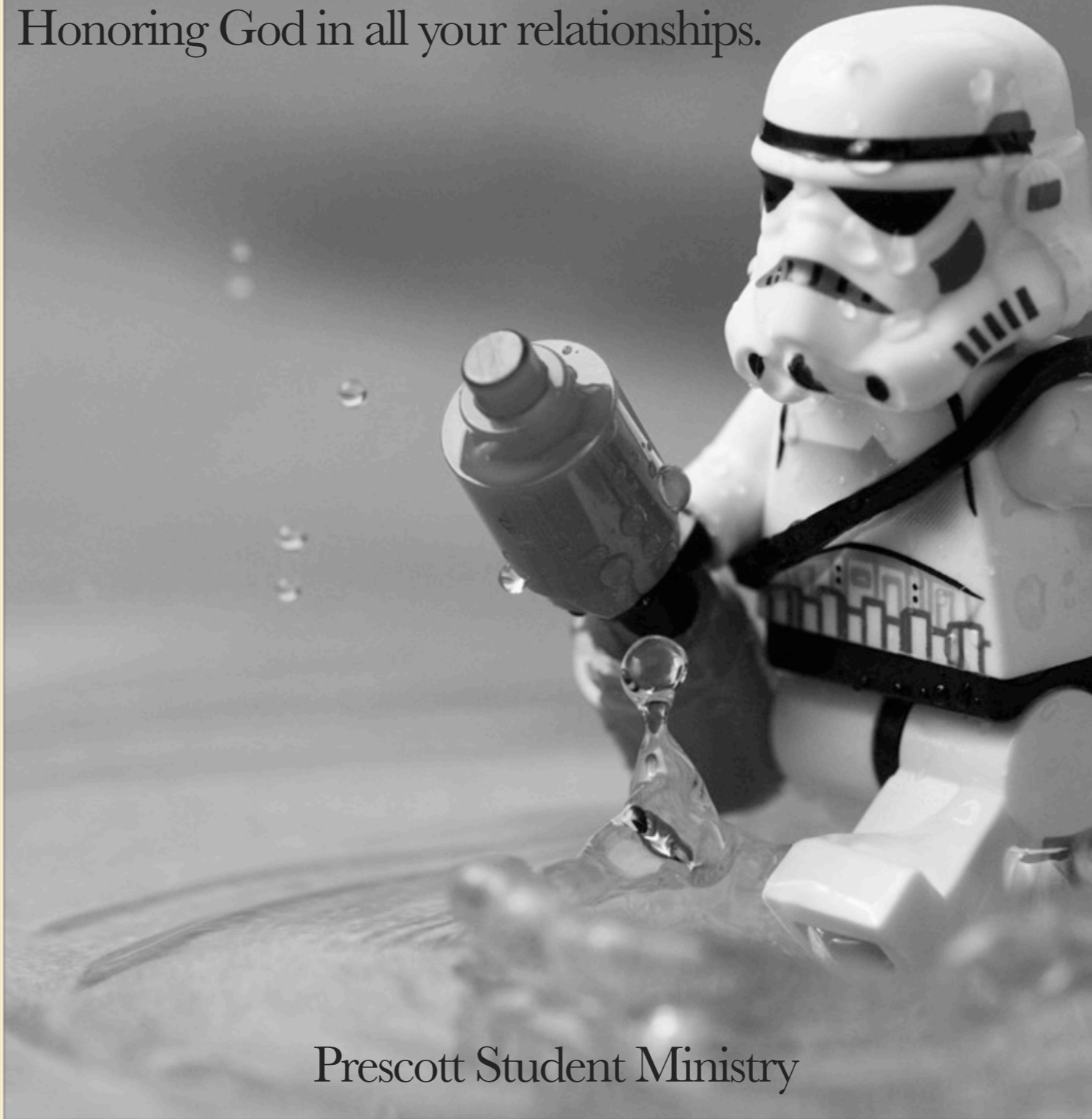


GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Honoring God in all your relationships.



Prescott Student Ministry

Godly Relationships

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

This series will take you head first into the world of Biblical love. You will see what God's desire for us is in all our relationships - his hopes and dreams - and how we can play such a huge part in it.

This series is meant to be done in groups. Learning is best done in a community of practice, where each individual plays a part of the learning experience. Students will be teachers just as much as adult leaders, as they bring the post-modern experience to the table. Adult leaders will be bringing their years of experience and wisdom to the conversation, and the hope is that together everyone learns where they are at, and where God intends them to be.





