

## Galatians #8 - Law Based vs. Grace Based Relationships

- Alrighty, this will be a fun one. So I wanna start by just giving a principle and that is that for human life to flourish, it needs to be in the healthy environment that God intended for it, I'll give you some examples. So we live in a great universe and world architected, finely tuned, and designed by God to sustain our life, the body that you and I inhabit, it's a complex wonder where God knit us together in our mother's womb. And he architected our body in such a way that we can actually live life in the environment that he created for us. Before you came here, you were probably in your condo, your home, your dorm, your apartment, the building you were in had an architect, somebody intentionally strategically designed that place for human life. And you probably drove here in a car. And that too was engineered someone carefully or a team carefully engineered the process by which that vehicle could transport you safely. My point is simply this, not only do we live in the world and in our body and in our home and in our car, we live in our relationships. And I think one of the most important things that we can learn is how to architect, how to design, how to engineer our interpersonal relationships so that we can live together and be healthy. And oftentimes we get frustrated in our relationships, but we don't work on our relationships. And what we're gonna deal with today is really relational. Because up until this point in Galatians and we will be in Galatians chapter four, it's been highly technical. And today it transitions and becomes very emotional, very relational, very practical. And what he's talking about is the relationships within the church. And so if I could summarize some of what we have studied this far in Galatians, it is that God creates and Satan counterfeits. And when it comes to relationships that God creates grace based relationships and Satan counterfeits with what I'll call law based relationships. Law based relationships are control, demand, punishment, expectation. They become domineering and overbearing grace based relationships build you up. They don't beat you up. It starts with love, it starts with mercy. It starts with compassion. It starts with generosity to help you grow into the fullness of what God intends for you. Our relationships are architected either out of being based in grace or based in law. And this is really what Paul is arguing for in this section. He, was a man who, before he met Jesus, let me just, for those of you that have been with us, was he law based or grace based before he met Jesus? He was law based. He believed that his relationship with God was more like a slave master than a father son. That ultimately he felt that you needed to earn God's favor and you needed to, make God love you. And you needed to punish people like God punished you law based. And then he met Jesus. His relationship with God now is a grace based or law based? It's grace based. What do I mean by grace based? It's Jesus work for you and through you that's grace. See ultimately in our relationship with God, it's like, you know, some work needs to be done. Jesus raises his hand and says, I'll do the work. So Jesus work for you is this my friend, and this is such good news. Jesus was perfect, so you don't need to be, and Jesus died, so you don't need to kill anybody or beat yourself up. And Jesus forgives, so you can live a forgiven life. And Jesus starts with relationship, that is grace based. And because it is held together by his faithfulness, no matter what that relationship will stay intact because of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ to forgive sin, to love you, to bless you, to defeat your enemies that Satan, sin, death, hell and the wrath of God, amen. That's Jesus' work for you. And then it's, Jesus' work in you. Now

you have a new nature. You have a new power through the Holy spirit. You're a new person, you have new desires, you have new relationships, you have a new outlook you're changing. And ultimately it's God's work through you. Now you're gonna start to treat others the way God treats you. You're gonna forgive people because you're a forgiven person. You're gonna love people because you're a loved person. You're gonna hang in there with people 'cause God hangs in there with you. You're gonna be generous toward people 'cause God is generous with you. Grace is Jesus work for you in you and through you. And the counterfeit of that. The demonic, satanic counterfeit of that is law based punitive domineering, overbearing, high control, beat you up. Don't build you up performance-based relationships. I'll give you an example practically, and here's where I'm going with this. I am going to mess with your family today, okay? I'm gonna mess with your family of origin. And some of you are gonna look back at your family and realize I had a great family, they were grace based. I'm gonna call them and tell them, I'm sorry for the child that I was others of you are gonna say it was a law based home. And I thought that my family was Godly, but it actually had some things in it that were ungodly. Some of you are gonna look at your current marriage, your current parenting, your current relationships. And one of the things that has been shocking to me in Galatians is, I didn't know it would be a series on marriage, relationships and parenting, but it is because it's talking about creating in the church family, a grace based or a law based environment. And then that sets the precedent pattern and prototype for your families. Why does this matter? Because one, the spirit of God blesses and the other Satan use to destroy the relationships that God is building. I'll give you an example. Some years ago, Grace and I, we had a mutual friend. Nice lady, great girl, love the Lord, mature in her faith. Very grace centered, easygoing, flexible, considerate, compassionate, empathetic, really sweet. She started dating a guy law based high control, lots of rules, lots of punishment per slips, to give you the stink eye. If you said, or did something you didn't like high control, domineering, overbearing law based. Well, they start dating. And what do you think that the grace based girl does with the law based guy? Will she accommodates him? Cause that's what grace does, right? So she's like, okay, well I'll love him. We'll hang out, he'll probably calm down. Eventually they get married and it gets worse. Now that they're living together, he has more control and more demands and more rules and more works that she needs to do. Otherwise she'll endure his wrath. Well, after a while this really discourages her and it deflates her and she brings this to her husband's attention. And what he basically says is we would have a better relationship if you would obey better. Now, if you're married, you know that that doesn't end well for you amen, that's not gonna end on a date night where you're holding hands and thanking, Jesus amen. So what happens is he just starts ratcheting up and then ultimately they add children to the family system. Now the question is, will the children live in mom's grace based environment or dad's law based environment. And dad is determined that the children will live in his law based environment. He's very demanding, overbearing. He's very critical. He's a guy who's always pointing out faults, flaws, and failures, he is easily disappointed. And in some way or another, he will punish you. If you do not obey him, we'll eventually no shock that marriage disintegrated because that man was breaking the grace based woman. And as a result, he was breaking the opportunity of a grace based relationship with his kids. If you ask that man today, what happened? He would say my family fell apart because my wife and children did not obey me. That would be his summation of their struggle. Hers would be he's

