

SMALL GROUPS

LIFE IS BETTER TOGETHER

“The #1 Secret to Healthy Relationships”

ICEBREAKER |

What is your favorite healthy activity? Maybe it's bike riding, surfing, lifting weights, or just spending time with a friend on a walk.

INTRODUCTION |

We all want to be healthy, but do we all like to do what it takes to get healthy? Many times, no. This week, we learned the #1 secret to have a healthy relationship – mutual submission. But that's not always easy. We have the desire, but do we have the drive? In this study, we will go deeper to see what it takes to put it into action.

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The #1 secret to healthy relationships may surprise you. If you read too quickly, you might miss it. So let's look at it again:

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Ephesians 5:21 (NIV)

The next verses in this passage deal with the husband/wife relationship, child/parent relationship, and even the employer/employee relationship. But before we get to that, we have to understand that each person has a responsibility to submit in some way to the other person, regardless of who is in charge.

What are some ways that submission can be abused in relationships?

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Mutual submission is hard. That's because we all have our own idea of what we want out of a relationship, and we think that submission to someone else may keep us from getting it. But there are some very basic principles in the Bible that help us get it done right. Read the following passage and then answer the questions together.

Our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where He wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you."

1 Corinthians 12:18-21 (NLT)

Here, the Bible tells us that our relationships are like a body. We are made up of parts that work together. Let's take a look at how this works with mutual submission.

First, we need to **accept our differences**. Just like our bodies are made up of different parts, so our relationships with people are different. They have different shapes and sizes. They have different likes and dislikes. If we were all the same, maybe we would all get along. But it would be very boring.

Name a relationship you have with someone who is very different than you. How does that help you be a better person?

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Second, mutual submission can help us have healthy relationships when we **understand our own unique fit**. Each part of the body fits perfectly with the others. We might not always like our own unique gifts or skills, but when we put them together with others, they fit just right.

When we submit to each other, we are saying that we can't do it all alone. We need each other to be complete.

What is something unique about you that you used to think was a set-back but have learned is an asset? (Example, a critical eye or a quiet demeanor)

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Third, mutual submission is possible when we **see others with eyes of grace**. There is one body made up of different parts, and God put each part right where it needs to be. When we see God's handiwork in our relationships, we understand each other better. When we know each other better, it's easier to mutually submit.

What is one thing that keeps you from submitting to others? How can seeing others with grace help you overcome that?

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Finally, mutual submission becomes the norm when you **treat others with respect**. There are parts of your body that you'd like to change. There are parts of your body that you don't fully understand. But when you take care of those parts, your whole body is healthy.

When we treat others with respect, we're not only honoring our relationships but we are revering Christ. Mutual submission is not about who's the boss or who gets to go first. It's about showing the world a picture of a God who loves them.

What are some ways you see people mistreat others in public? How can you make sure you don't make the same mistakes?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

If you want a healthy relationship, it begins with the hard work of mutual submission. Because this is something Jesus wants for you, He will help you.

- Start by:**
- **Accepting your differences**
 - **Understanding your unique fit**
 - **Seeing others with eyes of grace**
 - **Treating others with respect**

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1: *God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.*

1 Corinthians 12:6 (NLT)

Day 2: *Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.*

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NLT)

Day 3: *Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.*

Romans 12:10 (NIV)

Day 4: *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

James 4:7 (ESV)

Day 5: *Faith in Christ Jesus is what makes each of you equal with each other, whether you are a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free person, a man or a woman.*

Galatians 3:28 (CEV)