

Kingdom Culture
“Your RelationSHAPE”
June 27-28, 2020

Introduction:

Mark:

Aloha everyone and welcome back to our series, “Kingdom Culture” I’m Mark.

Jalee:

And I’m Jalee, and today we’re going to be talking about your “RelationShape”.

Jalee:

What shape is your relationship in? 2 weeks ago, Pastors Glenn and Theresa gave us the secret to a love that lasts and the perfect model for relationship — a love triangle between God, I, and you. As a couple draws closer to God they also draw closer to each other.

Mark:

But what happens when you remove God from the equation? Well, you’re left with only you and I. This is where I look to you to meet all of my needs and bring me happiness.

Jalee:

And I look to you for fulfillment and peace.

Mark:

For a while things seem okay but eventually you’re not going to meet my expectations.

Jalee:

And those little quirks I thought were cute about you when we were dating are totally becoming the things that annoy me most.

Mark:

And when the honeymoon phase of our relationship is over we’re going to see one another for who we really are — broken, imperfect people.

Jalee:

This is where my life’s mission becomes trying to fix you back to that perfect picture I had of you in the beginning.

Mark:

And my life’s mission becomes trying to get you off my back all the time. Eventually,

Jalee:

I’ll wonder when you became so uncaring.

Mark:

And I’ll wonder when you became so nagging.

Jalee:
Sound familiar?

Mark:
You see, the problem is not you and I. The problem is that this relationship was never in the right shape to begin with. You were never meant to meet all of my needs and bring me happiness.

Jalee:
And you were never meant to bring me fulfillment and peace. Only God can do those things and as long as we look to another person to complete us, we'll always be left empty.

Mark:
This relationship has no depth, no life, it's just flatline.

So if this is your relationship, you either need to shape up or ship out!

Jalee:
At this time, we're going to take a question from a couple in the Church. This first one comes from Ry and Kaylie. "What does it mean to have a Christ-centered relationship? And what does that look like or consist of?"

Jalee:
That's a great question. I think most people want to know what this looks like in everyday life. To answer that question we have to go back to the idea of "Self-speak" vs. "God-speak". Having a Christ-centered relationship means letting God speak into your relationship and not listening to your self-speak. Did you know that the Bible has a lot to say about your relationship? The Bible tells us the kind of people we should be dating, it talks about the importance of purity and timing. But are we letting God speak? Or are we listening to our self-speak?

Mark:
Somebody once said something I never forgot when it comes to your relationship, God saves His very best for those who take Him at His Word. God saves His very best for those who take Him at His Word. This is true even if you've made past mistakes, this is true if you're just starting out as a brand-new Christian, God is asking us to trust Him, take Him at His Word, because He wants to give you His very best. And God will speak into your relationship in different ways! He'll speak through His Word, He'll speak through the wisdom of others, and He'll speak through His Holy Spirit. The problem isn't that God isn't speaking! The problem is, do we really want to hear what He has to say?

[Testimony]
Jalee:

Before we started dating, both of us had been in prior relationships that were not built on God-speak. I remember wanting to hear God for my future, which college I should go to, but when it came to my relationships, I hit the mute button.

Mark:

And I remember being pretty uninterested in what the Bible or anybody else had to say about my love life. Are you kidding me? I got this! The thing is, both of us had grown up in the Church and were Christians, but here it is, *just because you're a Christian in a relationship, doesn't mean you're in a Christian relationship*. My mom is Japanese, but just because I fly to Japan doesn't mean I can suddenly speak the language. As Christians, we actually have to choose God-speak and both of us had gotten in the habit of tuning God out when it came to dating. As we said earlier, removing God from the equation leads to a lot of heartache and frustration. When we got married a lot of people said, "You guys did it right." But the reality is that for years we got it wrong! We both got to this place of knowing something had to change. Can I be honest? When we first started dating, I didn't try God's way because I trusted Him. I tried God's way because I no longer trusted myself. And in trying God's way I learned to trust Him. Some of you are watching thinking, *I want to try God's way but I just don't know if I can trust Him*. Who can you trust? Yourself? I don't know about you but I know how the story plays out when I'm in charge. Some of you have reached your, "Nuff awready! No can be like dis no mo!" Moment, it's time to try it God's way.

Jalee:

So when we first started talking, both of us had come to this place of wanting to do it God's Way — to listen to the God-speak and not the self-speak. This meant taking God at His Word when it came to things like purity and saving ourselves for marriage, it meant surrounding ourselves with Godly accountability, and it meant putting God before our own wants and desires and establishing healthy boundaries. And because we were open to God-speak, we knew in our spirit and from the feedback of those we trusted that we weren't in the right season to be in a relationship even though we both wanted to be.