non-relational he's non-compassionate he's inflexible, he's not grace based. You and I are gonna make an important decision today. And that is with the people that we live in closest proximity to your spouse, your best friend, your kids, your grandkids, where they're gonna architect a relationship with them. That is law based or grace based. It is led by the spirit of God, or it is led by the enemy of God. And Paul is passionate because he was law based met Jesus became grace base, went to a town called Galatia told everybody about the grace of God. They all receive the grace of God. They all fell in love with Jesus, Jesus loved them. They loved Jesus, Paul loved Jesus. They loved Paul, it's a big happy family reunion. In the presence of God, sins are forgiven. People are freed up, healed up, encouraged, blessed. It's all grace base, it's an environment of life. And then Paul transitions to work in another city. As soon as he departs what he calls false brothers, arrive in Galatia. And what they say is basically, Hey, grace based relationships are over from now on, we do law based relationships and they start putting lots of demands and expectations and legalistic rules on the people. And then the people start putting them on each other. And then they start putting them on Paul and it ruins their relationship with God with each other and with Paul. So it's a crisis in the church family, and it affects all the families. So what I wanna look at today is five principles for grace based relationships. And the first place I wanna start is in Ephesians four, we will be in Galatians Paul wrote both books. I believe there's a principle in Ephesians four. And then there is a case study in Galatians four. And as I was praying for you this week, I just feel like I'm supposed to share this verse with you. So number one, how do we have grace space relationships? Number one, seek to be a means of grace. I get grace from Jesus, how do I give it to you? Ephesians 4:29 and 30. And so I want you to think about somebody, you've got a relationship with it's a little struggling or strained. Maybe it's marriage, maybe it's kids, maybe it's extended family, maybe it's friend or former friend. And the relationship is in a position where you need to talk about it, right? So there's, three things I want you to consider. Number one, is this an issue we need to talk about? How many of you realize there's some things you need to forgive and flush amen. There's some things you just forgive... You know, we don't need to talk about it, I just forgive it. You know what we're gonna move on. The Bible says that love is not easily offended. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs and that it's a glory to overlook an offense. So, number one, is this something we need to discuss? Number two, am I the best person to have this conversation? If it's husband and wife are at war, they need to talk to each other. And if they're just talking to other people, that's gossip and not godly. So my, the best person and the number three, how will I communicate, how will I present? Will I be a means of grace or law? Because when someone sins against you it feels like they're giving you law. And so what do you wanna give them more law? Instead, the question is, how do I give them grace? How do I give them grace? So Paul decides this issue is important. Paul decides I am the person that needs to have the conversation. And you're going to see in Galatians four, that he is a means of God's grace. He says it this way, let no corrupting talk, come out of your mouth. How many of you, when you're frustrated, your relationships are bothering you. You say things you shouldn't say is that just me, anybody else had this experience, right? If you came with someone, they will testify that you have done this amen, got it. You're like I said it. And what we tend to say is like, I just need to get it off my chest, which means it's coming to your chest in just a moment. You know, I need to unburden myself, which means you're gonna get a burden in just the second, you know, I just

need to let this go. Which means you're gonna get shot. Here comes the bullet from my chamber. And oftentimes when we're frustrated, it's not considering you. It's just, punishing you. Let no corrupting talk, come out of your mouth, but only such as is good for building up law based communication, beats people up, grace based communication builds people up, but only such as is good for building up as fits the occasion, that it may give what? Grace to those who hear. Which is you, can't just say, hey, I told you the truth. You know what? Yeah, I know. And you, you packaged it in a, in a bomb casing. So you dropped it on my life. Okay, it, wasn't a means of grace to me. How many of us, when we're really frustrated or not saying, okay, how can I possibly say this in a way that you feel built up and blessed and you experienced the grace of God, somebody say that's impossible. It is, it's gonna take a miracle. You're gonna need a miracle. Okay and his name is the Holy spirit. Do not grieve the Holy spirit of God. The Holy spirit is like, hey, please, don't go, this one alone, tag me and tag me and tag me in, get me in the ring, let me help. If you just do this, it's not gonna end well, if I do this, I'm gonna work it out for you. By whom you were sealed for the day of redemption, the Holy spirit wants to give you the grace to give them grace. The Holy spirit wants to give you grace to treat them the way that Jesus treats you. Okay? And this is a miracle. How many of you have been married for a while? And you realize marriage is a miracle. Miracle is something that couldn't happen unless God was involved. You take two sinners who annoy one another. And, that's the biblical definition of marriage. Two sinners who annoy one another. You're like, how are they gonna hang in there? You know what it's gonna take a miracle. It's gonna take a ton of grace. I always say this, when I officiated a wedding ceremony, I have the husband and wife face each other. And I always say, there's only two problems with this relationship, him and her, other than that, all the variables are set for success. Thankfully, there's a third person in the middle. His name is God. And he will bring grace so that they can stay together in relationship. So the first question is, how can I be a means of grace? How can I present this in a gracious way? How can I bring you to live in the grace of God? And I believe this is a principle. And then there's a case study that will examine in Galatians chapter four. And the first thing I wanna say in regards to Galatians is number one or number two. The second principle is don't overlook the demonic. How many of you, when you're frustrated with somebody, you forget that there is an unseen realm. There are two realms, one reality. There is the world that we see in the world, we don't see. There is the world filled with human beings. And then there is another world filled with spirit beings. And these two worlds are interconnected. And Paul says this formerly Galatians 4:8-9, when you did not know, God, let me just say this. Some people do not know God, somebody like I believe in God, you don't know if you don't know Jesus, you don't know God, okay, God's name is Jesus. Some people don't know God. Some of you will know God. Some of you will hopefully come to know God today. When you did not know God, you were enslaved, stuck habits, patterns, death cycles, foolish behavior, addictions. You were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. Or you read that he right, who are these gods? I thought there's only one God. There is only one, true God, but Satan counterfeits with a lot of false gods and what he's pulling here, he's pulling some concepts from the old Testament. And in the old Testament is originally written in Hebrew. There's a word called Elohim. Sometimes that word refers to God. Sometimes it refers to angels. Sometimes it refers to other spirit beings. Sometimes it refers to demonic, fallen angels, demonic spirits. What that word means originally is any supernatural

