

## Power Lunch 2005

### #8 REALITY RELATIONSHIPS

#### Yesterday's Issues

Tuesday, March 15, 2005 • Dr. David McKinley

[Dr. McKinley, message #8 REALITY RELATIONSHIPS / Yesterday's Issues ]

86° on Saturday and a..., everyone was havin the best time enjoying a..., as though it were, the coming of spring, they were planting their flowers, they were digging up their a..., gardens, everything was getting in motion and then man today it just feels like the blast of winter has returned. But I guess that's what we get in March a..., here in the Dallas, Fort Worth area, sort of a transitional month and a transitional season and a..., here we are on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, a very significant date in history. The Ides of March; do you know about the Ides of March? 44 BC, Julius Caesar, the most powerful man in all the world, the emperor of Rome, living at the height of his glory, his kingdom, his power, suddenly was assassinated by his 2 trusted friends or by a band led by his 2 trusted friends Brutus and Cassias. Of course the famous phrase "*Et tu Brute,*" you too Brutus, because of the betrayal that took place in a relationship a powerful man lost his life and a powerful kingdom ultimately came to ruin. And it just reminds us here on this date of March the 15<sup>th</sup> in the Ides of March, that it doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter what you have, it doesn't matter what you control, command or are able to do if something goes wrong in your relationship it'll impact the outcome of your life.

Relationships have everything to do with who you are and what happens in your life. And so for that reason we've been talking about *Reality Relationships* and whether we deal with the extreme of betrayal on the one end as we're reminded of in history on this date or whether we look back at the very wonderful blessing of good relationships and the positive influence of them, every single one of us, on a regular basis has to deal with the positive and the negative impact of relationships and that is the ultimate reality in life. And so we've been trying to discover some things to help us in our relationships and I've been trying to give you some key relational concepts. I've called them 7 things, 7 essentials that help you to get real and to get right in all of your relationships in life. And we've been learning a lot about the dynamics in relationships; relationships at home, relationships with our children, our mate, relationships at work and relationships in other arenas of life and a..., it's so important that we understand the changing dynamics of relationships.

Speaking of different dynamics in relationships that new book that John Maxwell has out a..., we just gave it away and I just absolutely went blank. What's the name of that book? Somebody win that book today? *Winning With*

*People*, that it, thank you, I was gonna call it *People Make All The Difference*, I don't think that's his, *Winning With People*, but in that book a..., *Winning With People*, Maxwell a..., points out some wonderful things that help us to understand the dynamics of relationships and the differences in relationships between men and women. I thought I'd take a moment and just share with you some of the dynamic gender differences between men and women that he points out in that book. Lister to this:

*"A man will pay \$2 for a dollar item he wants; a woman will pay a dollar for a \$2 item that she doesn't want. [audience laughter] A woman worries about the future until she gets a husband; a man never worries about the future until he gets a wife. [more laughter] A successful man is one who makes more money than his wife can spend; and a successful woman is the one who can find such a man. [more laughter] To be happy with a man you must understand him a lot and love him a little; to be happy with a woman you must love her a lot and not try to understand her at all. [more laughter] Married men live longer than single men; but married men are a lot more willing to die."*

Heh, heh, heh, heh, heh, heh, heh, heh! [more laughter] Ohhh, that's good isn't it?

*"Any married man would forget his mistakes there's no use in two people remembering the same thing."*

Heh, heh, heh, heh, heh, heh, heh!

*"A woman marries a man expecting he will change, but he doesn't; a man marries a woman expecting that she won't change and she does. [audience laughter] A woman has the last word in any argument, anything a man says after this is the beginning of a new argument, [more laughter] there is a great wealth of wisdom in that word." [more laughter]*

And then the last was this...

*"There are two times when a man doesn't understand a woman, before marriage and after."*

So guys you might wanna just mark your card with that one. So anyway, just a little bit of a..., the dynamics that go on in relationships and a..., what we've been trying to talk about are the dynamics, the differences and the difficulties that we face in our relationships in life. And so I've tried to put all that together and to present it in a series that I've called *Reality Relationships*. Now I wanna be sure that you're getting the picture of what's involved in *Reality Relationships*, because what I've tried to give you are the 7 core issues that everyone of us has to understand and to engage in the relationships of life, the 7 essential issues for *Reality Relationships*.