Mark:

But everyday was a battle to choose God-speak over self-speak. I remember there was a time when I began listening to the self-speak again and giving in to my own desire for us to be together. So even though we weren't together I was acting like we were. I started holding your hand and putting my arm around you. And I remember waking up one morning and God was on the line. But I kept sending Him to voicemail. But God kept pressing and pressing until finally I was in the shower and I heard Him say to my heart, "Didn't you say you were going to trust Me?" Then He said, "When you get ahead of my timing it's like you're tearing off pieces of your heart and passing it under the table. I'm preparing you both for the day when you can give each other your whole heart all at once." I got the message loud and clear and I told God I would wait on His timing. Then He told me, "Tell her what I said." And my heart sank. I thought she would think I was crazy. I didn't want to tell her but God kept pressing me. So the next time we were together I tried to phrase it in the most positive way I could. I said, "You know

God's been speaking to me about us." And I saw her face light up. "Really, what did He say?" "Well, He told me that when we get ahead of His timing it's like we're tearing little pieces of our heart and giving it to each other under the table when God wants us to wait so we can give each other our whole heart at once." There was silence. Then she said, "Really? God said that? That just makes me like you so much more!"

Jalee:

Hearing you initiate that spiritual leadership from the very beginning was huge for me. I wanted to do things right this time, but I also had my own self-speak. You didn't realize it at the time, but I look back on that day as you setting a clear Godly foundation and becoming the spiritual head that our relationship needed.

I want to speak to the sisters who are believing for a Godly man — you need to know that you deserve a man who will be a spiritual leader and who will tune into God's voice above his own desires. Don't settle for, "Well, maybe I can change him" or, "At least he loves Jesus" or "maybe I can lead for now and one day he'll learn to lead us". Listen to the God-speak inside of you and only accept God's perfect plan. You are worthy of God's very best.

And to the men out there, you have to know that even if the woman in your life never expresses this, deep down we women desire this type of spiritual leadership and covering. Because when she really knows that you are trusting in God with the little things in your relationship, like sexual purity, accountability, community, or discerning when to even begin a relationship, then she will be able to trust your leadership in the big decisions. This is who God created you to be and we are longing for you to fulfill that role.

Mark:

That is so good and I hope that gives you a picture of what it looks like to have a Christ-centered relationship. This next question comes from Braiden and Darci. "We know you shared the same big values, but how did you agree on the small values?"

Another awesome question and it's so encouraging to know that you two are talking about your values because that's what this season is all about — making sure your values are in alignment.

For everyone, it goes back to the question, *What do you look for in a partner? What's important to you?* Is it enough that they have a cute smile, similar taste in music, and drive a nice car? Or are you looking for someone who loves Jesus whole-heartedly? Someone who has a similar calling in life for the Kingdom? To me, these are the foundational questions you should be asking. Don't get into the mindset that we'll build our relationship first then add God later. The Bible says, "Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." When we seek all these things before the Kingdom, that's like building a house and then trying to add the foundation later. The dating season is the time to lay that firm foundation so that when

the storms of life hit, your house will stand. So Braiden and Darci, it's so encouraging because I know you guys are already thinking along those lines.

Jalee:

Setting the foundation and agreeing on the big rocks first, helped us navigate the smaller values — The biggest rock being our faith in God.

(2 Corinthians 6:14) “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?”

God's plan for your relationship is that the two of you go in the same direction toward Him. The opposite is division, in that word you see two words Di= meaning two, and vision. So it's two visions at odds with one another — Di-vision, division. This is what happens when couples don't have a clear vision for their relationship.

When you and your partner set a foundation for your vision and core values, those things become your “non-negotiables”. Everything else is negotiable.

When we started getting more serious in our relationship and saw that marriage was on the horizon, one of the best decisions we made was to go to pre-marital counseling. Shoutout to Dr. Brian Misaka! We also went through, *Before you say, 'I do'* which we highly recommend for any couples who are engaged or in a very serious relationship. In it, you craft your personal vision, you discuss your views on finances, family dynamics, chores, and all these different areas so you can see eye-to-eye on those smaller values. I think there were many things we assumed we agreed on but it wasn't until we started going through the book and discussing with Dr. Brian that we realized how different we were and how we were going to reconcile those differences.

Thank you so much to Braiden and Darci for that great question.

As we close today, there may be some of you watching who are thinking, “This all sounds so foreign to me! This is a totally different approach than I've ever heard! Welcome to Kingdom Culture. God says, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.” Jesus says, “My Kingdom is not of this world.” Many of us have been approaching our relationships the world's way and making this shift is going to come as a culture shock. One of the greatest gifts God gave us were Godly couples we could look to and model our relationship after. If you're new to this, surround yourself with likeminded people who can help steer you in the right direction. We want to close in a time of prayer and we felt led to pray especially for those who desire the kind of Godly relationship we've been talking about but feel unworthy or disqualified from God's best. If that's you, I come against that self-speak right now in Jesus' Name. In Jesus you have the ability to start all over, brand new right now in Jesus' Name. If you want to respond to that just raise your hand somewhere on the screen and let us know so we can pray for you.