



FRANKLIN ROAD

baptist church

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RELATIONSHIPS CREATED

AT THE VERY CENTER OF THE GOSPEL IS THE OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE TO KNOW GOD. WE GET TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ALMIGHTY CREATOR. IN THIS GRAND AND EXPANSIVE UNIVERSE, THE ONE WHO CREATED IT KNOWS WHO WE ARE. WE ARE FULLY KNOWN BY HIM AND WE LOVE HIM ONLY BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US.

IN MY EXPERIENCE AS AN EDUCATOR, I'VE HAD NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES TO CREATE RELATIONSHIPS AND AUTHENTIC RAPPORT WITH STUDENTS. MANY TIMES THESE RELATIONSHIPS DID NOT HAPPEN BY CHANCE. THERE WAS INTENTIONALITY BEHIND MY EFFORTS TO KNOW MY STUDENTS. SOME RELATIONSHIPS LASTED FOR A SHORT TIME AND DIDN'T MAKE WHAT I WOULD CONSIDER TO BE A SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT. OTHER RELATIONSHIPS CONTINUE TO THIS DAY.

THEY WERE NOT ALWAYS EASY. SOME STUDENTS DIDN'T WANT TO BE KNOWN. THEY BUILT UP WALLS OVER TIME AS A RESULT OF UNSPEAKABLE EXPERIENCES.

AS AN EDUCATOR IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL, MANY OF MY INTERACTIONS INVOLVE STUDENTS FROM VERY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES. MANY STUDENTS HAVE LIVED THROUGH DESPICABLE, SCARY EVENTS THAT I COULD NEVER FATHOM. THEIR LIVES HAVE BEEN MARKED BY A LACK OF STRUCTURE AND AN ABUNDANCE OF PAIN.

MY INABILITY TO EMPATHIZE WITH THEIR PAIN REQUIRES ME TO LOVE THOSE STUDENTS AND KNOW THEM WELL. WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT ATTEMPTS ON MY PART TO KNOW MY STUDENTS, MY ABILITY TO TEACH THEM DIMINISHES DRASTICALLY.

MANY OF YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED FIRST HAND THE RESULTS OF PAINFUL AND UNSPEAKABLE CIRCUMSTANCES THROUGH YOUR OWN LIFE AND/OR THROUGH YOUR EXPERIENCES LOVING OTHERS. I BELIEVE THE SAME IS TRUE IN CHRIST'S LOVE FOR US. IT TOOK A SIGNIFICANT ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF GOD TO SEND HIS SON TO THIS EARTH TO KNOW US. AND EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT WAS THE SACRIFICE OF HIS SON ON THE CROSS. WITHOUT THE UNCOMFORTABLE AND INCONVENIENT EXPERIENCE OF COMING TO EARTH TO BE BORN IN A STABLE AND ULTIMATELY DIE ON A CROSS THERE WOULD BE NO RELATIONSHIP.

CHRIST CAME TO KNOW US. HE EXPERIENCED WHAT WE EXPERIENCE. HE WAS TEMPTED AS WE ARE TEMPTED. HE WAS UNCOMFORTABLE. ARE WE?

ARE WE WALKING IN THE SHOES OF OTHERS? ARE WE INTENTIONALLY CREATING RELATIONSHIPS? ARE WE LOVING OTHERS BEFORE THEY LOVE US?

THIS IS, OF COURSE, A GREAT IDEA AS IT PERTAINS TO BEING MISSION MINDED IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS, WORKPLACES, SCHOOLS, ETC. BUT WE MUST START WITH OUR CHURCH. WE MUST LOVE EACH OTHER. INTENTIONALLY. EVEN IF IT MAKES US UNCOMFORTABLE. TAKE THE FIRST STEP. LOVE FIRST. CHRIST DID.

ADAM MCDANIEL