#1 I talked to you about **RESPONSIBILITY**. The #1 issue in relationships is this issue. I must accept and share the responsibility for the health and

the well being of all of my relationships in life. It's not enough for me to try to be in relationship and point the finger and blame others for my lack of happiness, my lack of fulfillment, my lack of well-being. Relationships begin with me taking responsibility for what happens in a relationship and me being responsible in my actions in that relationship and so that was the foundational essential that we looked at together; it was the issue of responsibility.

The second issue that we looked at is the issue of **EXPECTATIONS**. Expectations and I simply brought a lesson there that said I must expect more of myself in effort than I expect in...from others in response and that lesson actually took us longer than I expected; it took us 2 weeks to get through the issue of expectations. And so we talked about expectations in relationships.

And then we talked about **ATTITUDE** issues in relationships, attitude issues. You can't build good relationships with bad attitudes and so we talked about the issue of attitudes and what kind of attitudes you bring and I bring to the relationships of life on a daily basis and we dealt with the attitude issue in *Reality Relationships*.

And then we talked about **LANGUAGE** issues; language issues, no not bad language, but not using good language in our relationships, not developing good communication skills, not understanding the importance of speaking the same language and speaking a language that connects with the heart of others and I said that day that love is a language you speak every day by the expressions you choose and by the things that you say. And every day you are communicating in your relationships and at different times, different places, different levels what you communicate makes all the difference in the condition of that relationship.

Then we talked about **IRRITABILITY** issues, irritability issues. Do you remember on that day I asked you to raise your hand if you'd met someone that you'd put in the irritability category, someone who was irate, someone who was irritable. Many of you were looking around at other people sitting around the room near you on that day and you know I just had to kinda do some conflict management on that day as we talked a little bit, but we dealt with the issue of irritability and I said to you that the a..., essential here is that people of irate and irritable disposition do more to cause damage in their personal relationships than any event, circumstance or problem. If you bring that kind of disposition, anger into a relationship, your anger in and of itself will do more to bring damage to your relationship than anything else that your relationship will face.

And then we talked last week about **TRUTH** issues, that you have to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth if you want to build healthy, happy and harmonious relationships. So that's where we are to date. We've looked at the issue of responsibility, of expectations, of attitudes, of language, of irritability and of truth.

And today we come to the last of those reality issues and it is

*Yesterday's Issues.* *Yesterday's Issues*, literally or more specifically said what you invested in relationships yesterday will not be sufficient to sustain your relationships tomorrow. I didn't say that very well so I'm gonna try to say it again. Okay? What you invested in your relationships yesterday will not be sufficient to sustain your relationships tomorrow. Now, whatever relationships you're involved in today at any level or any sphere of life to a large degree are impacted by things that you did yesterday; that's where they stand today. But today you have to make a choice, you have to make a choice whether you're going to leave them in the condition that they're in, whether you're gonna leave them at the level that they're at or whether you're going to continue to make investments in that relationship that will change the course of that relationship tomorrow. And one of the things that we have to learn is that whether it's at the marriage altar where 2 people stand together and say "I do!" and then they spend the rest of their life sayin "I did!" Heh! Or rather I keep doing, I do today; it's not enough to say I did yesterday, you have to say I do today. And just as that's true in a marriage it's true in every other relationship in life. You have to keep making choices day after day after day.

In 1965 on their hit release *Help*, the song that surfaced to the top of the charts for the Beatles was the song written by Paul McCartney, *Yesterday*. It is said today that, that one song has had more covers than any other song in song writing history; over 3,000 different versions of the song *Yesterday*, have been sung and recorded by other artists. But you know the words to the song well don't you? Let me remind you:

*Yesterday, all my troubles seem so far away.  
Now it seems as though they're here to say.  
Oh, I believe in yesterday.*

*Suddenly, I'm not half the man I used to be.  
There's a shadow hanging over me.  
Oh, yesterday came suddenly.*

*Why she had to go I don't know, she wouldn't say,  
I said something wrong, now I long for yesterday.*

*Yesterday, love was such an easy game to play.  
Now I need a place to hide away.  
Oh, I believe in yesterday.*

