Discovering Relational Wisdom 2.0
Three-Dimensional Emotional Intelligence™
Building better relationships by taking every thought, emotion, word and action captive to Christ
About the Course Designer

Ken Sande is the founder of Peacemaker Ministries and Relational Wisdom 360. Trained as an engineer, lawyer, and mediator, Ken has conciliated hundreds of family, business, church and legal conflicts.

As president of RW360, he now focuses on teaching people how to “get upstream of conflict” by building strong relationships in the family, church and workplace. He teaches internationally and is the author of numerous books, articles, and training resources, including The Peacemaker, which has been translated into seventeen languages. He is a Certified Relational Wisdom Instructor and Conciliator, Emotional Intelligence Certified Instructor (through TalentSmart), and has served as a church elder and as an Editorial Advisor for Christianity Today.

He and his wife, Corlette, have two adult children and a growing number of grandchildren, and love to hike and ski in the mountains near their home in Billings, Montana.
Introduction

Welcome to Discovering Relational Wisdom® 2.0!

This course is designed to teach you how to improve your ability to develop authentic, enjoyable, productive and lasting relationships. We will also study ways to resolve conflict and restore broken relationships. The principles you will learn have the potential to impact every area of your life, including your worship, marital intimacy, parenting and friendships, as well as your workplace performance and career advancement.

My motivation for developing this seminar is my belief that every person on the face of the earth has been made in the image of God, and since God is highly relational, we are designed and called to be highly relational as well. That both excites and challenges me!

I say “potential to impact” because there are no quick and easy shortcuts to developing better relationships. We’ve all developed attitudes and habits that undermine our relationships, and it takes a lot of determination and effort to change some of the ways we view and engage others.

The good news is that we can change! This process will go more smoothly if we are willing to admit where we’ve gotten it wrong in the past, if we decide to learn and practice new relational skills, and if we are open to accepting advice and assistance from those who love us and want to help us grow.

Your motive for exploring these concepts may be different from mine. That’s okay—we’re all on a journey of learning and growing. Whatever your motive is, I hope that what you learn in this seminar will enable you to better understand yourself and those around you and to enjoy deeper, more fulfilling relationships in every area of your life.

Ken Sande

Scripture, Movies & Feedback

The principles in this seminar are supported by over three hundred Scripture citations, which are compiled in a 40-page document (rw360.org/RW-Scriptures) that students are encouraged to download and study to verify the biblical integrity of this course (see Acts 17:11). The movie clips shown in this seminar are used under a license with WingClips (wingclips.com) and are discussed in detail on our website (rw360.org/movie-clips).

We would welcome your evaluation of this seminar and the individual who teaches it to you. Please visit rw360.org/survey and give us the benefit of your experience, comments and suggestions on how we can improve the delivery of this material.

The term “relational wisdom®” and the six-part relational wisdom paradigm were developed and copyrighted by Ken Sande in 2012 and are used in this seminar under a special license. Study guide copyright 2012, 2013, 2016 Relational Wisdom 360. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be used, reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form without prior written permission.

Unless indicated otherwise, Scripture is taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version®, ESV®, Copyright © 2002 by Crossway Bibles. Used by permission of Crossway. All rights reserved.

LESSON 1
God Created us For Relationship

“...you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart... and love your neighbor as yourself.”
Matthew 22:37-39

What is relational wisdom?

In essence, relational wisdom (RW) is the ability to love God with all your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself... better yet, as Jesus has loved you.

In modern terms, relational wisdom is your ability to discern emotions, interests, and abilities in yourself and others, to interpret them in the light of God’s Word, and to use these insights to manage your responses and relationships constructively.

Why is relational wisdom worth pursuing?

Because life is all about relationship.

Because relationships are precious gifts that God entrusts to us with the expectation that we will see them as opportunities to show his love and multiply the number of people who will enjoy him forever.
Matt. 25:14-30

Here’s a simple example of relational wisdom

Relational wisdom is so simple a child can learn it, yet so intricate and robust you can spend the rest of your life enhancing it. To start this learning process, we’ll show you four simple acrostics you can easily memorize and practice in daily life. The first of them is:

Practice the SOG Plan™

S: Self-Aware: How am I feeling and acting?
O: Other-Aware: How are others feeling? How am I affecting them?
G: God-Aware: Where is God leading me?

What are the benefits of developing relational wisdom?

Stronger relationships
- Experience, love, and enjoy God more fully.
- Less conflict and more enjoyable, productive and enduring human relationships.
Ruth 1:16-18 | 1 Sam. 20:17 | Prov. 18:24

Valued influence
- Your example and advice will be more credible and welcomed by others.
Prov. 3:35 | 16:23
- Improved relational skills enhance personal and team performance at work, at church and in other group activities.
Matt. 25:14-30

Compelling witness
- Noticeable changes in your character and relationships reveal God’s transforming power in your life.
2 Cor. 5:17-20
- Love and unity among believers show that we are Jesus’ disciples and prove that God loves us and sent his Son to save us.
John 13:34-35; 17:20-23

Think of RW as a “relational operating system” for life

Just as Windows and Mac OS control every program on your computer, RW impacts every aspect of life, not only improving workplace performance and advancement but also enhancing worship, marriage and church unity.

This seminar is specifically designed to help you upgrade your “relational operating system!”
LESSON 2
Soft Skills Surpass Hard Skills

"He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend." - Proverbs 22:11

When people are working together, relationship usually surpasses expertise

When we are working with others, whether in an office or warehouse, on a church committee or nonprofit board, or as a mission team in the field, relationship usually surpasses expertise.

Soft skills increase “social capital” in both work and ministry settings

Soft skills bring out the best in people and produce bonds of loyalty, trust and mutual support (aka “social capital”), which produces countless benefits, including improved team creativity and cohesiveness, better balance between work and family life, less conflict, reduced staff and volunteer turnover, higher member and customer satisfaction, and increased productivity, growth and impact.

