



relational
wisdom[®]360



Discovering Relational Wisdom[®]3.0

going beyond 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 sold over 500,000 copies in 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.



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This Study Guide Belongs To

going beyond emotional intelligence[™]

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Introduction

Welcome to Discovering Relational Wisdom® 3.0!

This course is designed to teach you how to improve your ability to develop authentic, enjoyable, productive and lasting 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.

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.

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!

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) or pursuant to the “Fair Use Doctrine” 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.

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LESSON 1



Life Is All About Relationships

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

Relational wisdom (RW) is an "operating system for life"

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

What is relational wisdom?

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

Matt. 22:37-39 | John 13:34-35



**Living out
the two great
commandments.**

In modern terms, relational wisdom is your ability to discern emotions, interests and abilities in yourself and others, to interpret this information 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.

Gen. 2:18 | 1 Cor. 1:9 | John 3:16; 4:1-42; 13:34-35; 17:20-23

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



**Well done,
good and faithful
servant! You have
been faithful with
a few things; I will
put you in charge of
many things.
- Matt. 25:21**

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: To be relationally wise in all situations ...

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.
Jer. 29:13 | Matt. 22:37 | John 8:29; 14:21, 23
- Less conflict and more enjoyable, productive and enduring human relationships.
Ruth 1:16-18 | 1 Sam. 20:17 | Prov. 18:24



Get Wisdom...
prize her highly,
and she will exalt
you. - Prov. 4:7-8

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.

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

Why do soft skills outshine hard skills?

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, relational skills are usually more valuable than technical expertise.



Soft skills can either **magnify** or **diminish** the value of our hard skills, as well as those of the people around us. *Prov. 22:11*

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 yields 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.¹



When companies invest in the relational wellness of their workers, returns on investment can range between \$1.50 and \$6.85 for every dollar spent on these types of programs.²



¹ See rw360.org/workplace for over 100 articles on the value of relational skills in business, healthcare, education, ministry, sports and military settings. ² Relational Wellness: Corporate America's Business? (Life Innovations, Inc.)

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.



**We all are
being transformed...
This comes from the
Lord who is the
Spirit. - 2 Cor. 3:18**

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.



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

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*

Walk with the wise

To accelerate your relational growth, identify several highly relational people and spend as much time as you can with them, learning from their example and benefitting from their encouragement and advice.

Prov. 13:20 | 1 Cor. 11:1 | Phil. 3:17 | 1 Thess. 5:11 | Prov. 19:20



**Whoever walks
with the wise
becomes wise.
- Prov. 13:20**

LESSON 2

Emotions Were Designed by God

"Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!"

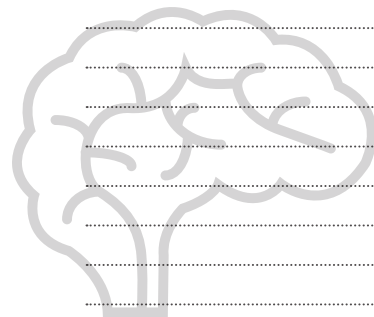
Psalms 32:11

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 fragments 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.



Core Emotions

	Sadness	Shame	Fear	Enjoyment	Love	Surprise	Disgust	Anger
High	Despair Depression Grief Loneliness Hurt	Guilty Sorrowful Worthless Disgraced Dishonored	Terrified Dreading Fearful Afraid Frightened	Ecstatic Overjoyed Excited Thrilled Delighted	Worship Adoration Infatuation Loyalty Attraction	Shocked Stunned Alarmed Astonished Perplexed	Revulsion Despising Detesting Loathing Contempt	Fury Hostility Hatred Animosity Bitterness
Medium	Hopelessness Sorrow Self-pity Distress Unhappiness Gloom Disappointment	Humiliated Remorseful Unworthy Embarrassed Bashful Regretful Uncomfortable	Anxious Insecure Intimidated Nervous Worried Uneasy Concerned	Passionate Cheerful Happy Satisfied Glad Contented Pleased	Respect Compassion Fondness Friendliness Kindness Liking Acceptance	Bewildered Disoriented Confused Wondering Unsettled Puzzled Bemused	Scorn Aversion Rejection Disrespect Disapproval Dislike Distaste	Exasperation Antipathy Resentment Mad Frustration Annoyance Irritation
Low								
	Spirit of Fear			Spirit of Power, Love, and Self-Control		Spirit of Anger		
	"God gave us a spirit not of fear... (2 Tim. 1:7a)			... but of power and love and self-control." (1:7b)		"Be not quick in your spirit to become angry for anger lodges in the bosom of fools" (Ecc. 7:9)		