You see so many of our relationships have all of the investments in yesterday, but not in today. And it's what you're doing today that gonna impact where you go tomorrow in your relationships. You have to choose every day of your life that you're not going to simply live in yesterday, but that you are going to impact the lives of people around you today and for tomorrow and it's that choice and it is that ultimate reality decision that makes a difference in relationships. Benjamin Franklin who lived a little while before Paul McCartney wrote these words:

*"Promises may get us friends, but it's performance that keeps them."*

We may make promises yesterday that attract people to us and get us friends, but it's the performance of that relationship that keeps that relationship strong and healthy. Dr. David Niven in his book, *100 Simple Steps To Great Relationships* said it this way:

*"When a relationship has a successful history some may imagine that the work has been accomplished. But that is no more true than imagining that successful gardeners can skip watering and fertilizing this year because of their good track record last year."*

The fact that you have experience the confidence in your relationship means that you know what needs to be done. It does not mean that you can ignore things that need to be done because you have done them before. The task of a successful relationship never ends, because the point of a relationship is to build toward the future and not the past. You see that's the yesterday principle, that I cannot simply live with a thought of what I did yesterday, because it will not be sufficient for what my relationships need tomorrow. Now, I know you're sitting here thinking yeah but I've got so many relationships in my life. I don't have time and energy to give to all the different relationships and that's true. It's true to recognize the fact that you can't always, at all times, be all things to all people. But what you do have to realize is that you're relationships come at different levels and in different times of life and where you need to give the lion's share of your energy are to those relationships that have the longest life span with you. Again in that book *Winning With People*, I love the fact that John Maxwell points out that there are 3 types of relationships, 3 levels of relationships in life. He says:

*"There are some relationships that come into our life for a reason."*

**RELATIONSHIPS THAT COME INTO OUR LIVES FOR A REASON** a..., it often is something that is short, something that is specific for a moment, for a time, for a place and there's a reason that, that relationships occurs. I remember in 1983 I had moved to South Florida. I'd recently graduated from seminary with my Master's Degree, I went to a specific professional training a..., day and while I was there I met a guy name Bill McKinney. My name is David McKinley and his name was McKinney and so in this seminar they had cards and McKinney and McKinley sat next to each other. I was living in South Florida and he was from California. But one thing that I was doing as I had been out of school just about a year and had already begun to think that if I ever wanted to do additional studies in my doctorate and doctoral studies that I would need to investigate and to maybe more on into that sphere of life. In fact I cut a deal with my wife. I would get out of school before our first born started school. That was the...that was kinda the thought; she just said I don't want both of you in school at the same time. And so a..., so we'd been...we'd been working on this little life path together and that day, that week that I was there I sat next to this guy named Bill McKinney and I was talking to him about

exploring these option and it was there that day that he told me about a school that I really knew a little bit about, but not a lot about. In fact I'd already made some application and inquiry at another school, but he told me about this school in Southern California that had a unique program where I could do a little bit more intensive on campus and then extensive training and in that day and time that was a whole new dynamic in doctoral studies. Well, I tell you I met Bill McKinney for one week in my life, but I ultimately made the decision to go to the school that he told me about. That made all the difference, it was \_\_\_\_\_ University in Southern California, Talbot school of Theology and it was a wonderful school, an incredible life experience, but that man came into my life for a reason. We became friends, haven't really been connected for the last 20 something years. Has it been that long? 1990...2000, 15 years, okay, good! I'm not as old as I thought I was, but a..., for a minute there that just didn't sound right and so a..., well I've just been out of high school 20 years. No that's not right either. [audience laughter] But anyway a..., ahhhhh, it's amazing where you find yourself in life. But that relationship was for a reason in my life.

I remember this past summer when I got a call that there'd a health event in my mom's life and I rushed to be with my dad and my brother in my home town of Memphis, Tennessee and for 18 days I went in and out of the hospital room and I met a group of people, some incredible health care workers who were there to aid us and to attend to my mom's needs and in those final days, which did in fact culminate 18 days later with my mom stepping out of earth and stepping into heaven and us going through that valley of the shadow of death and the pain of that. I just remember there were some people that I'll probably never see or be with again, but they were in my life for a reason and I thank God for them and for their impact on me and my family at such an ~~in-time~~...intense and extreme time of life, but there're relationships that you have for a reason.