According to Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves, authors of the best-selling book, Emotional Intelligence 2.0:

- Relational skills are the single biggest predictor of performance in the workplace and the strongest driver of leadership and personal excellence.
- Ninety percent of top performers are high in relational skills.
- People with high relational skills usually earn substantially more money than people with low relational skills.

Can people improve their relational wisdom?

Yes! Unlike your IQ (intelligence quotient), which does not change noticeably after the teen years, your relational wisdom can improve significantly if you are willing to work at it.

Psychologists who study relational skills attribute our ability to change to the “plasticity” of our minds. Christians attribute it to a transformational process called justification and sanctification. 2 Thess. 2:13

In fact, God commands and empowers us to grow in relational wisdom as he sanctifies and transforms us into the likeness of Christ. Rom. 12:2 | 2 Cor. 3:18 | Eph. 4:22-24 | James 1:5 | 2 Pet. 1:3-7

Don’t give in to guilt or regret

As you study relational wisdom, you may think, “Oh, I wish I’d learned these concepts years ago!” Don’t let guilt or regret for past deficiencies discourage you.

Instead, remember that Jesus makes all things new (2 Cor. 5:17) and that God delights to bring beauty out of ashes (Isa. 61:3). Then follow the Apostle Paul’s example by “forgetting what lies behind” and “pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Phil. 3:13-14

Because of Jesus, it is never too late to start doing what is right!

See rw360.org/workplace for over 100 articles on the value of relational skills in business, healthcare, education, sports and military settings.

Emotional Intelligence 2.0. (San Diego: Talent Smart, 2009), pp. 19-22.
LESSON 3
Emotions Were Designed By God

“Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!”
Psalm 32:11

Emotions move our relationships, both positively and negatively

Emotions influence most of what goes on in this world. Whether it’s the romantic attraction that draws a couple together, the sacrificial love of a parent for a child, the desire to build a successful ministry or business, the bitterness that corrodes a friendship, or the anger that fractures a family or church—emotions play a powerful role in every aspect of life.

And yet most of us know far too little about the source and dynamics of our emotions. Let’s begin to deepen our understanding by taking a quick look at eight basic facts about emotions.

1. Emotions are built into all people in all cultures by God’s design. They are hardwired into our brains and bodies through the neurological and hormonal systems that he designed at creation and weaves into every baby as he forms it in the womb (Gen. 1:26-27 | Ps. 139:13-14). Thus the human vocabulary—and the Bible—are filled with emotional terms.

2. Emotions are physiological experiences that involve measurable neural, muscular, respiratory, hormonal and cardiovascular changes that impact our thoughts and move us to action, both positively and negatively (Exod. 32:19 | 2 Sam. 18:33 | Mark 1:40-42). In fact, the word “emotion” comes from a Latin word that means “to move.”

3. Emotions provide some of our greatest pleasures in life, such as love, joy, delight, acceptance, compassion, belonging and peace, to name just a few. These emotions are found in both saved and unsaved people, and drive some of our most noble and constructive behaviors. Exod. 2:5-6 | Dan. 1:9

4. Emotions are also tied to our greatest struggles and agonies in life, which often involve negative feelings such as sadness, embarrassment, anger, bitterness, jealousy, self-pity and regret. Gen. 37:11 | Matt. 27:35


6. Human emotions are often twisted by sin. Because of the fall, sin has corrupted our whole being, including our thoughts, emotions, and will (sometimes called the “noetic effects of sin”). Therefore, like a computer with a defective motherboard, we are unable to consistently understand and control the emotions that are triggered by people and events in our lives (Gen. 3:13 | Jer. 17:9 | Eph. 4:22). Therefore, while positive emotions usually move us to do good things, negative emotions often move us to sin against God and one another, Gen. 37:11 | 2 Sam. 11:2-4 | Ps. 73:21-22

7. Through the gospel, God has redeemed us from the curse of sin, made us new creations (which impacts our thoughts, emotions and will), and is now progressively bringing them under the Lordship of Christ. Ezek. 36:25-27 | 2 Cor. 5:17 | Titus 2:14 | Rom. 12:2 | 2 Cor. 3:17-18

8. The key step in redeeming our emotions is to bring them to God in humility, faith and prayer, examine them in the light of God’s truth, and ask him for the faith, wisdom and strength we need to harness the power of our emotions so that their ultimate impact is to move us to love the Lord with all our heart and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Ps. 31:8 | 1 Pet. 1:22 | 2 Cor. 10:5 | 2 Pet. 3:8

LESSON 4
Emotions Can Hijack Our Brains and Bodies


In high stress situations, our emotions can overwhelm rational thinking

Man’s fall into sin has corrupted our brain’s ability to work as perfectly as God designed it to do (AKA “the noetic effect of sin”). Data enters the brain through the thalamus, which sends impulses to other parts of the brain. Impulses arrive at the limbic system (amygdala) a few nanoseconds before they get to the neocortex, which allows your emotions to take control before you are able to rationally process the information (rw360.org). Hijacking = Strong emotions that trigger an impulsive reaction that is quickly regretted

Hijacking = Strong emotions that trigger an impulsive reaction that is quickly regretted

The downward spiral of emotional hijacking, flooding, and relational failure

Definitions
- Hijacking occurs when our emotions (in the amygdala) overpower rational thinking (in the neocortex).
- Flooding is the sense of feeling repeatedly swamped by our own or others’ emotions.

Emotions Can Hijack Our Brains and Bodies

Hijacking = Strong emotions that trigger an impulsive reaction before you are able to rationally process the information (rw360.org/hijacking).