being in the unseen realm. And what he's saying is that what we see as spirituality or religion, what we see as addiction or entertainment, God looks behind it, and he says, there are demonic, principalities and powers that are involved. They're getting people to worship that, which is not God. They're getting people in slave to things that God made. And they're self-destructing. But now that you have come to know God, or rather known by God said, you didn't know God, but you did know demons. He says, then you came to know God and God came to know you. And this is his definition of what it means to be a Christian. God knows you, you know God. So I'll tell you two of the most important things you can learn in the Bible is who has gotten whom I, All right, who has gotten whom I, right God knows me. I know God, two different theologies debate over this one will emphasize the God knows you. And the other be like, you know, God. And Paul says, yes, God knows you. And you know, God, 'cause that's a relationship, right? I know Grace, Grace knows me. So we have a relationship. This is relational language. Now that you've come to know God or rather be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles. He's talking about demonic powers, principalities and spirits there of the world whose slaves you want to be once more. So here is what he is saying. He's saying, Satan set you up. Let me just tell you this. Satan sets people up through pride, addiction, woundedness, selfishness, whatever the case may be. And Jesus got you out of that horrific relationship with that, which is counterfeit and not Christ. That which is life taking not life-giving. He said, so you guys were doing demonic lifestyle. Let me just tell you this life apart from Jesus is demonic. Okay, you're going to give yourself to someone or something. And if it's not, Jesus, it will be an unholy. Unclean, unhelpful spirit. It says, you knew demons. And then you met Jesus and Jesus knew you and you knew Jesus, and then you're free. I don't have to do that anymore, I belong to Jesus. Now I can leave that old lifestyle, those old patterns and precedents. I get a new life with Jesus yay. And he says, and now you're going back to demons. This is like somebody who didn't know the Lord. And then they know the Lord. And then they get bored with the Lord and they go back to their old lifestyle. What are you doing, going back? Why would you go back to the old lifestyle? That was a prison sentence and Jesus set you free. Why would you go back to jail? How many of you have had this? Maybe even with a child or an adult child, you're like, gosh, I was like this, and then I met Jesus. And then I told my kids all about Jesus. And now they're going back to what I was doing before I met Jesus. I was drunk and they're drunk, I was rebellious and they're rebellious. This is Paul's fatherly heart. What he's saying is, hey guys, this is where I was. This is where you were, this is what Jesus has done. Let's go forward, not backward. But here's the question. If you believe that our war is not just against powers that are seen, but those that are unseen that our war is not just against flesh and blood to quote Ephesians six, but powers, principalities, and spirits. Then when you're having some sort of interpersonal conflict with someone, just ask yourself, I wonder what Satan is doing in this relationship. Don't overlook the demonic. Maybe Satan has lied to them and they believed a lie. Maybe Satan is tempted them. And they're going into a temptation. Maybe Satan is deceived them. And they think that they're doing the right thing. And what this will give you is compassion and clarity. So you know what my war isn't against you, our war needs to be against him. So how do we work on a grace based relationship so that we can get rid of all that that is unhealthy unholy and unhelpful. Don't overlook the demonic, let me just, let me make this plain. You are going to have relational conflict and friction when it comes