The other thing is that there are **RELATIONSHIPS THAT YOU HAVE FOR A SEASON**. They're there in your life for a season. It may be like a..., a teacher in a school, maybe in your life or maybe in the life of your child you know a teacher for a year or for a season. Maybe it's a coach who's there for a season and some of you are here today and some of the most significant and influential relationships you've had have been with coaches in your life who have coached you for a season or some seasons in your life and you have relationships that are there for a season in life and you learn to value those relationships and to build those relationships. They're a limited time, but they increase our knowledge, our skill, our social experience, our training and so they're there for a season. So some are for a reason, some are for a season and then...

There are a few **RELATIONSHIPS THAT ARE FOR LIFE**. They are lifetime relationships. You're doing a life together, that certainly where I am with my relationship with my wife. Just a few weeks ago we celebrated our 26<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and we are doing life together and it's not a sentence, it's a joy. I mean it is one of the greatest things in my life to be able to every day be Connie McKinley's husband and to share the joy

of life together. We're doing life together and it's a great thing, but you've got to know what you're life relationships are and it is in the sphere of life's relationships that you've got to make the biggest portion of your investments, and if it's one relationship that I've gotta be sure every day is getting attention it is that relationship. It was Maxwell who in that same chapter said:

*"You cannot neglect your relationships and expect them to grow."*

That's what I'm talking about when I talk about *Yesterday Issues*. You can't just live in where you were yesterday. You have to keep investing for today and relationships require commitment and cultivation. You have to keep renewing your commitment and you have to keep cultivating that relationship because if either commitment or cultivation are neglected the relationship will suffer. So let's go back to our manual and look one more time at 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 13, because in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 13 we've been following the instruction of Paul who has given to us a picture of what real love, the real connected force of life is all about and what God's love is and the standards that God has given to us that impact our relationships at every level and at every phase of life. And when he's bringing the big ship called love, the love boat into port he ends up summing it up with 4 beautiful refrains of what love is. He says this in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13 in verse 7, he says:

*Love bears all things, love believes all things, love hopes all things, and love endures all things.*

*It bears all things, it believes all things, it hopes all things, it endures all things.*

You know one of the things I love about everyone of those statements? Every one of them are in the active voice, everyone of them indicates current, contemporary action. It's not past or passive, it is something that is happening and love is continually bearing, love is continually believing, continually hoping and continually enduring. And so here are the concepts of what I have to have as 4 active ingredients to keep me from living in yesterday and to keep my relationships growing toward tomorrow.

If you look in the world of agriculture you will discover that there are 4 basic compounds, 4 essential ingredients that are necessary for health and growth...growth, and to keep from having crop failure. The 4 essential compounds are N-P-K and F. N is nitrogen, P is phosphate, K is often the symbol for potash and F is for sulfate. And these 4 compounds must be present in all soil if you're going to have life and health in plant growth and if you're going to have productivity. Well, in much the same way these 4 essential elements that I've just given to you are the essential ingredients to keep your relationships from dying in the past and being able to live in the future. So let's just take the remaining time that we have, the next hour and a half and look together at [audience laughter] I just needed to be sure you hadn't checked out on me. It won't

be that long I promise you. I'm very well aware of the fact that I've got about 12 minutes and so we're gonna try to wrap it up in that period of time. But what we wanna look at is how we cultivate these 4 essential compounds to help to bring the maximum contribution in our relationships.

#1 **BEARS ALL THINGS**. You just read it on the screen. That means to cover with forgiveness. When we hear the bear, we tend to think of gritting our teeth and bearing it, you know kinda bearing under? But the word that's used here in the original language is actually a work that means to protect or to cover. It's the idea of a roof over the head and every relationship has to continually have a roof that is together. It cannot be a roof that's got holes in it and leaks in it, but a roof of protection and a roof of covering. What is the protective covering of every relationship? It is the protective covering of forgiveness, that is the willingness to not just zero in on the faults, but to find a way to resolve and to move beyond faults in a relationship. Bearing is protecting and covering and keeping from allowing the irritations and the frustrations that come into a relationship from destroying that relationship.