Flooding

Emotions can overwhelm us in high stress situations. When our emotions (in the amygdala) overpower rational thinking (in the neocortex), we may feel swamped by our own or others’ emotions.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotions hijack the brain in a few nanoseconds. Before the neocortex (which allows rational thinking) can react, impulses arrive at the limbic system (amygdala), triggering a noetic effect of sin. Data enters the brain through the thalamus, which sends impulses to other parts of the brain. Impulses arrive at the limbic system (amygdala) a few nanoseconds before they get to the neocortex, which allows your emotions to take control before you are able to rationally process the information.

If Intense Emotions Continue

- We feel increasingly confused, frustrated and out-of-control.
- As emotions intensify, our limbic system pulls oxygen away from our neocortex so we have less capacity for rational thinking.
- It becomes increasingly difficult to recover from feeling hurt or angry.
- We lose hope for a positive resolution.
- We develop a hard, uncaring heart, partly as protection and partly as punishment.
- We avoid the other person, spending more and more time apart.
- We eventually give up on our relationships, friends, churches, jobs or marriages.

Common Tendencies of Men and Women (sometimes reversed)

- Men tend to avoid conflict at all costs, often because they are afraid of emotional flooding.
- Women generally want to engage: “We need to talk”.
- Fear of flooding often compels men to “stonewall” (withdraw into silence or leave).
- The more a woman presses to discuss... the more most men will pull away. Prov. 21:9
- This results in further frustration and flooding in the woman, which prolongs the spiral.

The Three-Fold Pattern of Emotional and Relational Failure

- Failure to understand and faithfully obey God’s instructions
- Failure to understand and consistently control the emotions and interests that are driving us
- Failure to understand and wisely engage the emotions and interests of others

Are you tired of being controlled by an invisible puppeteer?

If you fail to develop the ability to understand and master your emotions, they will act like an “invisible puppeteer,” jerking you around, provoking impulsive words and actions, and damaging your relationships.

There is hope:

As you grow in relational wisdom, you can learn to anticipate, prevent, and reverse this spiral, and become skilled at building healthy relationships.
Lesson 5
You Are Designed to Relate to God, Self and Others

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart... and love your neighbor as yourself.”
Matthew 22:37-39

Relational wisdom is a theology for life

The Bible provides a highly effective way to deal with relationships and the emotions that fuel them. These truths may be organized into a discipleship paradigm called “relational wisdom” or simply “RW.”

Relationships are three-dimensional

- God, Self, Others

Relationships involve two dynamics

- Aware – What do I know?
- Engaging – What will I do?

Biblical Synonyms

The six skills or disciplines of relational wisdom are described by a variety of biblical words, such as: remember, faithful, humble, disciplined, compassionate, and serving.

Values-based RW

If you do not believe in God or actively think about his role in your life, you still need to be aware of the fact that outside values are constantly influencing your relationships; that is, you still need to be “Values-Aware” and “Values-Engaging”.

Relational wisdom is taught throughout Scripture

Relational wisdom is taught as individual disciplines and in complete 360s (all three dimensions addressed in one passage), with each discipline fueling and supporting the others.

Ephesians 4:30-32

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another...

...as God in Christ forgave you.”

Values-Aware / Engaging

Values-Aware / Engaging

Values-Aware / Engaging

Values-Aware / Engaging

Values-Aware / Engaging

Values-Aware / Engaging

360 passages are everywhere:

- Matt. 28:18-20
- Exodus 20:1-21
- Phil. 2:1-11
LESSON 6
Practice the SOG Plan

“Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.” Psalm 42:5-6

Relational wisdom can be summarized with simple acrostics

The Christian church has used acrostics for centuries to help Christians learn biblical truths. For example, the letters in the Greek word for fish came to stand for “Jesus Christ God’s Son Savior.”

This practice is helpful for learning the principles of relational wisdom, which are so simple that a child can apply them, and yet so intricate and robust that you can spend the rest of your life exploring and applying them. For example:

To be relationally wise in all situations...

**Practice the SOG Plan™:**

**Self-Aware:**
How am I feeling and acting? Ps. 42:5-6
- What am I feeling? Why?
- What do I feel like doing? What are the likely consequences?
- What can I do instead?

**Other-Aware:**
How are others feeling and how am I affecting them? 1 Pet. 3:8
- What do others seem to feel? Need? Want? Fear?
- How am I impacting others?
- Is this really the best time to talk, counsel or correct?
- How can I serve, love or forgive others?

**God-Aware:**
Where is God leading me? Prov. 3:5-8 *
- Who is God? What is he like? What is he doing?
- Am I acting in faith or unbelief?
- Do I trust in him or in myself?
- What difference does the gospel make?
- How can I pray? What Scriptures can guide me?
- How can I show that I love, trust, and obey God above all things?

**Values-Aware:**
Where are my values leading me?

An innovation, to be effective, has to be simple and it has to be focused. Effective innovation starts small.
- Peter Drucker

**RW Can Start Anywhere on the Circle**

Although the ideal approach to life is to be constantly God-aware, you will often be focused on other things. So when relational issues arise, you may first sense an inner turmoil (self-awareness, see Ps. 77:1-2) or see that another person is distressed (other-awareness, see 1 Sam. 1:18).

Regardless of where you begin your response to a relational issue, you can develop the habit of always looking at it from all three perspectives: God, self, others (Ps. 77:3-20 | Matt. 22:37-38 | Eph. 4:30-32). Do this not just once, but repeatedly, using repeated 360s to understand and improve the relationship.