2 Emotions are complex and involve our whole being. More specifically, emotions: (1) are a God-designed part of our personhood; (2) are usually triggered by sensory perception (sight, sound, touch, etc.); (3) are influenced by and reveal our values, beliefs, thoughts, concerns, experiences and evaluations; (4) produce automatic neural, hormonal, muscular, respiratory, cardiovascular and facial reactions; and (5) energize the will and move us to action (*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.”¹



Emotions are designed to **move** us to action, just as the wind moves a sailboat.

3 Emotions drive some of our most noble and constructive behaviors.

Positive emotions such as love, joy, delight, kindness and compassion move us to form strong relationships, to comfort and serve others and even to forgive them when they have wronged us. These emotions are found in both saved and unsaved people and drive much of the kind and beneficial behavior that goes on in the world. *Exod. 2:5-6 | Dan. 1:9*

4 Emotions can also drive some of our most regrettable and destructive behavior. Negative emotions like fear, bitterness, anger, jealousy, self-pity and lust frequently move us to speak and act in ways that damage or even destroy important relationships. *Gen. 37:11 | Matt. 27:3-5*

5 Emotions are not inherently sinful. Jesus felt a wide range of emotions, including love, compassion, joy, pity, anger, sorrow and agony (*John 11:5 | Matt. 14:14 | Heb. 12:2 | Mark 1:41 | Mark 3:5; 14:34 | Luke 22:44*). Yet he never sinned (*1 Pet. 2:22*). His emotions never overwhelmed him or moved him to act contrary to his Father's will. *John 8:29*

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. 3:6-13 | 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*

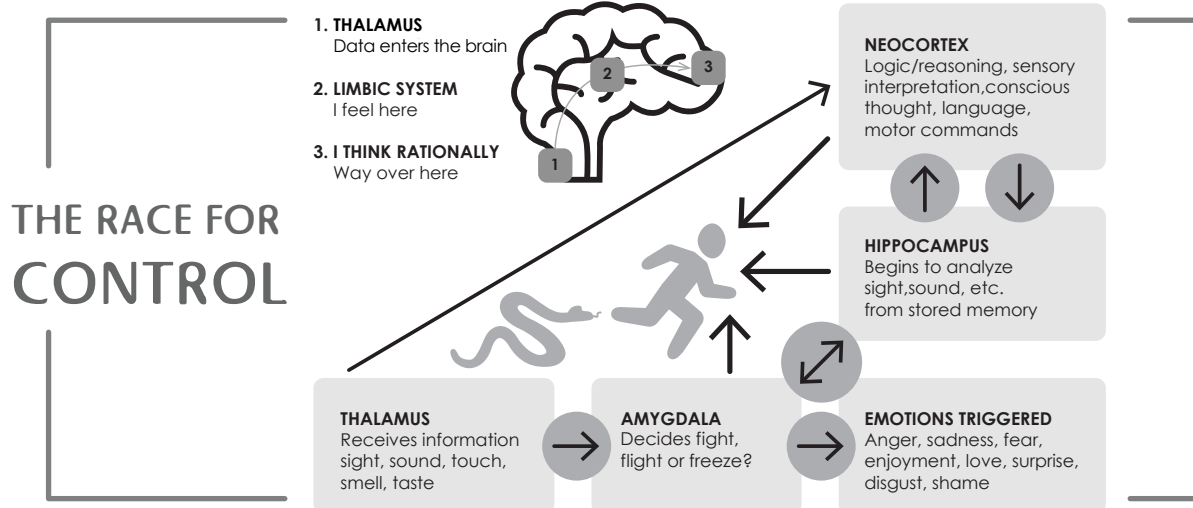


When my soul was embittered... I was brutish and ignorant; I was like a beast toward you.
- Psalm 73:21-22

¹ This definition incorporates elements of three closely connected concepts that are often used interchangeably: feelings, emotions and affections. Each of these terms can be distinguished both neurologically and perhaps even at a theological level, but for the purposes of this study, they are combined under the term, “emotions.” For a more detailed explanation of these concepts, see David Powlison, “What Do You Feel,” *Journal of Pastoral Practice*, 10 no. 4. (1991): 50-53; Feelings and Faith: Cultivating Emotions in the Christian Life, Brian Borgman (Crossway, 2009); Sam Williams “Toward a Theology of Emotion,” *Southern Baptist Theological Journal*, 7, no. 4 (Winter 2003):

59-61; Jonathan Edwards, “A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections” (1746).

