it, 'Communication 101'. And anyone who is good at it knows full well that good communication starts not with talking but with listening. We pick it up at page 59. At the bottom of the page Bill introduces a new concept that he calls a 'backstory'. Here he says, "I believe that ministry happens when we connect to people's backstories."