so does the enemy. And he's looking for an opportunity to attack relationship with God and one, another. Number three, show the bad and good tracks, Galatians 4:10 through 15. The principle here, start with this. Some years ago, I was talking to a well known pastor we're driving in his truck. And he said, I used to think that life was good seasons and bad seasons. Now I see it as parallel tracks. There's always good and bad, God has always a work. And so is Satan and God's blessing is present. And so is this curse fallen world, how many of you, this makes sense of your reality, right? What the pessimists does, they only look at the bad track. Ah, here's everything that's going wrong. Here's what the optimist does. They only look at the good track oh, here's all that God is doing. The realist has God gave me two eyes, one to focus on each track and to see what God and Satan are doing to see the good and the bad that are coexisting. So what Paul is gonna do here, he is going to point out both. He's not gonna just rebuke them for their failure. He's also going to encourage them for their obedience and what he's doing. He's paying attention to both. How many of us, when we're frustrated with somebody, we don't wanna talk about anything on the good track. We just wanna travel on the bad track. We use words like this, always, never, only as soon as you hear those, you know that you're in trouble, you always say this. You never say that, you're only like this. You're not like that, we make generalities. And as a result, people don't hear us because we're not being honest about both tracks. As you hear Paul, you're gonna hear him give specific examples of the good and the bad tracks. You observe days and months and seasons and years. That's the bad track, you're allowing now religious legalistic, domineering, overbearing people to control your life. Those would be the fear of man issues, you're people-pleasers, you don't like conflict. You're susceptible to this strong personality shows up and you change your behavior because you don't wanna upset them. They're like a grenade with a pin pulled and whatever it takes to just keep them at bay. And what that means is they're like God ruling over you. And there are God of wrath and you don't wanna endure their wrath. If you have a parenting or a marriage relationship like this, you have a crisis, you have a crisis. And what he says is you observe days and months and years, people have come in and they've changed your schedule and your holidays and your family traditions. And he told us earlier, they've changed their diet. And guys are signing up to get circumcised, right? Those are, the specific examples. Now how many of you you're like, that's crazy. And you know what, God would look at some of us and say, you are allowing those people to cause you to do things that are equally crazy, equally crazy. And so he's giving a negative example. You observe days and months and seasons. I'm afraid I may have labored over you in vain. Do you understand the gravity of that statement? Right, I'm not gonna tell you to do this, but this is like looking at someone and saying maybe all that I have invested is a total waste of time and energy. Paul went to Galatia. Paul planted a church for those of you who were here. When we started a few years ago, planting a church, is a lot of work. It's a lot of labor. And now the church is up and going. This is like a couple sits down with a counselor. And the counselor says, okay, tell me where we're at. And if you've ever been lost in the mall, I got lost in the mall, recently I was in Scottsdale. If you wanna get lost, go to the mall in Scottsdale. It's so big, I can't determine one end from the other. And so I'm in the mall and I got totally lost. And I couldn't find my way out, there's so many levels. I totally got confused. I plugged it into my GPS, no help. So what I looked for have you seen this at the mall, you find the information kiosk and what is there a big map that says "You are here". And I was

like, okay, least now I know where I am. So I know where to go. This is the, you are here, moment of the relationship. Paul says, okay, we're here, we're here. We're here at this place where I feel like maybe this was all just a waste of time and energy. You know, that's a devastating thing to know, but it means there should be a sense of urgency. To change things. And sometimes let me just say this. The key to getting a relationship healed is for first the relationship, to be honest, I deal this with couples all the time, ask the guy, how's it going, we're doing great. Doing great, thanks pastor Mark wife. She's like, yeah, I hate him. And so does my boyfriend, you're like, well, okay. I don't, I don't feel like this is going as well as he, he told me, right, sometimes you gotta have the, you are here moment of reality, right? Brothers, so he's, it's loving. We're family. He's not talking here about professional relationships. He's talking about personal relationships. He's talking about the church family and the families that comprise the church, family. Brothers, I entreat you, I beg you, I'm pleading with you, please hear me on this. Become as I am for, I become, as you are. What he's saying is I was a law based religious guy and I met Jesus and I brought grace to you. So live in grace with me. Don't move over to law that's what I got saved from. And here's what he says. These are the positive things he says, you did me no wrong. He's looking at the good track. He's talked about the bad track, here's a good track guys, we had a good, healthy, loving relationship. You, did me no wrong. You know, it's because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, what he says is when I showed up into town, I was beat up, Paul gets shipwreck, homeless, left for dead, a drift on the sea, I mean, this guy, his job is like a crash test dummy that's Paul's assignment everything for him is hard. And he shows up in town and apparently he's sick or injured or ailing he's Jewish, they're Gentile. He's got a different God, they don't yet know God. And what he says is you guys love me. You welcome me, you embrace me, you blessed me. You are awesome to me. Okay, and as a pastor, I'm just honored to tell you, we feel the same way that everybody welcomed us. And we feel very loved and he says, that was amazing. And it was a good season. And though my condition was a trial to you. It was a pain, I wasn't healthy. Things were not going that great. You did not what? Scorn or despise me. You didn't bring law, right? Didn't bring law, he brought grace. But received me. As an angel of God, angel means messenger. When I showed up and started talking, you're like, well, that's a word from the Lord we receive you, and we bless you as Christ Jesus. What then has become of your blessedness for I testify to you that if possible, you would have douched out your eyes. And given them to me, what he's saying is there is nothing you guys wouldn't have done for me. And there's nothing that I wouldn't do for you because we had a grace based relationship. And what he's saying is when we started the relationship, Jesus was in the middle and he brought us together. And the grace of God was a blessing for us to enjoy and to share. And he says, now we've gone over to law and punishment and demands. And now you're rejecting me. And the whole relationship is in jeopardy. What he's talking about here is that law doesn't start a relationship with God. Only grace starts a relationship with God. So any of you who are Christians, your relationship with God, it started in grace and you should remain in grace and not move to law, the law didn't save you. The law based relationship didn't introduce you to God. So as a result, it will not grow your relationship with God. Think of it this way. What Paul is saying is our relationship today is unhealthy, but it was healthy, let's talk about when it was healthy. This is like a good pastor of marriage counselors meeting with a couple okay, where are we at, the, you are here conversation. We hate each other, it's not going good.