For example, in high stress situations, our emotions can overwhelm rational thinking through “amygdala hijacking” (strong emotions that trigger an impulsive reaction that is quickly regretted).



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 can allow intense emotions to take control and trigger impulsive words or actions before you are able to rationally process the information (rw360.org/hijacking).

Thus, your emotions often act as an “invisible puppeteer,” jerking you around, provoking impulsive words and actions and damaging your relationships.

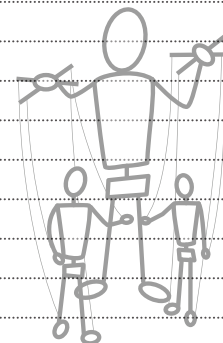
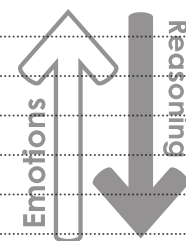
7 **There is hope! Through the gospel, God has redeemed us from the curse of sin,** made us new creations (which impacts our thoughts, emotions and will) and is now pouring his grace into us, giving us the ability to understand our emotions and progressively bring them under the Lordship of Christ.

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 and controlling our emotions is to bring them to God in humility, faith and prayer,** to examine them in the light of God's truth and to ask him for the grace, 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 neighbor as ourselves.

In other words, rather than simply listening to and following our emotions, we need to “preach God's truth to ourselves” in order to take every thought, emotion, word and action captive to Christ!

Ps. 51:6 | 1 Pet. 1:22 | 2 Cor. 10:5 | 2 Pet. 1:3-8



LESSON 3



Relationships Are Three-Dimensional

"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 inherently three-dimensional *Matt. 22:37-39*

- God, Self, Others¹

Relationships involve two dynamics *Matt. 26:10*

- **Awareness** – What do I know?
(Knowledge)
- **Engagement** – What will I do?
(Action)

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.

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.



The key to staying inside the circle is the knowledge of God

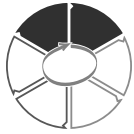
"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy one is insight."
Prov. 9:10

¹ For additional insights on three-dimensional interpretations of life by theologians like John Frame, CS Lewis, John Stott and Tim Keller, see rw360.org/Triperspectivalism.

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.

_____ Aware / Engaging



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

_____ Aware / Engaging



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

_____ Aware / Engaging



...as God in Christ forgave you.”

_____ Aware / Engaging



**360 passages
are everywhere:
Exodus 20:1-21
Matt. 22:37-39
Matt. 28:18-20
Phil. 2:1-11**

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. 77:11-12; 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 (humility)** is the ability to accurately discern your own identity, emotions, thoughts, values, interests and abilities.
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.
Gal. 5:22-23 | Matt. 16:24-25 | John 8:29 | Titus 2:11-12
- **Other-Awareness (compassion)** is the ability to understand and empathize with the experiences, emotions, values 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 love, encourage, serve and resolve differences with others in a mutually beneficial way.
John 13:34-35 | 1 Thess. 5:14-15 | Mark 10:42-45 | 1 Pet. 3:8-9 | Matt. 5:9

Relationships improve as we learn to relate to others in increasingly wise ways

Foolish	→	Wise
Forget	→	Remember
Fickle	→	Faithful
Proud	→	Humble
Indulgent	→	Disciplined
Insensitive	→	Compassionate
Manipulative	→	Serving



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

Relational wisdom is an enhanced form of emotional intelligence

Through God's general revelation and common grace¹, secular studies on emotional intelligence (aka EI or EQ) have produced valuable insights on human neurology and behavior. Dan Goleman's writings, including his best-selling book, *Emotional Intelligence*, are particularly insightful and provide valuable insights on four of the six skills of relational wisdom. Therefore, we can gain a great deal of useful knowledge from these studies.

Emotional intelligence has deficiencies

As a growing number of studies indicate, however, high levels of emotional intelligence can actually contribute to significant relational problems, including over-analyzing people, excessive self-criticism and an inclination to agree with questionable actions out of fear of hurting others' feelings.²

But there are even deeper problems. Secular materials on emotional intelligence typically ignore God's existence, the reality of sin and the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. As a result, most 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.

These deficiencies contribute to what is commonly called "the dark side of EI," namely, that unprincipled people with exceptional emotional intelligence can use those skills to manipulate others for their own advantage.