WHAT IS RAYAH?

Rayah is the first word for love in Hebrew, which would be translated literally to mean “friend” or “companion”- someone you hang out with.

What does it mean in today’s language? In order to truly figure that out, let’s take a look back at what it mean for someone in scripture, specially a man named Job.

RAYAH

1

Read Job 2:11-13

Job had these three great friends that came to him when he was at his absolute lowest. He lost his wife and kids, his home was gone; everything he once held dear. In the midst of this great tragedy, Jobs’ friends were there.

1. Who are your closest friends?
2. Are they kind of friends that will be there when your whole world falls apart? Would they stick with you through the worst of the worst, and even experience that with you?
3. Have you experienced a time in your life where you needed these types of friends and they were there with you?
4. Have you ever been abandoned in your pain or struggle (you know, Job’s wife told him to just curse God and die, his life stunk so bad. His friends kept trying to convince him he did something wrong, and totally misrepresented who God was to Job.)

Read the following verses and complete the statements below as a group.

Exodus 33:11

God was Moses' _____.

God still _____ to people.

The two ways God speaks today are: _____, _____.

Hosea 3:1

Loves never _____.

God loves us more than _____.

When you think about this verse (Hosea 3:1, The beautiful book of Hosea is like the love story of God and us), notice that those who loved Hosea's wife didn't love her in the real sense, but merely in the friendship way. They aren't committed to her like Hosea, or God.

I guess it's crazy to think sometimes, that the Lord loves you like this. That not only does he love you so much, like a son he would give his life for, he loves you so much he just wants to hang out with you. Sometimes he just wants to talk. That's Rayah love.

God is the ultimate standard of love and friendship. His bar of excellence is something we should all hope to reach for.

How do you relate to your friends?

1. How is God's desire for friendship different than ours?
2. Are you and God friends?
3. What needs to change in your relationships so that you can be a better friend.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8Love never fails.

Group Prayer

As we start our journey to see God's complete view of love, pray that we truly "get it" and that "it" begins to radically transform our love for others and God.



WHAT IS AHABA?

Someone to talk to. Someone you trust. Someone you could share your whole self with- your innermost thoughts, dreams and desires- knowing that as you shared, you would be loved, cherished; even respected.

We long for love. We long for friends like these. This is what we're talking about when we say "doing life together". That no matter what, we have someone we can go to in any and all circumstances. As humans, we all have this in common: a need to belong; a need to be needed.

AHABA

2

Last week we talked about Rayah, a Hebrew word for love meaning "friend" or "companion"- someone you hang out with. This week is a little different. We want to build upon our view of love, and the Bible is filled with the direction we need to take. So today we'll be looking at another Hebrew word for love, Ahaba, meaning "to put your life into the hands of another; an emotion that leads to commitment."

1. How is Ahaba love different than Rayah love?
2. Who do you have an Ahaba relationship with?
3. What makes them Ahaba friends?

Read the following verses about *Ahaba* love and then answer the questions below together as a group.

Genesis 29:20

1 Samuel 18:3

1 Samuel 20:17

At first glance, these verses may make some of you ask questions, like, “what’s the deal with Jonathan and David. They seem a little... close.” While that’s a totally normal question, it shows you just how needed this scripture is. In many ways, we have forgotten how to be real friends with one another. The depth of Jonathan and David’s love for each other can almost seem odd, or better yet, foreign to us.

Take a look at the love that Jacob had for Rebecca too (maybe read the whole story later on your own). Does a story like that seem a little off to you too? No need to answer that at this moment, but start to think about how we view love and friendship today, and how it is valued.

1. After looking at these verses, and thinking on friendship and love, do you still view your Ahaba friends in the same way as you did in question two?
2. Why do you think we don’t see more Ahaba love in our circles of friends more often?
3. What qualities does Ahaba love have:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
4. How can you become more committed to your friends, in a way that they will know it?

Deuteronomy 7:8

But it was because the LORD loved {Ahaba} you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

1 Kings 10:9

Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the LORD's eternal love {Ahaba} for Israel, he has made you king, to maintain justice and righteousness."

It’s amazing. The depth and breadth of God’s love for us. Not only does He want to be Rayah friends with us (remember, that’s the Hebrew word for “friend” or “companion”- someone you hang out with), but He also wants to be Ahaba friends with us. He has Ahaba love for us- a love that is 100% committed to us. A love that allows us to put our lives in His hands.