Download SOG practice worksheet at rw360.org/worksheets
LESSON 7
Emotional Intelligence Is a Form of Common Grace

“For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” Matthew 5:45

God graciously shares knowledge of his creation with all people

General revelation is a knowledge of God’s existence, character, and moral and physical laws that he gives to all humanity generally through studying nature and through an inner sense of God’s existence and laws. Gen. 1:27 | Ps. 19:1-4 | Rom. 1:20, 2:14-15 | Acts 17:26-29

Common grace is the grace that God pours out on all people, whether they believe in him or not, to give them innumerable blessings that are not necessarily part of salvation. This grace includes knowledge, health, prosperity, happiness and peace, as well as the ability to comprehend and respond (imperfectly) to what God reveals through general revelation. Matt. 5:45 | Acts 14:16-17 | Ps. 145:9-15-16 | Rom. 2:14-15

Through general revelation and common grace, God gives both believers and nonbelievers insights into the laws of nature (physics, medicine, etc.) as well as insights into how humans behave and can form healthy relationships and stable societies (psychology, emotional intelligence, sociology, law, etc.).

Emotional intelligence provides valuable insights into human relationships

By God’s grace, secular studies on emotional intelligence (which address four of the six skills of relational wisdom) have produced valuable insights on human neurology and behavior. Dan Goleman’s writings, including his best selling book, Emotional Intelligence, are particularly insightful. Therefore, we can gain a great deal of useful knowledge from these studies.

Emotional intelligence has a major deficiency

Unfortunately, teachings on emotional intelligence typically ignore God’s existence, the reality of sin, and the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. As a result, traditional teaching on EI lacks an objective moral compass. The primary motivation for improving EI is personal advancement. And apart from the transforming power of the gospel, change depends entirely on human effort.

Moreover, an increasing number of articles are highlighting “the dark side of EI,” namely, the fact that unprincipled people with exceptional emotional intelligence often use those skills to manipulate others for their own advantage.

Christians have a unique opportunity to cure this deficiency by teaching and modeling a God-centered, biblically-grounded and gospel-driven form of emotional intelligence, namely, relational wisdom.

1 See rw360.org/Common-Grace-RW
2 See rw360.org/Emotional-Intelligence
LESSON 8
Relational Wisdom Involves Six Life-Enriching Skills

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.” Proverbs 9:10

In real life, people live both inside and outside the RW circle

Even King David vacillated between relational wisdom and foolishness.
- In his youth 1 Sam. 17, 24: remembered, faithful, humble, disciplined, compassionate, serving.
- Later in life 2 Sam. 11: forgot, fickle, proud, indulgent, insensitive, manipulative.

With practice, these six skills or disciplines can become habits

- **God-Awareness (remember)** is the ability to view all of life in the light of God’s character, works and promises.
  - Prov. 9:10 | 1 Chron. 16:12 | Ps. 77:1-12 | 111:2-3: 103 | Rom. 8:28-39 | Eph. 3:14-19
  - 2 Pet. 1:3-8

- **God-Engagement (faithfulness)** is the ability to trust, obey, and imitate God in a way that pleases and honors him.
  - Deut. 10:12-13 | 1 Kings 3:6 | Prov. 3:5-6 | Matt. 25:21 | John 14:15 | 1 Cor. 10:31-11:1
  - Eph. 5:1-2

- **Self-Awareness (humbly)** is the ability to honestly discern your own emotions, interests, values, strengths and weaknesses.
  - 1 Peter 5:5 | Ps. 139:23-24 | James 4:1-3 | Mark 7:21-23 | 2 Tim. 2:22

- **Self-Engagement (discipline)** is the ability to manage your thoughts, emotions, words and actions so that they advance God’s purposes.

- **Other-Awareness (compassion)** is the ability to understand and empathize with the experiences, emotions and interests of others.
  - Mark 6:34 | Luke 10:30-37 | 1 Pet. 3:8 | Phil. 2:3-4

- **Other-Engagement (service)** is the ability to encourage, cooperate and resolve differences with others in a mutually beneficial way.
  - Mark 10:42-45 | John 12:24-26 | 1 Thess. 5:14-15 | 1 Pet. 3:8-9

Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.
- 1 Tim. 4:15
LESSON 9
Relational Wisdom Is Inspired by the Gospel

"He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" Romans 8:32

The gospel reconciles us to God... and to one another

The word “gospel” means “good news.” To understand God’s good news, we first need to understand the truth about ourselves.

The Bible tells us that God created us in his image and designed us to reflect his perfect love and character by living according to his commands. But everyone on the earth has fallen short of that perfection. Instead of living for God, we have lived for ourselves. We have loved and served worldly pleasures more than we have loved and served God. We have repeatedly broken his commands and pursued our own desires and goals. As a result, God’s justice requires that we pay for our sins by being eternally separated from him.

But there is good news. God is radically relational and perfectly wise. In his great love and mercy, he sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to pay for our sins by dying on the cross. He then raised Jesus back to life to show that his sacrifice paid our debt in full and to open the way for us to be reconciled to God and enjoy him forever. The reconciling power of the gospel can also overflow into our human relationships.

Relational wisdom is an outpouring of the gospel

As the gospel overflows in our lives, it inspires and empowers every aspect of relational wisdom.

GOD-AWARE: The first outpouring of the gospel occurs when Jesus makes us God-aware by sending the Holy Spirit to renew our hearts and minds so that we can know, value and love God.

GOD-ENGAGED: As we become God-aware of God’s love and mercy, we are moved to become God-engaged. God’s grace enables us to worship him in spirit and truth, to glorify him with trust and obedience, and to delight in imitating him.

DEFINITION: The gospel is the good news that Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins and rescue us from eternal separation from God, and he rose from the dead to give us new life. Through faith in Jesus, we are reconciled to God, adopted into his family, empowered to love others as he has loved us, and given the gift of enjoying him forever.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
- John 3:16

SELF-AWARE: God-awareness also opens the way for true self-awareness. As we come to know the holiness of God, we are able to know ourselves more accurately. We see our sin and realize how empty and miserable we are when we live for ourselves. This leads us to humble ourselves, turn from our self-absorbed lives, and trust in Jesus as our Savior. But God also opens our eyes to see his many blessings; he has forgiven our sins, adopted us as dearly loved children, and entrusted us with gifts and opportunities to know and serve him.

