

# Needy by Design

**Brown Community Group**  
**November 24, 2019**

Last week, we looked at some passages that reveal part of what it means to be made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), including a key aspect of humankind being that we enter this world wired by God to connect with Him and with other human beings. Therefore, it is not good for us to be alone (Genesis 2:18). Aloneness is an issue of the heart, not the rational mind. Aloneness is removed when we have meaningful relationships that facilitate relational intimacy – deep mutual knowing for the purpose of caring involvement. God provided several types of relationships that are appropriate for removing aloneness – namely, marriage, family, friendships, and the church.

Today, we will examine Scripture that speaks to God's plan for human beings to function in community with one another – *interdependent* with each other and *dependent* on Him. As stated last week, this lesson will include an opportunity to *experience* the Word so that we are “doing the Book,” rather than simply gaining knowledge.

## Your Experience of Neediness

So how do you feel about being needy? What does that word convey to you about you? What do you sense in your heart when you consider that there are needs that you have for which you are dependent on other people to meet for you in addition to God? What were you taught about being needy growing up?

## A Needs-meeting God

*Philippians 4:19 - And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*

In this verse, the Apostle Paul is bragging on God to the Christians at Philippi. He seems convinced that God has both the concern and the resources to meet all his needs. He's declaring that he has a needs-meeting God who is all sufficient. However, Paul is not saying that a sovereign God doesn't get to deliver some of his provision for us through human beings. Just as He chooses to involve people in the sharing of the Gospel, the Lord also chooses to engage us in the delivery of a variety of his provisions for physical, spiritual, and relational needs.

You may have heard sermons preached before that convey that you should only need God. Some suggest that if we were spiritually mature, we wouldn't need other people, certainly not to deal with our struggles, disappointments in life, losses, etc. Yet, in this very passage, where Paul ends up declaring that God is the ultimate source of all good, he has just thanked the Philippians for giving him aid. He also shows that their generosity is a way they worship God. We see that the Lord often wants to use people as the delivery vehicle in meeting needs for others.

*Philippians 4:16-18 - ... for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.*

## Three Dimensions of Neediness

No one would argue that humans have physical needs. We have an ongoing need for physical nourishment. God in His sovereignty chose to meet those needs through food and water. We also have an ongoing need for rest to restore our strength. Again, God in His sovereignty chose to meet our need for physical restoration through the process of nightly sleep and rest from labor. Similarly, Christians don't argue that we have spiritual needs – for forgiveness, salvation, and communion with the Spirit. However, some struggle to accept the validity of relational needs that God wants to be met by other humans. These relational needs include attention, affection, security, comfort, approval, acceptance, etc. Maturity teaches us to humbly admit our neediness and exercise faith in God's provision. In reality, that is how we experience God's love. We need acceptance and He gives it. (See Romans 15:7) We need forgiveness and He gives it. (See I John 1:9) We need comfort and He gives it. (See II Corinthians 1:3,4). But the “one another's” of Scripture make it clear that God wants us to be involved in meeting such needs.

## Understanding Relational Needs (Characteristics)

If we are to enjoy the relational intimacy that God intends, we must first understand our own needs and how God is pleased to meet them through our walk with Him, and oftentimes, through our spouses and others. The relational needs listed on this page are not created from the imagination of a psychologist or research studies. They are derived from a study of Scripture. Most, you will find, are taken from the “one another” verses in the Bible, where God commands us to treat people in certain ways. The theology for these needs says that God would not command us to meet needs that are irrelevant to human beings. He created us with needs, and when we obey him by caring for each other in these ways, we are blessed and God is honored and glorified.

The list of ten relational needs below is not exhaustive. However, these are ones that most people can relate to easily. Here are some characteristics of relational needs as a whole:

- **They are God-ordained.** Therefore, you don’t need to apologize to anyone for having such a need.
- **You never outgrow the needs.** They are in you at birth as part of your “wiring” and you will die with them one day.
- **These needs are gender-independent.** They are not “his needs,” and “her needs.”
- **They are cross-cultural.** There is no distinction based on race or nation wherever these “one-another” verses are found.
- **They can only be met through relationships** – with God and/or with other people.
- **Some will matter more to you than others.** However, the priority of needs may change based on what’s going on in life.