So not only does God want a deeper, more fulfilling relationship with us, He wants the same for us and our friends. In fact, He not only desires it, He requires it. It’s as if God is saying, “Alright. If you’re really going to be all about me, then this is how you should act.”

Micah 6:8

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love {Ahaba} mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Group Prayer

God calls us to a deeper love of Him and of our friends, neighbors, and families. Those we proclaim to love the most. Spend some time in prayer as a group, that you would rise up to the challenge of scripture, and live love to the fullest.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8Love never fails.



WHAT IS DOWD?

Proverbs 7:18

Come, let's drink deep of love till morning; let's enjoy ourselves with love {Dowd}!

Dowd, the third word for love in Hebrew, literally meaning, the “physical or sexual element to a relationship.” One of the goals we set out when we started going through love, was to attempt to get a clear picture of what God’s desire for us is. What does love really mean and how can we make this real in our lives?

DOWD

3

Over the past few weeks, we have been searching scripture for answers on how to love fully. We have looked at two out of three words for love in the Hebrew language, the language most of the Old Testament was written in.

- *Rayah is the first word for love in Hebrew, which would be translated literally to mean “friend” or “companion”- someone you hang out with.*
- *Ahaba is the second word for love in Hebrew, which would be translated literally to mean, “to put your life into the hands of another; and emotion that leads to commitment.”*
- *Dowd is the third word for love in Hebrew, literally meaning, the “physical or sexual element to a relationship.”*

Think of it godly love like a fire. Each love, Rayah, Ahaba and Dowd, all contributing to the same fire, individually as flames. On their own, the flames can never burn as hot and bright as they would together. Conversely, the fire won’t be all it could be without all three flames. As man and woman, we were created to have all three flames burn as one fire.

“When you separate the flames, it can never really satisfy. It’s like you’re living outside of how God wired you to live,” Rob Bell.

1. How is Dowd different from the other two Hebrew words for love, Rayah and Ahaba?
2. How many relationships have you seen where all the flames of love are burning as one?
3. Do you think it’s possible to be completely satisfied without having all three flames burning?

True sexuality is vast and mysterious. It involves all of you. You have a body, but you also have a soul and a spirit. Dowd love is a man and a woman coming together and giving all of themselves to each other.

1. What is the prevailing view love in our culture?
2. What does it mean to give all of you to another person?
3. How can you put yourself in a position to be able to fully give yourself to another person when you are married?

FOR HIGH SCHOOL GUYS ONLY

1. Guys are visual. How does lust play into how they love?
 - a. What is lust?
 - b. How have you been viewing women?
 - c. Have you ever struggled with pornography?
 - d. How does lust set people up for failure?
 - e. Who are you in an accountability relationship?
2. Masturbation is a big deal for guys. There is a statistic that is floating out there that 90% of guys masturbate and the other 10% lie.
 - a. Is masturbation a sin?
 - b. Since masturbation is primarily an issue of control, who is in control of your actions: you or God?
 - c. How does masturbation skew your view of sex?
3. What are the boundaries you have set up to guard yourself and your future spouse from falling into temptation?
 - a. This is how I can keep my MIND pure: _____.
 - b. This is how I can keep my BODY pure: _____.
 - c. This is how I can keep my SOUL pure: _____.
4. What do you think your parents or those that care about you, expect from you in your relationships?
5. What kind of girlfriend or future wife do you think your parents want you to have?
6. What aspect of marriage are you most looking forward to?

FOR **HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS** ONLY

Girls are emotional. They act based upon they feel. However, in the context of love in the Bible, emotions can betray.

1. What are some ways we can "guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).
2. When it comes to boundaries in dating, it is good to set your own boundaries now, even if you aren't in a relationship. What do you think would be good boundaries in each of these categories:
 - a. This is how I can keep my MIND pure: _____.
 - b. This is how I can keep my BODY pure: _____.
 - c. This is how I can keep my SOUL pure: _____.
3. Our boundaries only mean something if we have someone to hold us accountable to them. Take a moment and write your boundaries on a 3x5 card, then in the next few days (or right now) find a partner (or the one whose name you wrote above) to give that card to.
4. Think of your relationship with your dad if you have one, or a male role model. How does that relationship fit into your view of love?
5. How have you seen Rayah and Ahaba modeled for you (parents, grandparents)? Is this something you want for yourself?
6. What type of man do you want to marry? How do you think this picture differs from who your parents want you to marry? From who God wants for you?
7. There are a lot of people that believe there is this "one perfect love" for them. From what we have learned and now know about love, is this true... or is love something more?
8. What choices can you make in love in order to honor the man that you will one day marry?
9. What aspect of marriage are you most looking forward to?

