

Red Flags Part 3: Red Flags in our Relationships

Intro: Today, we delve into the Word of God to uncover FOUR red flags—warning signs that should give us pause and prompt us to tread carefully in our interactions with others.

Red Flag #1: We seek relationships as a source for validation.

As humans we seek validation, approval, acceptance, and affirmation. Many of us find it hard to give out these things because we feel that we've been neglected in past relationships of these things.

Seeking validation through our relationships open us up for:

1. DEPENDENCY on Others (people have a false view of you/selfish,
2. being VULNERABLE to abuse (fail to value you),
3. and can lead to INAUTHENTICITY (you can't be yourself).

As Christians, we don't strictly look to people or relationships for our validation, our validation is found:

1. In our inherent values and worth as a creation/child of God
2. In our identity in Christ as a new creation
3. Our acceptance by grace
4. In God's unconditional love for us
5. A gospel-centered church and community of believers
6. Relationships that mirror the gospel

ASK YOURSELF: Is there any relationship that I'm using as a source for validation and acceptance? What validation do I need that I'm lacking, why do I seek it through this relationship, and where else can I truly find this validation from?

Red Flag #2: We constantly engage in comparison and competition.

Comparison and competition poison the wellspring of our relationships, breeding jealousy, envy, and discontentment. - **2 Corinthians 10:12**,

Here are some specific ways in which comparison and competition can harm our relationships:

- Undermining Trust
- Fostering Resentment and Bitterness
- Diminishing Intimacy
- Creating Unrealistic Expectations
- Promoting Insecurity
- Distracting from Individual Growth and fulfillment
- Jeopardizing Communication
- It Robs you of what you've accomplished by seeing it as not good enough

Three views of Relationships that guard against competition and comparison:

1. Relationships should be based on **completion not competition.**
2. Relationships should be more about **putting in** than what **you're getting out**
3. Relationships should be based on **mutual submission not domination**

ASK YOURSELF: Do I have any relationship that is suffering because of comparison or competition? What steps can I take to bring completion instead of competition?

Red Flag #3: Our relationship involves manipulation or control

In every relationship there exists the potential for unhealthy dynamics that seek to manipulate and control. Manipulation and control can manifest in various ways within relationships. Here are some common types:

1. Gaslighting
2. Emotional Manipulation
3. Isolation
4. Threats and Intimidation
5. Financial Control
6. Love Bombing
7. Passive-Aggressive Behavior

Manipulation is a form of DECEPTION. The apostle Paul, and scripture as a whole WARN against the deception and manipulation of the enemy. - 2 Corinthians 11:3-4

So how can we guard against this false flag:

1. Know God's Word
2. Pray for Discernment
3. Communicate your thoughts/feelings clearly
4. Share concerns with others
5. Lean on God's Strength and wisdom

ASK YOURSELF: What current relationships do I feel are not as healthy as they should be and may be a source of manipulation or control

Red Flag #4: We fail to set or respect healthy boundaries

Establishing clear and healthy boundaries, both physical and emotional, serve as safeguards that protect us. They protect our emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being.

Here are some important things to think about concerning boundaries:

1. Establish boundaries EARLY
2. Communicate boundaries CLEARLY
3. Navigate boundaries WISELY
4. Consider the CONSEQUENCES often

ASK YOURSELF: What areas of my life do I need to go back and examine my boundaries and ask God to help me?