SELF-ENGAGED: God-awareness and self-awareness lead to self-engagement. As we are filled with God’s Spirit and united with him through Christ, we are inspired and empowered to break free from the slavery of sin, to develop self-discipline, and to grow in godliness. Our old habits do not die easily, but God promises to steadily transform us into his likeness.

OTHER-AWARE: As God fills us and gives us the heart and mind of Christ, we are freed from seeing ourselves as the center of the world and enabled to become others-aware. We start to listen, understand, value and care for others! As we develop compassion and understanding, their joys become our joys and their sorrows become our sorrows.

OTHER-ENGAGED: This growing other-awareness spills over in other-engagement. As the Holy Spirit changes our hearts from being self-absorbed to being God-absorbed, we are freed from the desire to manipulate others to get what we want. Why? Because we see that we already have the best of the best in Christ! We learn to find our greatest joy and fulfillment in loving him and the people he has placed around us. Thus the gospel results in relationships that are characterized by the same compassion, kindness, gentleness and forgiveness that God has shown to us through Jesus.

A FREE GIFT: God offers all these blessings to each of us as a gift. We don’t have to clean ourselves up to earn them. We must simply admit our need, believe that Jesus’ death and resurrection have saved us, and then follow him as Lord of our lives.

But mental assent alone will not change your relationships. Many people who say they believe in Jesus have not truly made him the “guidance system” of their lives. They still live according to their own desires, ways and agendas. As a result, they are not growing into his likeness or relating to others like true disciples of Christ.

If you are such a person—or possibly a new believer—pray that God would fill you with his Spirit, transform your mind through the daily study of his Word, and give you a deeper understanding of the gospel and the life-changing power he offers to all who trust in Christ.

If you would like to learn more about what it would mean for you to trust in Jesus and make him Lord of your life and relationships, please talk with a course instructor or one of the pastors or counselors who are available through the church or ministry hosting this training.
**LESSON 10**

The Gospel Penetrates Barriers

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

**Relationships thrive on the gospel... not on “the law”**

Most of us find it easier to bring “the law” to people rather than the gospel. By “law” I mean all the “thou shalt” passages. You know, the ones we use to tell other people how they should live or how they’re falling short … or better yet, to prove how we are right and they are wrong.

Don’t get me wrong. I love God’s Law. It is beautiful and perfect (Ps. 19:7). It reflects God’s perfect righteousness and reveals our sinfulness, leading us to seek pardon in Christ. It restrains sin by establishing moral boundaries that support civil societies. And it teaches those who trust in Christ how to live a life that honors him and advances his kingdom.

These are proper uses of God’s Law. But because of our sinful nature, we often ignore these benevolent purposes and instead use the commands of Scripture to vindicate ourselves and critique others. It’s a hard habit to break because it’s fueled by our pride and self-righteousness.

**Bring the gospel to both the saved and unsaved**

One way to counteract this tendency is to develop a counter-habit, the habit of constantly bringing the gospel to others. Not only to the unsaved, but also to believers.

Yes, the gospel is central to evangelism. But the Lord also calls Christians to bring the good news of our redemption to one another to encourage thankfulness for God’s mercy, to dispel doubts and fears, to remind us of our identity in Christ, to promote sanctification, and to motivate us to love others as Christ has loved us (see Paul’s example in Rom. 5:1-5 | Eph. 1:7-14; 5:1 | Col. 1:11-14).

**Ways to Bring the gospel**

Here is a small sample of the promises you can pass on at any time to your spouse, children, coworkers, friends… even your pastor (who needs to be reminded of the gospel, too!)

- “God has given you a priceless gift: eternal life through Jesus Christ.” Rom. 6:23
- “The Lord set his love on you before he even created the world … so it obviously has nothing to do with your earning it.” Eph. 1:4
- “You are chosen by God, holy, and dearly loved.” Col. 3:12
- “God has rescued you from the dominion of darkness and brought you into the kingdom of the Son he loves.” Col. 1:13
- “I know you are weary and burdened today. Jesus promises that if you turn to him he will give you rest.” Matt. 11:28
- “Even though you feel like you’ve completely blown it, remember that Jesus has already paid the full price for your sins; he has separated them from you as far as the east is from the west.” Ps. 103:12 | 2 Cor. 5:21
- “Don’t give up on yourself. When you put your trust in Jesus, he began to change you into his likeness. And he will continue that process until the day he takes you home.” Rom. 8:29 | 2 Cor. 3:18 | Phil. 1:6
- “If you are trusting in Jesus, you are a new creation. The old is gone the new has come!” 2 Cor. 5:17
- “If God gave his only Son for you, will he not also give you everything else that you need in this life?” Rom. 8:31-32
- “For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.” 2 Cor. 1:20
- “You are God’s workmanship, created in Christ to do good works, which God prepared for you long ago.” Eph. 2:10
- “Did you know that you are part of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation?” 1 Pet. 2:9

**The law repels; the gospel attracts.**

The law shows the distance which there is between God and man; the gospel bridges that awful chasm and brings the sinner across it.

- C.H. Spurgeon

**Christians need other Christians who speak God’s Word to them. They need them again and again when they become uncertain and disheartened. They need other Christians as bearers and proclaimers of the divine word of salvation.**

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer
LESSON 11
One Guidance System Beats Them All
"This is God, our God forever and ever. He will guide us forever." Psalm 48:14

The quality and stability of your relationships will depend on what guidance system you choose to live by.