We don't like each other, we fight all the time, okay? Was there ever a time that you enjoyed one another and had a healthy relationship and felt God's grace and blessing? Yes, okay, well, let's, let's go back, let's start there. What did you do, we'd pray together. We'd snuggle, we'd go on dates. What do you do now? She watches CNN, he watches Fox. And then we talk about politics. Oh, well, you know, maybe, maybe we flush that. Right, and we've returned to that. Okay, how many of you, your relationship with Jesus started very sweet and then someone or something made it sour. What he's saying is go back to that sweet relationship. Number four, encourage healthy relationships. That's ultimately where he is driving. There are healthy relationships. There are unhealthy relationships, Galatians 4:16 through 17. Have I then become your enemy? At that moment, how would they have to answer that question? Paul, we see you as an enemy and we treat you as an enemy. That's what they have done. He's their pastor, he loves them. He's their pastor, he loves them. He's like, I love you. We had a great relationship and then I leave town. Somebody else shows up, next thing you know, you guys treat me like I'm an enemy. I'm not an enemy let me see this certain relationships. You do have enemies. The Bible says to love our enemies, but it doesn't say to trust our enemies, right? It doesn't say to walk with our enemies. You have real enemies. You have real enemies, somebody abuses your kid. They don't get to babysit anymore. But if the closest relationships that you have with people who are believers and love you are at a place that you see them as your enemy. Guess what the enemy is there, but the enemy is not them. This is part of the demonic deception, I'll give you an example. Some years ago, Grace and I were having an argument in the bathroom at night, hoping the children weren't listening, okay? And Grace looked at me as we're arguing and I kept bringing law, here's what I want. Here's what I need, here's where you failed. I was given grace at performance reviews. So Mr. Law is giving Miss Grace a performance review, okay? So if any of you were like, what messed up, welcome to our church, right? We're all a work in progress. So I look at Grace and I'm giving her the performance review and she looks at me and she says, I'm not your enemy. I said, yes, you are. I'm not Satan, but sometimes I deliver his mail. That was Satan's mail. That didn't come from the Holy spirit, amen. How many wives right now you're like, you agree that wasn't from the Holy spirit. That was from an unholy spirit. That was demonic. Grace looked at me, she said, no, no, no, Mark. I'm not your enemy, but we have an enemy. Right, do we have an enemy? Yeah. And the enemy wants to think that they're the enemy. So we shoot them rather than us standing together to oppose him. When Grace and I were married, we're 21 years of old of age. We went on our honeymoon to this, a little cabin. VRVO off the ocean, and it was a really sweet couple. That was Christians that owned it and when we came in, they're like, congratulations on your marriage. And we'll be praying for you. And you can tell they're believers. And the lady looked at us and she said, I just feel like I'm supposed to share something. Okay? She said, you have an enemy, but you're not the enemy. She said, the two of you need to stand together against your enemy. I'll never forget that. I thought what an odd thing for a woman to say, she'd been married a while. She'd been married a while, is there ever a day you wake up and you're like, I think you're my enemy. I think I married the devil's ex-wife because he couldn't live with her anymore. And then I picked her, what the heck? All right? They're not the enemy, right? If this is your spouse, some of you are laughing. Some of you are leaving, okay? So, and what we're talking about is two believers that are in a grace based relationship that are supposed to love one



another. And the enemy has showed up. When we treat each other like enemies, that's not grace based. Have I become your enemy by telling you the truth? Being honest, they make much of you, but for no good purpose, these are flatterers. These are people who butter you up so that they can benefit from you. These are people who are like, oh, listen to us. Not to them, be friends with us, not with them. Give to us, not to them. And he's saying, they're using you. They're using you. And they wanna shut you out so that you'll make much of them. They don't want you talking about Jesus. They, you to talking about them. They don't want you focused on Jesus. They want you focused on them. They don't want you to wake up in the morning and ask Lord Jesus, what do you want me to do? They want you to wake up in the morning and do what they tell you to do. That's a domineering, overbearing law based non-grace centered relationship. Let me give you some comparison and contrast between unhealthy and healthy relationships, unhealthy relationships, they demand perfection and they punish imperfection. That's a law based on healthy relationship. You need to do everything and if you miss anything, that's the one thing we're gonna focus on and talk about some of you are like I can't win. Yeah, mom, I cleaned my room, but I forgot the garbage can. Why does that need to be the hour conversation at the dinner table? Just remind me and I'll go empty it, I'm sorry. Right, yeah I got straight A's but I got one a minus, so guess what we talked about the a minus, because in my family, it's straight A's or F. We demand perfection and we punish imperfection. You didn't do it, right. I'm gonna raise my voice at you. I'm gonna give you an evil eye, I'm gonna punish you, or I'm gonna withhold my talk or conversation or love or affection from you as a form of punishment, unhealthy law based relationships. They demand perfection and they punish imperfection. Some of you what's been interesting to me as we're going through Galatians is it's raised for many of you. It's kind of, I didn't see it coming, but I'm glad to be in it with you. A lot of reconsideration of your family, of origins, some of your, like I was in a law based home. Man, gosh yeah, that was my home. And maybe even I thought my parents were godly, but some of this was not that godly. I don't want you to be bitter against them. I want you to give grace to them 'cause the enemy wants you to be bitter and not give grace to them. God wants you to forgive and give grace to them. Some of you you're doing this to your spouse. Some of you you're doing this to your own children, perfection, punishment, perfection, punishment. Number two, it creates ungodly division. The division here is between Paul, the pastor who led them to Jesus and the people that he loves. And now this is an ungodly division. There's no reason that they can't be friends with Paul, right, once you write a book of the Bible, you're safe. Amen, that's just all right. I just thought it was clever all right? Number three, an unhealthy relationship. You lose, they win. That's what Paul is saying and Paul is saying here, you're all losing, they're all winning. They want you to make much of them, it's about them. Not about you. A true loving grace based relationship is about you being blessed, not you being my blessing. It's generous, not greedy. And he goes on to say as well that ultimately they wanna shut you out. And he's talking there about their relationship with Jesus. Let me say this, I don't think that a Christian can lose their salvation, but I think they can lose the joy of their salvation and these people with their legalistic overbearing, demanding rules. It's like the door to heaven is shutting. Nobody's gonna get in. They're being cut off from Christ. Your relationship with Jesus Christ is your most treasured possession. It's your most important relationship and what an unhealthy relationship does it hurts or distances your relationship with Jesus. That's how you know, it's an unhealthy