Just yesterday Zig Ziglar was here, I think many of you got a late notice on that. I really hate that we were not able to get that notice out sooner, but Zig did a recording of some of his information on courtship after marriage a..., here in this building yesterday and he cited during that speech yesterday that studies have proven time and time again that one of the primary reasons for decline in productivity in the marketplace in American is marital trouble. When there is conflict in someone's heart, in someone's home it impacts them on the job and it's not only true in the marriage, it's true in the work, it's true in every arena of life. If we are living with all sorts of pent-up anger, frustration and irritation it impacts our ability to perform. Therefore in relationships, if we're gonna be healthy and especially in those deep lasting lifetime relationships if we're gonna be healthy we've gotta give a lot of attention not to finding fault, but to mending faults and to bearing with one another.

Dr. David Niven, once again, I wanna quote him from his book on relationships he says:

*"People in long term relationships have a distinct habit, when asked about their partners they don't bring up a long list of complaints."*

Heh! In other words if you're living in a relationship and all you can do is just catalog the complaints you don't have much of a relationship. But let's continue reading he says:

*"It's not that the partners are perfect, but they're tendency isn't to dwell on faults. The fact...in fact people in long term relationships not only spend much more time thinking about the good traits of their partner, but also tend to see redeeming features even in their faults. These people see the complex reality that is another person and recognize within every one are both admirable and regrettable qualities, but that within most of*

*us the admirable qualities predominate."*

You see relationships are not intended to just create frustration in our lives, they are intended to help us to grow and to value other people and therefore if you want to live beyond yesterday you'd better not have a closet in your heart where you're cataloging all of yesterday's faults because that relationship is doomed to failure and to explosion at some point in the future. You gotta keep a short record book and it's dealing with that issue bearing with all things, learning what it is to have a covering of forgiveness that will keep you from living in yesterday and will free you to be able to live today and tomorrow with joy and fulfillment. Is everything gonna be perfect? Certainly not, but it will be a covering of love. That's true in your office, that'd true with your friends, that's true with your family. Because wherever you are carrying and wherever you are storing the bitterness and the injury of things that have happened yesterday they are just waiting for an opportunity to be released into your life. So understand the powerful principle of bearing all things of being willing to cover with forgiveness. And then the Bible says that relationships must...true love must...

**BELIEVE ALL THINGS.** To believe is to invest positive time and positive energy. You see if you don't believe in something you're not gonna invest in something. That's certainly true in the financial area isn't it? If you don't think somethin's gonna fly you're certainly not gonna throw money into it. You have to believe that it's going to work. You have to believe that it is solvent and that it is valuable and that it is worth an investment. Well, that's how you have to be about your relationship, that a relationship has to be important enough to you that every day you're gonna find a way to make a positive investment of time and energy in that relationship so that the relationship can keep going forward. How important this is in the dynamic and the marketplace and the work arena. Too many times we have a great start-up and then we just go flat; we don't communicate, we don't connect, we don't coordinate, we don't do any of those thing together and then over time we just drift apart. But you see when we are continuing to invest even small amounts of important time and energy we begin to put together the elements that fusing and infusing that relationship. That's what nitrogen is in the soil of a crop. Nitrogen is what begins to give the life and the color and the clarity and the quality to a crop, to a plant and that's exactly what love is, care and investment in a relationship. Now when we say we believe all things, it doesn't mean that we're gullible, it doesn't mean that we are naïve. We're not talking about being unrealistic. When it says believes all things what it means here is that it believes enough to make a positive investment and so you need to believe in your relationships, you need to invest in your relationships. So it bears all things, it believes all things and then it says...

**IT HOPES ALL THINGS.** What does it mean to hope all things? Well hope is like oxygen in life; everyone of us has to have hope to live, hope that things will be better, hope that things will move forward, hope that we will change things in the future in life. Hope is so important, not only

in life but of course in death. How important it is to have hope. I can't tell the tragedy so many times that I've had of being called to deal with a family who had no faith, no hope and they're looking at death and yes with all of it's tragedy there's no hope there's nothing left. How grateful I am for the wonderful privilege I have of offering people hope beyond this life. But just as I have that privilege as a pastor you have that privilege as a friend, you have that privilege as a mate, you have that privilege as a co-worker of offering hope to others and what is hope? Well, I believe that hope is to offer encouragement on a daily basis. Encouragement is to a relationships what hope is to life and you need encouragement and the greatest investment that you can make in other people is to invest in them by investing in the relationship of encouragement and with hope. Encouragement is the greatest value you can add to another life. I believe that with all of my heart. If my relationship with you and your relationships with me is a value added relationship then the greatest value that I can give you is that I can add encouragement to your life and we need encouragement because we get so discouraged in life.