Most of us would like to improve our relational skills, but no matter how hard we try, we keep veering off course by falling back into habits that damage our relationship with God and other people. Rom. 7:15-18

Because of his great love, God invites us to trade in our flawed ideas on how to live, to accept the gift of his kindness and forgiveness, and to trust that he will provide us with the best system for navigating life and relationships. Prov. 3:5-7 | Isa. 30:21

He provides this guidance through his written Word, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, and through the teaching and counsel of his church.

God’s guidance system has proven its superiority over thousands of years. Those who trust in it have found a wisdom, righteousness, security, and peace that is unmatched by anything the world has to offer. Ps. 23

To become more God-aware and God-engaging...

Follow a trustworthy GPS (God Positioning System)

Glorify God: Trust him absolutely.

Pursue God: Seek him earnestly.
Jer. 29:13 | Joshua 1:8 | Ps. 119:45 | 1 Thess. 5:17

Serve God: Do what please him.
John 8:29 | Josh. 24:15 | Matt. 5:16 | John 15:8

Glorify God in Conflict
"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31

Conflict occurs when people are “living outside the circle of relational wisdom.” Peacemaking is how we draw ourselves and others back inside the circle through confession, correction, forgiveness, negotiation, reconciliation and, if necessary, mediation. Acts 6:1-7

The Bible provides a practical theology for resolving conflict

Through the gospel, God provides both the model and motivation for peacemaking, which can be organized into 4 G’s:
- Glorify God | 1 Cor. 10:31
- Get the log out of your eye | Matt. 7:3
- Gently restore | Gal. 6:1
- Go and be reconciled | Matt. 5:24

Peacemaking requires a major shift in focus

Our natural tendency when we’re in conflict is to focus on vindicating ourselves (Gen. 3:9-13). Therefore, a key step in successful peacemaking is to become intensely God-aware and God-engaging so that we are more concerned about glorifying him than we are in vindicating ourselves. Phil. 2:1-11

Conflict provides an opportunity to bring glory to God | 1 Cor. 10:31

Glorifying God means to draw attention to the excellence of his character, powers and works (Ps. 86:12 | 1 Pet. 2:12). God is glorified when his people depend on and trust in him and obey his commands, even when it seems to put them at a disadvantage. Acts 4:18-20 | Ps. 37:3-6 | John 14:15-31 | Luke 6:27-28

Helpful questions:
- How can I please and honor the Lord in this situation?
- How can I bring praise to Jesus by showing that he has saved me and is changing me?

Peacemakers are people who breathe grace. They draw continuously on the goodness and power of Jesus Christ, and then they bring his love, mercy, forgiveness, strength, and wisdom to the conflicts of daily life.

Lord, please deliver me from this lust of always vindicating myself! | St. Augustine

For more details, see rw360.org/Peacemaking

DIG DEEPER

The Peacemaker

Chapter 1
LESSON 13
READ Yourself Accurately
“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” 2 Timothy 1:7

Emotions have the power to move us
Emotions are like the wind to a sailboat; they have the power to move us in many directions and even to capsize our relationships and lives.

With God’s help, we can learn how to harness the power of our emotions
Just as good sailors learn how to read and use the wind, wise Christians learn how to anticipate and harness the power of their emotions (2 Tim. 1:7). You can develop this skill by practicing the READ acrostic.

To become more self-aware and self-engaging… READ yourself accurately

R Recognize your emotions.
Ps. 42:5 | Matt. 14:30 | Phil. 4:6

E Evaluate their sources.
Ps. 73:2-3 | Prov. 20:5 | James 1:13-15 | see rw360.org/ccef-idols

A Anticipate the consequences of following them.
Prov. 22:3; 15:18 | Col. 3:5-6

D Direct them on a constructive course.
Prov. 15:1; John 12:27 | Col. 3:12-13

Emotions are like the wind. They can either capsize your relationships or propel them on an exhilarating journey.

Since language skills are located in the neocortex, naming your emotions engages your entire brain in processing emotions and making wise decisions.

Buy Six Seconds
Find ways to give your neocortex time to engage along with your limbic system so you can think and respond with your whole brain, as God intended. For example, always take a bottle of water or cup of coffee with you during potentially difficult conversations. If you sense your emotions building, force yourself to take a sip of water or coffee before saying anything. Prov 13:3

Another strategy for dealing with intense emotions is to ask for a brief pause in a conversation so you can think and pray about the issues. If circumstances permit, taking a brief walk around the block also gives your mind and body time to process emotions and plan a thoughtful response.

Do a 180
As soon as you sense strong emotions building, ask yourself whether they are likely to move you to do things that are honoring or dishonoring to God. If they are likely to move you to please and honor God, put up “full sail” and let those emotions move you toward godly words and actions.

But if you sense emotions that are likely to move you to dishonor God (e.g., anger, jealousy, bitterness, fear), try to discern what direction those emotions seem to be pushing you… and then ask God to help you to do just the opposite of what you feel like doing, just as Jesus and Paul taught in Luke 6:27-28 and Romans 12:17-21.

Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin. - Prov. 13:3

But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. - Luke 6:27-28

Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin. - Prov. 13:3

Download R.E.A.D. practice worksheet at rw360.org/worksheets

DIG DEEPER
The Peacemaker: Chapter 5
LESSON 14
Serve Every Person You Meet

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” 1 Peter 4:10

God designed eagles to soar to great altitudes

Eagles are often seen soaring at altitudes of 10,000 feet. They do not have the strength or stamina to get to such heights by flapping their wings.

So how do they get that high? They search for thermals and then spread their wings to catch the updrafts of warm air that lift them to altitudes they could never reach in their own strength.