relationship. This is like a girl who says she knows and loves Jesus. And her family loves Jesus and she starts dating some guy. Who's an unbeliever. Next thing you know, she's not going to church. She's not reading her Bible, she's not praying. She's not listening to her parents. You ask her, how's your relationship. She'd say, it's going great. Is he encouraging your relationship with Jesus? If not, it's a bad relationship. The definition of a relationship that is healthy is that it improves our primary relationship. Grace and I have learned this in marriage, that as she gets closer to Jesus and I get closer to Jesus, we get closer to each other. That's how it works, right? Marriage doesn't work without Jesus. Relationship doesn't work without Jesus. Family doesn't work without Jesus. Life doesn't work without Jesus. Nothing works without Jesus because people only flourish in healthy environments of grace. And Jesus is the only one who brings grace. Satan can't counterfeit grace, he can't bring grace. Only God brings grace and a healthy relationship. Ultimately what it does, it celebrates the progress without demanding the perfection. Hey, you made progress. You're doing better, praise God, let me encourage you. And to be honest with you, the walk with Jesus sometimes is two steps forward, one step back, four steps forward, three steps back, but it's encouraging the forward progress 'cause here's the deal. You're not gonna be perfect until you're resurrected from the dead, amen. You're not gonna be married to a perfect person. Some of you read the Bible, you're like they were naked, and perfect. Those days are over, right? That was a long time ago. Everything's different now, two sinners living together and any kind of relationship they're gonna need some grace so that they can make some progress. And the perfect relationship is the relationship with Jesus, not their relationship, man, I want that for you. I'll tell you, what's your relationship with Jesus. He's perfect and he helps you make progress. He's perfect, he helps them make progress ultimately as well. What a healthy relationship with Jesus does, it gives us a healthy relationship with others and a healthy relationship with others, reinforces our relationship with Jesus. Grace is my best friend. I am closer to Jesus because of my relationship with her. I am, I love my kids. I'm closer to Jesus because of my relationship with my kids, that ultimately the goal of relationships is not make you like me. The goal of the relationship is us become like him. Us become like him. So number five, how does this work? Well, he's gonna talk about how to connect before you correct. It's not that law based relationships deal with the issues and grace based relationships, don't it's that law based relationships are focused on, correct, not on connect and that grace based relationships start and prioritize connect before correct. Okay? Says this Galatians 4:18 through 20. It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose. And not only when I am present with you, first thing is to talk about here is the ministry of presence. When you have relational conflict, if at all possible, it's good to sit down in a safe place and have a conversation face to face because you can't communicate emotion through an email and a text, doesn't bring the fullness of the facial expressions and the vocal intonations. Sometimes a text makes it worse. And if you've been there sometimes an email just it's like demons where the attachment with the email and wants it open, like hell fury unleashed on the relationship. And sometimes by sitting down and having a conversation, okay, let me talk. Let me listen, let me on some stuff. Let me ask some questions. What Paul is saying is I wish I could be present in that moment he can't, for some reason, he's constrained in another city and they're constrained in Galatia. But let me just say this, if the relationship is important in as much as you possibly can seek to be present together, to talk about the relationship and here's his heart, my little children, that's