FOR JUNIOR HIGH GUYS ONLY

Junior High is a great place to solidify what relationships should be like with the opposite gender. If you fail to prepare yourself for a relationship, then you are dooming yourself. A relationship without a firm foundation will crumble. Our goal for our junior high students is to provide a solid starting point for developing healthy relationships.

1. What are the biggest struggles of a junior high guy?
 - a. Your thought life?
 - b. Masturbation?
 - c. Hormones going crazy?
2. What boundaries have been set up for you by your parents or those who influence your relationships?
 - a. Curfew?
 - b. Hand-holding versus kissing?
 - c. How far is too far?
3. What do you think your parents or those that care about you, expect from you in your relationships?
4. What kind of girlfriend do you think your parents want you to have?
 - a. Do your parents even want you to date?
 - b. What does dating look like?
5. Do you have any questions you have always wanted to ask someone about relationships? Ask away!

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1. What are the biggest struggles of a junior high girl?
 - a. Your thought life?
 - b. Gossip?
 - c. Physical appearance and comparing yourself to others?
2. What boundaries have been set up for you by your parents or those who influence your relationships?
 - a. Curfew?
 - b. Hand-holding versus kissing?
 - c. How far is too far?
3. What do you think your parents or those that care about you, expect from you in your relationships?
4. What kind of boyfriend do you think your parents want you to have?
 - a. Do your parents even want you to date?
 - b. What does dating look like?
5. Do you have any questions you have always wanted to ask someone about relationships? Ask away!

FOR ALL GROUPS

Read each verse and write down what it says about love (all are in relation to the word Dowd).

Song of Songs 1:2 Love tastes _____.
Song of Songs 1:4 Love is worthy of _____.
Song of Songs 4:10 Love smells _____.
Song of Songs 6:3 Love is all about _____,
 _____, and God.

As we scroll through Song of Songs (or Song of Solomon, depending on what translation of the Bible you are using), you notice love (in the form of Dowd) is all over. What you probably don't see or may not notice, is that the woman in this book is but one woman among many. She is not Solomon's only bride. For all of Solomon's wisdom, he never fully understood the marriage principle: one man+one woman.

Today, there are many among us who still don't get it, though it may not be in the context of having multiple spouses. Mostly, it's in the form of pre-marital sex. Everyone is trying to get their piece of the action. But what we read about love (Dowd) is about as intense as it gets. Love is passionate. It's heavy on the heart. It's real.

It's also paired hand in hand with another form of love we already learned about: Ahaba. Dowd love is paired with Ahaba. Let that sink in. Passionate, sexual, intimate love is paired with a commitment to the relationship. We don't find it without it. You must have Ahaba to have Dowd.

Song of Solomon 8:6-7

Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love {Ahaba} is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.⁷ Many waters cannot quench love {Ahaba}; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love {Ahaba}, it would be utterly scorned.

Reflect on that for a minute. What our culture says to do, couldn't be further away from what the Bible says. Culture says, "Go for it. If it feels good, do it!". In direct contrast, the Bible says, "Do not awaken love until it so desires. Wait. Wait for marriage. Be in that committed relationship. Do not push the boundaries beyond what you can handle. God knows you best." Sure, that's a minor paraphrase, but it's true. Dowd love is meant to be experienced in the context of marriage, and marriage only. Only then, can you fully give yourself to another person- knowing that they have your interests above their own. They are committed 100%, all the way, to the end.

Group Prayer

This is perhaps going to be one of the hardest lessons we learn. Everyday we are told that love is something different than what we know to be true. That love is not special. That it will not last. That it's a dime a dozen.

Through this study, we have learned that love is something more than that. So much more. We know that God wants to be our friend. Our Rayah friend. He is committed to us through thick and thin, like only a Ahaba friend can be. God wants our love to overflow in Dowd, a love that is only real when paired with the other two loves. In marriage, this can be fully experienced- in a lifelong committed friendship... with the best Godly benefits ever.

Pray the verse below as a group. Pray that God would transform your view of love, from what we thought we knew, to what we now know through Him and His Bible. That we would begin reflect His image in our relationships. That we would put the highest value on love, because this is what He desires. May we more and more love like God loves.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8Love never fails.