God designed you to lift other people to heights they could not reach on their own

God designed all of us to love him and to love those around us (Matt. 22:37-39). Among other things, this means that he calls us to be always looking for opportunities to lift, serve and encourage one another (1 Pet. 4:10 | Heb. 10:24-25). You can begin to make this a habit by practicing the SERVE acrostic.

S
Smile: home, workplace, church, store, telephone
Num. 6:24-26 | Prov. 12:25 | Matt. 7:12 | see rw360.org/smile

E
Explore & Empathize: Show interest and compassion.
Prov. 20:5 | Rom. 12:15 | 1 Pet. 3:8 | see rw360.org/empathy

R
Reconcile: Be a peacemaker.
Matt. 5:9 | Rom. 12:18 | James 3:17-18

V
Value: Express appreciation and respect.
Rom. 16:1-2 | 1 Cor. 16:17-18 | Phil. 2:29 | 1 Tim. 5:17

E
Encourage: Give courage, inspire, put wind under their wings.

To become more other-aware and other-engaging...

SERVE every person you meet

S
Smile: home, workplace, church, store, telephone
Num. 6:24-26 | Prov. 12:25 | Matt. 7:12 | see rw360.org/smile

E
Explore & Empathize: Show interest and compassion.
Prov. 20:5 | Rom. 12:15 | 1 Pet. 3:8 | see rw360.org/empathy

R
Reconcile: Be a peacemaker.
Matt. 5:9 | Rom. 12:18 | James 3:17-18

V
Value: Express appreciation and respect.
Rom. 16:1-2 | 1 Cor. 16:17-18 | Phil. 2:29 | 1 Tim. 5:17

E
Encourage: Give courage, inspire, put wind under their wings.

Whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.
- Prov 1:25

Download S.E.R.V.E. practice worksheet at rw360.org/worksheets
LESSON 15
Conflict is Fueled by Unmet Desires
“What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?” James 4:1

Good desires can become controlling idols
An idol is anything apart from God that we depend on to be happy, fulfilled, or secure. It is something other than God that we set our heart on (Luke 12:29), that rules us (Eph. 5:5), or that we trust, fear, or serve (Isa. 42:17 | Matt. 6:24 | Luke 12:4-5). Given its controlling effect on our lives, an idol may be referred to as a “functional god.”

The progression of an idol
- I desire
- I demand James 4:1-3
- I judge James 4:11-12
- I punish Gen. 4:1-8 | Prov. 27:15

Use “X-ray” questions to READ yourself and see the silhouettes of idols in your heart
- What am I preoccupied with?
- “If only ______, then I would be happy, fulfilled, and secure”?
- What do I want to preserve or to avoid at all costs?
- Where do I put my trust?
- When a desire is not met, do I feel anxiety, resentment, bitterness or depression?
- What do I want so much that I’m willing to disappoint or hurt others to get it?

The cure for an idolatrous heart
- Confess your sin and trust in God alone for everything you need. Acts 3:19
- Replace idol worship with worship of the true God. Ps. 37:4

LESSON 16
The Seven A’s of Confession Tear Down Walls
“Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.” Proverbs 28:13

Most people give lousy confessions... if they confess at all
When we do something wrong, our typical responses are to conceal it, deny it, excuse it or to blame it on others (Gen. 3:12-13); if we are forced to admit a wrong, we are naturally inclined to minimize it by using words like “if,” “but,” “maybe,” or “perhaps.”

SEVEN A’S OF CONFESSION Matt. 7:3-5 | 1 John 1:8-9 | Prov. 28:13
An effective confession requires humble self-awareness and self-engagement, which can be demonstrated by these elements spoken sincerely and from the heart, not as a token checklist:

1. Address everyone involved
   (All those whom you affected)
2. Avoid it, but, and maybe
   (Do not try to excuse your wrongs)
3. Admit specifically
   (Both attitudes and actions)
4. Acknowledge the hurt
   (Express sorrow for hurting someone)
5. Accept the consequences
   (Such as making restitution)
6. Alter your behavior
   (Change your attitudes and actions)
7. Ask for forgiveness

There is a simple way to test the sincerity of a confession:
Ask, “How detailed is your plan of repentance?”
“For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret (turning from sin, growing in Christ-like character, and enjoying a clear conscience), whereas worldly grief produces death (empty words, passing regret, and unchanged attitudes and habits).” 2 Cor. 7:10

Trust is rebuilt by making and keeping promises
- Repair any harm you’ve caused
- Fulfill past promises
- Follow through on new commitments
- Earnestly pursue needed changes in your attitude and actions
- Make sincere sacrifices for the sake of the person you’ve wronged
LESSON 17
FORGIVE AS YOU’VE BEEN FORGIVEN
“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”
Ephesians 4:32
Forgiveness is a decision modeled after God’s forgiveness of us
Christians are the most forgiven people in the world.
(Col. 1:21-22 | Ps. 103:8-12). Therefore, we should be the most forgiving people in the world. Thus God calls us to forgive others the same way that he has forgiven us.
Eph. 4:32 | Eph. 5:7 | John 13:34
The four promises of forgiveness are a powerful way to serve others
The four promises of forgiveness are modeled after God’s forgiveness for us.
Jer. 31:34 | Ps. 103:8-13 | Matt. 6:12 | 1 Cor. 13:5 | Eph. 4:32
1. “I will not dwell on this incident.”
2. “I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you.”
3. “I will not talk to others about this incident.”
4. “I will not let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.”