connecting before, correcting. Correcting, without connecting as all right, Galatians. Let's talk about all of your shortcomings and my disappointments. He starts with, I love you. And to me, you're like my kids that's connecting, amen. How many of you, if your dad just said that that would be a life changing moment for you. I love you with all my heart and I value our relationship above all else. Paul here is the spiritual father in the church in Galatia. He led these people to Christ. They were born again under his ministry, his heart for them as like a father toward his kids. I want you to know that I love you from a place of fatherhood. I hope you sense that. I love my kids very, very, very much. I adore my kids. I love you from the same place that I love my kids. I love our church family from the same place that I love my own family. I want you to know that and what Paul is telling the Galatians, and I think it's important for the people to know that. I think it's important for you to know that, that I see this as a family. I see myself like a dad, and I love you like I love my kids. And what Paul is saying here is like, that's my heart. That's amazing for whom I am in anguish in childbirth until Christ is formed in you. If you've ever seen a woman give birth to a child, you're like, there's a lot of pain that brings life. And he says, I've been through a lot of pain with you, but it's cause I want life for you. You're worth it. And he says that the goal is that Christ is formed in you. The goal of our relationship should not be, I get what I want, it should be, we become like Jesus. Law based is always, I got what I wanted grace based is we got Jesus. Maybe we didn't get what we want. But we got Jesus. And if I can encourage you to be like Jesus, and you can encourage me to be like, Jesus, that's a relationship that God will bless with lots of grace. I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone. He says, if I come off as angry, if I come off as harsh, you know, I'm sorry. I love you, that's not my intent. I'm just perplexed, I'm confused. I'm concerned that, I don't understand. This is not the relationship that Jesus wants with you. And this is not the relationship that I want with you. Let me pivot to parenting. Okay, 'cause you guys are making babies. Congratulations, be fruitful, multiply. Fill the earth, you called dips. We got babies. We got a lot of babies coming. And let me just say this to raise a child, requires you to connect before you correct. How many of you, your parents would yell at you from the other room, but they didn't come in and talk to you. How many of your parents, they send you a text. You suck, stop sucking, love dad, okay. No connection. When my kids were little, here's how I would physically do it. Because when you're bigger than the kids, you can domineer overbear easily, right? 'Cause you're bigger than they are. And you're looking down at them. You don't want that relationship with your child because let me just tell you what happens, eventually they grow up and now my son's looked down on me. And am like... Their voices have dropped and they're taller than their dad. So it's not the biggest one is the boss. Okay, so what I would do when my kids were little, if we had to talk about something, correction, something happened, this is what Paul is doing. I'd literally get down at the eye level of my kids and I'd look at him, hi, hi dad, what are you doing down here? I'm here to meet with you face to face because I wanna connect. And then I need to correct. And I'd ask them questions like who am I kids be like, you're my dad yep. Good, how do I feel about you? You love me, do you believe that I love you. Yeah, dad and I make them look at me. Yeah, dad, I know you love me. Do I want good for you? Yeah, you want good for me, dad? You know what, our relationship is really important to me. Is it important to you yeah. Or your relationship with your mom or with one of the siblings? I wanna talk about that 'cause here's the thing. I want us to enjoy each other. I want this to be a fun, enjoyable life

giving home. And when that happens, it really hurts that, do you understand that? So let's talk about that. And sometimes what I'd even do with the kids is I'd lay hands and pray over them. Lord Jesus, we're gonna have a conversation. We invite the Holy spirit to come Holy spirit please open my kid's heart to receive your love and my love and help us to have an awesome relationship in Jesus name. And I would lay hands and pray over my kids. And then we'd talk. Most of the time. Our problem is not with a correction. It's with a lack of connection. How many of you are adults and you still feel this way. If somebody just yells at you, that doesn't work. If they really care about you, their correction is a gift 'cause the Bible says that a wounds of a friend are to be trusted much. You can get wounded by an enemy. It's different than being wounded by a friend but ultimately it is Romans two the kindness of God that leads us to repentance or change. See when Jesus came to the earth, God literally got down at our level and looked us in the eye. What he said was I'm here to bring grace so we can have a relationship. And in the context of that relationship, I'm gonna correct some things in your life. Cause I love you and I want good for you. That's Jesus, that's Jesus. So we wanna lead like Jesus, we wanna parent, like Jesus. It's burden lifting, not burden giving it's life, giving not life stealing. It builds people up who otherwise would feel very beat up. And some of you have asked, if we just believe in grace, do we not deal with stuff? We do, we spend a lot of our energy and our first priority on connect. And then once they know that we love them and we have a relationship we can correct. Does that make sense? Now I'll do one other thing 'cause as I've been preaching through Galatians at the same time Grace and I are raising five children. So for me, there's a lot of family system stuff in here that I didn't know it was, I think there could be a whole parenting book on Galatians, whole family systems book on Galatians. Our kids are 13, 15, 17, 19 and 21. How many of you have heard about those years? You're like, do they really get demon possessed? You know, is that, Is that what the word teenager means in Greek they're demon possessed. No, you can actually love your kids. Like your kids, enjoy your kids, have a relationship with your kids, if it's grace based, if it's grace based. And so as we've been getting into this issue of law based versus grace based relationships in Galatians, many of you have asked parenting questions. And many of you are asking questions about parenting teenagers and adult children. So let me summarize how I see all of this. I'm gonna give you two charts. I just think very visually law based relationships, I will make the argument. They lead to immature people in relationships and here's how it works, here's you. And then there's someone else and they have a fear, a fear that you will fail a fear you'll make a bad decision, a fear that you'll ruin your life. A fear that something bad will happen. And as a result, they need to have control over you and to maintain control. They make lots of demands on you. Has anyone ever had this kind of relationship? It's demonic. Any relationship that starts with fear instead of faith is demonic. Your relationship with God starts in faith. And if you have a relationship that is based in fear, it is ungodly. How do I know the Bible says that God has not given us a spirit of fear. The spirit of fear is the counterfeit to the Holy spirit. The Holy spirit brings faith, the unholy spirit brings fear. That's the spirit of fear. Some of you lived in homes. Some of you are in relationships. Some of you live life under the demonic covering of a spirit of fear. That's, what's driving a lot of what's going on in Galatians. When he says, who has bewitched you an angel from heaven. You know, if they bring up false gospel, let them be a cursed, he says, it's like someone put a spell on you. As you hear this language in Galatians. It's his way of saying, when