## Ten Relational Needs from Scripture (Definitions)

Turn to page 3 to see the definitions and Scripture references for the Ten Key Relational Needs.

## Priorities and Targets for Relational Needs

Generally speaking, at any given point in time, some relational needs are higher priority to us than the others. Certain needs may always be at the top of the list because they were not met consistently for you growing up – thus, it’s like an empty well needing to be filled. Conversely, some needs remain priority because you remember feeling loved that way and want those experiences to continue. Additionally, the life situations we are experiencing may dictate which needs are most significant for us at the time. As we come to understand that these are legitimate needs that God calls us to meet for one another, it is very important that we develop an ability to discern the “need of the moment” in ourselves and in others.

## Obstacles to Meeting Relational Needs

- **Selfishness—exalting our neediness**

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. (Philippians 2:3)*

"I have needs and I'm going to take to have my needs met."

**antidote = faith**

- **Self-Reliance—denying our neediness**

*You say . . . I do not need a thing. But you do not realize . . . (Revelation 3:17)*

"I have no needs, but if I did, I'd take care of them myself."

**antidote = humility**

- **Self-Condensation—denouncing our neediness**

*There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)*

"I do have needs, but I feel bad that I do."

**antidote = gratitude**

# Ten Key Relational Needs

You	Relational Needs	Spouse /Friend
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Acceptance:</b> Receiving another person willingly and unconditionally, even when the other’s behavior has been imperfect. Loving another in spite of differences or failures (Romans 15:7).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Affection:</b> Expressing care and closeness through physical touch; saying “I love you” or “I care about you” (Romans 16:16; Mark 10:16).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Appreciation:</b> Expressing thanks, praise or commendation. Recognizing accomplishment or effort, particularly for what someone does (Colossians 3:15b; I Corinthians 11:2).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Approval (Blessing):</b> Building up or affirming another, particularly for who they are; affirming both the fact of, and the importance of, a relationship (Ephesians 4:29; Mark 1:11, Matthew 3:17).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Attention:</b> Conveying appropriate interest, concern, and care; taking thought of another; entering another’s world (I Corinthians 12:25).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Comfort:</b> Responding to a hurting person with words, feelings, and touch; to hurt with and for another’s grief or pain (Romans 12:15b; Matthew 5:4; II Corinthians 1:3-4; John 11:35).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Encouragement:</b> Urging another to persist and persevere toward a goal; stimulating toward love and good deeds, particularly when someone is weary (I Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Respect:</b> Valuing and regarding one another highly; treating one another as important; honoring one another (Romans 12:10).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Security (Peace):</b> Ensuring harmony in relationships even as conflicts are resolved, trust is deepened and vulnerability is expressed; providing freedom from fear or threat of harm (Romans 12:16,18).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Support:</b> Coming alongside and gently helping with a problem or struggle; providing appropriate assistance. (Galatians 6:2)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Use this list to help identify your priority needs. Then, share with your spouse/friend what you consider them to be. Next, talk about how you each would prefer those needs be met. Note the responses of your spouse/friend and plan for how you can begin to better meet those needs. Give first! (Luke 6:38)

## **The Zacchaeus Principle (Cinderella Man)**

### **Luke 19:1-10 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup>Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup>A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. <sup>3</sup>He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. <sup>4</sup>So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

<sup>5</sup>When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” <sup>6</sup>So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

<sup>7</sup>All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

<sup>8</sup>But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

<sup>9</sup>Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup>For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Here is a case where Jesus reached out to a man who had made rich at the expense of others. He was despised in the eyes of the people for it. Jesus, knowing this, nevertheless invites himself over for dinner. The man repents of his sin, even taking initiative to make restitution. Jesus met this man’s need for acceptance without condoning his wrongful behavior. The result was repentance. It reflects Romans 2:4 that says, “God’s kindness leads to repentance,” and Romans 5:8, “God demonstrated His love for us in this: while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

### **Video Clip Illustration from “The Cinderella Man” – Jim Braddock’s son Jay steals a sausage**

A final word of encouragement – Matthew 10:8 says, “Freely you have received; freely give.” Let’s all be “point men/women” for delivering God’s love to people whose “illegitimate” behavior may mask their legitimate needs. And remember, John 13:35 says that, “They will know that you are my disciples by the way you love one another.” Meeting relational needs that appear as the “one another’s” in the Bible is another excellent way to show His love.