The “Replacement Principle” can speed reconciliation
Replace negative feelings and thoughts with prayer, thankful thoughts, gracious words and kind actions.
Luke 6:27-28 | Phil. 4:8

LESSON 18
Win-Win with Interest-Based Negotiation
“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
Philippians 2:4
Many conflicts involve both substantive and personal issues
Substantive issues, which typically involve money, property, authority or promises, are often inflamed by personal (heart) issues.
(Luke 12:13-15). Personal issues can be resolved through confession and forgiveness, while substantive issues can be resolved through negotiation. The more other-aware and other-engaging we are, the more effectively we can exercise these skills.
Phil. 2:3-4
When you need to negotiate, PAUSE
The Bible contains many principles and examples of negotiation, which may be summarized in five basic steps you can apply whenever you need to resolve substantive issues:

P Prepare: pray, get the facts, seek godly counsel, develop options.
Prov. 14:8, 22
A Affirm relationships: show genuine concern and respect for others.
1 Sam. 25
U Understand interests: identify others’ concerns, desires, needs, limitations, or fears.
Phl. 2:3-4 | Matt. 7:12 | 1 Cor. 13:4-5
S Search for creative solutions: use prayerful brainstorming.
Prov. 14:8
E Evaluate options objectively and reasonably: evaluate, don’t argue.
Dan. 1:11-16

Interests are what really motivate people
When we’re in a conflict, it’s usually easy to see others’ positions. They are like the tip of an iceberg. What we really need to discern and understand, however, are others’ interests, which are usually hidden from view, like the bottom of an iceberg.
Interests give rise to positions; an interest may be a concern, desire, need, limitation, or something a person values or fears.
The better you understand others’ interests (as well as your own), the more likely you are to negotiate acceptable solutions.
1 Sam. 25:32-35 | Dan. 1:8-16

1 In cases of abuse, forgiveness can and should include the establishment of safe boundaries for emotional and physical safety.
See The Peacemaker, pp. 156-7, 284.
LESSON 19
Let Your Royal Titles Inspire Relational Growth
“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.” 1 Peter 2:9

When we trust in Christ, God calls us to live out an array of royal titles*

- But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true WORSHIPPERS will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. John 4:23.

- To the SAINTS and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. Col. 1:2.

- The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are CHILDREN of God. Rom. 8:16.

- And if children, then HEIRS—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. Rom. 8:17.

- But you are a chosen race, a royal PRIESTHOOD, a holy nation, a people for his own possession. 1 Pet. 2:9.

- Therefore, we are AMBASSADORS for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 2 Cor. 5:20.

Live out your calling by letting your titles inspire relational growth!

God-aware:
True worshippers delight in remembering God’s deeds and exalting his character. Ps. 77:11; 79:13

God-engaging:
Sincere saints are highly motivated to be faithful to Christ. Eph. 1:1 | 2 Cor. 4:2

Self-aware:
Godly children humbly admit their limitations and ask for their Father’s guidance and help as they seek to develop the character of Christ. Col. 3:12-15

Self-engaging:
Heirs of God understand the gifts and privileges God has bestowed upon them and seek to lead disciplined and productive lives. Matt. 25:14-23

Other-aware:
Priests are called to be compassionate as they discern and minister to the weaknesses and needs of others. Heb. 4:15

Other-engaging:
Ambassadors go forth on behalf of their King to proclaim his will, reflect his love, and serve those whom he desires to bless. 2 Cor. 5:20 | Eph. 6:20

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature. - 2 Pet. 1:2-4

1Eph. 4:1-3 | 2 Tim. 1:9 | 2 Pet 1:3-11 *A young college student, Carter Knight, provided the original insights for this section.
LESSON 20
Develop a Personal Growth Plan

“Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.” 1 Timothy 4:15

If you truly want to grow, develop a personal growth plan:

☐ I will pray daily for God’s grace and wisdom to grow in specific ways. James 1:5; 3:17-18

☐ I will sign up for the RW Blog for weekly tips on relational wisdom rw360.org/blog.

☐ I will study the Scriptures, starting with the passages cited in this booklet and compiled at rw360.org/RW-Scriptures to confirm these principles and imprint God’s Word on my heart. Acts 17:11 | Ps. 1:1-3

☐ I will register for the online version of this course academy.rw360.org, which will allow me to review these principles and study them more deeply.

☐ I will ask this person to study the online course with me ______________________.

☐ I will start keeping a journal to record my experiences and insights.

☐ I will download the free practice worksheets at rw360.org/worksheets and focus on practicing one of the foundational RW acrostics for 30 days:
  □ SOG (to become more relationally wise in all situations)
  □ GPS (to become more God-aware and God-engaging)
  □ READ (to become more self-aware and self-engaging)
  □ SERVE (to become more other-aware and other-engaging)

☐ I will share what I’ve learned about RW with this person ____________________.

☐ I will ask ________________to hold me accountable for pursuing these goals.

☐ I will ask ________________to be my prayer partner as I pursue these goals.

☐ I will download free practice worksheets from rw360.org/worksheets and focus on improving my relationship with this person ____________________.

☐ I will apply what I’ve learned to three relational situations (focusing on only one at a time):
  □ Home _____________________________________________________________
  □ Church ____________________________________________________________
  □ Work ______________________________________________________________

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might!” Ecclesiastes 9:10

INTERACTIVE ONLINE COURSE

Create a private group and invite others to study RW with you.

Academy.rw360.org

A Flexible, Convenient and Interactive Way to Learn

Create a private group and invite others to study and practice RW with you. Learn innovative ways to build stronger relationships and “get upstream of conflict”

Study Anywhere
Study privately on your computer, tablet, or smartphone... or on a TV with friends in your living room

Set Your Own Pace
Work any time of the day or week at a pace that suits your schedule, with no pressure or deadlines

Multiple Learning Methods
Teaching and demonstration videos, Bible study, interactive discussions and online quizzes

Skills for Real Life
Practical exercises help you to apply improved relational skills in your home, church and workplace

Please provide feedback on this seminar by going to RW360.org/survey
Discovering Relational Wisdom© 2.0
Three-Dimensional Emotional Intelligence™
Building better relationships by taking every thought, emotion, word and action captive to Christ