did the spirit of fear come over these people and cloud out faith in God. I love you, let me go from preaching to mentoring for a moment, some of you have been through pain. Some of you have been through trauma. Some of you have been through abuse. Some of you don't want it to ever happen again. And you were afraid that it will. Some of you don't want that to happen to the people that you love so you're fearful for them. You need to be wise and discerning, but not fearful. You'll never arrive at the will of God, starting with fear. You'll never arrive at the will of God, starting with fear. The Galatians, these people, they're afraid of these false teachers. They're living in fear of them. And these people are controlling them and making demands on them and what this feels like. Let me just ask you, what does it feel like if this is your life? It feels like the vice is being squeezed. That the pressure is increasing, that you have less freedom and that because you know what the Holy spirit wants. He wants freedom. Satan's counterfeit is pressure, lots of pressure to perform and produce. And the myth is for those of you who are parents, 'cause there's a lot of garbage parenting books out there that claim to be Christian. A lot of the garbage parenting books will tell you that this is how you have a relationship with your baby. Now the illusion is when they're a baby, you can control them, that's the illusion. How many of you have had a baby? You realize I can't control them. They do whatever they want. Okay, but, when a baby is little, they can't feed themselves. They only eat what you feed them. They can't go anywhere unless you carry them. They can't do anything unless you do it for them. They're under your control, right, they can't call 911 and report this situation. They're stuck. Okay. Now what happens is you can start parenting when the kids are little in a law based high control fear-based environment, but what happens is the kids get bigger. They go to school, they're not home all day. They have friends, not just family. They have their own opinions. They wanna pick out their own clothes. All of a sudden they're differentiating and they're becoming individuals and not just part of the family system. And as soon as that happens, what sometimes happens is the parents think, we're losing control we need to double down. And what happens is this. If the only way to have a relationship with you is on your terms, then I choose no relationship. Does this make sense? This is why sometimes the most rebellious kids come from where the most religious homes parents said, here's the manual. And if you don't abide by all of our demands, then what, then we won't have a relationship with you. Well, then I choose no relationship because if it's that relationship or no relationship, you've allowed the laws, the expectations, the demands, the performance to be the center of the relationship. This is where marriages crumble. This is where children rebel. This is where relationships disintegrate. Does this make sense to anyone? Okay, it just gets heavy when I get into this. So is there an alternative? No, there is an alternative. I'm just checking to see if you're still with me. So you're like, please tell me there's a plan B what I need you to see is that plan A doesn't work. And the only plan B is Jesus and the grace of God, okay? So let me show you how I see it. There's you and there's others. And what holds you together is Jesus' grace. You have your political party, they have their political party. You have your holidays, they have their holiday's. You got your way of doing things. They got their way of doing things, not sinful things, secondary things. And you know what, what holds us together is Jesus' grace, he's working on you. He's working on me, he's got a lot of work to do, right? You're in relationship with him. And he is in authority over you. Therefore, I don't need to just be brow beating you and dominating you. You could be filled by the spirit led by the spirit. You can have the spirit of self-control. God

is working on you, God is working on me. God is bigger than my mistakes. God is bigger than your mistakes. And what holds us together is the grace of Jesus Christ. What this will allow, especially as your children get older and they start to differentiate. You're gonna live in a house, your kids gonna live in a house. You might be in a city and they might be in a city. You might be in one church, they might be in another church. You may have your way of doing things. They may have a different way of doing things. When the holidays come, you may want it this way, but that's not the way they want it. And the grace of Jesus allows us to have a conversation, how to love each other and have a relationship with Jesus at the center. If you don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ, that should be an urgent first priority for you until this relationship is right. All the other relationships are wrong. Once this relationship is right, okay, Jesus forgives me. He gives me grace, hey, God knows me. I know God, okay now what? Now I can take this grace based relationship that I have with Jesus. And I could start to figure out how to have grace based relationships with other people. After the first service I had a couple of parents come up with tears in their eyes and say, I was law based and... I really, really wrecked some stuff with my kids. What do I do, what do you do? Apologize. Say, I am sorry that was wrong. I lit the relationship on fire for some secondary issue. I apologize, I asked you for forgiveness. It was such a big deal my God had to die for it. But since he died, we don't have to kill this relationship because he rose. We can resurrect this relationship. Do you understand that? So if you don't know, Jesus, let me just tell you. There is a God who loves you. There is a God who knows you. There's a God who gives grace to you. And once you enter into a relationship with him, he'll never leave you never forsake you. Never abandon you and never betray you. It's the perfect relationship, amen. And so what I wanna do now is I wanna encourage your relationship with Jesus. I'm gonna invite the band forward. We're gonna sing and celebrate. I want you to take some time to process this in the presence of God, with the people of God and ask, okay, Lord, what is in here for me? What am I supposed to hear and do as a result of being in your word today? And we will also take communion. Communion is remembering the broken body showed forth in the bread and the shed blood shown forth in the drink of Jesus Christ. And as you partake, what you're saying is Jesus has given grace to me and now Christ is being formed in me and the grace of Jesus can now come through me to love and have relationship with others. Father God as we come to a time of celebration, consideration, contemplation maybe repentance, God, I pray against the demonic spirit of condemnation for there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ. There may be conviction and correction, but there is not condemnation. Lord Jesus, thank you that you have a grace based relationship with us. Thank you that you help us to have grace based relationships with one another. And God, I just feel jealous to pray this morning for the marriages, that they would be grace based for the parenting, that it would be grace based for the relationships among the families and our church family, that they would be grace based and Holy spirit, we invite you with full authority to bring us the grace of Jesus Christ to enjoy and share together in Jesus' good name, amen.