I heard about a group of Boy Scouts, they'd gone out on a camping trip, night fell and all the sudden just after dark the mosquitoes just literally began to swarm and just to come upon these boys. They were out there, they were trying to get, you know, this wonderful experience of camping in the woods but these mosquitoes were all over em, all around em. They didn't know what to do, they finally unzipped their sleeping bags, got in em and pulled em up over their heads and were there trying to hunker down, as though it were, under their sleeping bags hoping they could survive this infestation of mosquitoes. When finally one of the little boys open his zipper and looked out and suddenly he noticed that instead of seeing mosquitoes everywhere there were green glowing bugs all around them. There were lightning bugs all around. But he didn't know what it was, all he knew was that he could see em and he said oh guys we're done for now they got flashlights and they're comin after us. [audience laughter] Do you ever feel like that in life? [more laughter] Do you ever feel like you're already under the gun and then somebody's got flashlights comin after you? Man you need some encouragement in life. You need somebody to lift you up and somebody to bear you under and hope is given in life and a relationship when you let somebody know I'm there for you; I'm there yesterday, I'm there today and I'm gonna be there tomorrow. And it's bein there with them that offers hope and encouragement in that relationship. So you encourage people hope, a..., hopes all things is what the Bible says and encouragement is a value that you can add to others.

Carney and Fry in their study in 2002 discovered this:

*"Satisfaction in a relationship is 8 times more reliant on recent feelings and the ability to perceive improvements then it is based on the history of the relationship."*

You see your relationships are just like plants, if you don't water em, you don't pay attention to em, you don't encourage em they don't grow and

when they quit growing do you know what they start doing? Sagging and dying. It doesn't matter what they have grown to, it doesn't matter how beautiful they are or how much they may ornament a place in your home, your office or whatever it may be, the reality is, is if you begin to neglect them they will die and that is the reality of relationships. What's the final thing? Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things...

**ENDURES ALL THINGS.** I love that, to continue with reliability. If you want to add one of the most important active ingredients in your relationships it's that you've gotta be a person who is reliable; as reliable today as you were yesterday and with the promise of reliability tomorrow because every relationship requires that we wade through a few things that are difficult, that we work through many things that are needed, that we wait on some thing that take time, that we watch out for things that can be harmful and that we always are willing to wave goodbye to some things that only show our own selfishness. You see we have to keep working on relationships and that's the ultimate reality principle is that it's not just what I know, it's not just what I think, it's not just what I feel, it's not what I've done, it's what I'm willing to do and what I will do in the days to come. So Paul summarizes this whole teaching on love with this all encompassing phrase.

*Love never fails...*

*Love never fails...*

Real love never fails and I ask you is that the quality of your life that you are a person who's not failing, but who is infusing your relationships. How thankful I am that in the most important of all relationships it is true beyond measure, God's love never fails! Do you remember I said to you in the beginning there are 3 spheres of relationship to God, to yourself and to others. I've spent a lot of time talking to you about building your relationship with others, but I want you to know that you'll never be able to adequately be able to build relationships with others if you don't have a relationship with God, because the very standards and properties of the kind of love that we've been talking about are not things that are within you and your potential apart from a relationship with One who's love never fails and I don't know who you are and I don't know what's happened in your relationship today, but I want you to hear me loud and clear, no matter who you are, where you are, what you've done, what you've experienced, who's hurt you, God's love never fails and He will never fail to love you and to meet the deepest needs of your life. So I encourage you to investigate a relationship with Him. I encourage you to discover the wonder of a *Reality Relationship* with God and that's not a relationship that you or I build based on livin a good life, tryin harder, doin our best, it's based on what God has done for us when He stepped out of heaven and stepped to earth 2000 years ago in the person of Christ. It happened on Christmas morning, but the victory of it was on Easter morning that celebrate that's just ahead of us because it was there that on the cross Jesus Christ died for the...all of the

offenses, all of the betrayals, all of the rebellion of our hearts in a relationship with God so that we could be forgiven, covered and then we could have a relationship with God; a relationship filled with life giving strength, with hope and with a love that never fails. I pray you know that in your life. Thank you so much for your encouragement through this series.