Going beyond emotional intelligence

As Christians educate themselves on the benefits and deficits of EI, we can initiate conversations to introduce others to the distinguishing qualities of relational wisdom, which include:

- Seeing the human brain and all of its marvelous functions as being designed by God to enable us to know him, experience his love and enjoy fulfilling human relationships.
- Recognizing that sin has impaired the brain, causing it to perform erratically, which leads to harmful behavior, conflict and broken relationships.
- Through the gospel, God has provided a remedy to the damaging effects of sin and a way for us to replace our erratic, harmful behavior with consistent, beneficial behavior.
- The motivation for developing relational wisdom is to improve our ability to love and serve God and the people around us rather than advancing our own interests at their expense.
- The Bible provides a proven and objective moral compass that shows how to use our relational gifts and abilities to serve and bless rather than use and harm others.
- God himself empowers us to improve our relational skills through the transforming power of the gospel and the indwelling work of his Holy Spirit.
- Development of RW skills is facilitated through easy-to-learn-and-apply acrostics.

EI/EQ

Personal Competence

SELF
AWARENESS

SELF
MANAGEMENT

Social Competence

SOCIAL
AWARENESS

RELATIONSHIP
MANAGEMENT



¹ See rw360.org/Common-Grace-RW • ² See rw360.org/Emotional-Intelligence

LESSON 4



The Gospel Transforms Relationships

"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.¹ 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.²

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.³ 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.⁴ The reconciling power of the gospel can also overflow into our human relationships.⁵

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.⁶

GOD-ENGAGED: As we become aware of God's love and mercy, we are moved to become God-engaged. His grace enables us to worship him in spirit and truth, to glorify him with trust and obedience, and to delight in imitating him.⁷



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



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.

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.⁸ This leads us to humble ourselves, turn from our self-absorbed lives and trust in Jesus as our Savior.⁹ 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.¹⁰

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.¹¹ Our old habits do not die easily,¹² but God promises to steadily transform us into his likeness.¹³

OTHER-AWARE: As God fills us and gives us the heart and mind of Christ,¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

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.¹⁶

A FREE GIFT: God offers all these blessings to each of us as a gift. We don't need to (and never could) clean ourselves up to earn them. We must simply confess our sin, admit our need, believe that Jesus' death and resurrection have saved us and then follow him as Lord of our lives.¹⁷



For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. - Eph. 2:8

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.¹⁸ As a result, they are not growing into his likeness or relating to others like true disciples of Christ.¹⁹

To avoid this trap, 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.²⁰

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.

If you've not yet put your trust in Jesus, you can do so right now by sincerely praying this prayer:

Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and I realize that my good deeds could never make up for my wrongs.

I need your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins, and I want to turn away from them.

I trust you now to be my Savior, and with your help I will follow you as my Lord and King, in the fellowship of your church.

If you say this prayer, it is essential that you find fellowship with other Christians in a church where the Bible is faithfully taught and applied.

⁸ Job 42:1-6 | Isa. 6:1-5 | Luke 5:8 • ⁹ Rom. 2:4 | Acts 16:29-34 • ¹⁰ 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:9-11 | Rom. 8:15 | 2 Cor. 5:17 | Eph. 2:10 • ¹¹ John 1:12-13 | Rom. 6:5-6 | Titus 2:11-12 | Gal. 5:22-23 | 2 Pet. 1:3-8 • ¹² Rom. 7:15; 21-25 • ¹³ 2 Cor. 3:18 | Phil. 1:6 • ¹⁴ 1 Cor. 2:16 | Gal. 2:20 • ¹⁵ Rom. 12:15-16 | 1 Pet. 3:8 • ¹⁶ John 13:34 | Col. 3:12-17 | Eph. 4:30-32 • ¹⁷ Rom. 6:23 | Eph. 2:8 | Acts 16:30-31 | Rom. 10:9-13 | 1 John 2:6 • ¹⁸ Gal. 5:13-15 | 1 John 2:9-11 • ¹⁹ John 13:34-35 • ²⁰ Eph. 1:6-23

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 inspire worship, encourage thankfulness for God's mercy, dispel doubts and fears, remind us of our adoption and identity in Christ, promote spiritual growth and motivate us to love others as Christ has loved us (see Paul's example in *Rom. 5:1-5* | *Eph. 1:1-14, 4:20-24, 5:1* | *Col. 1:11-14*).



**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**

Ways to bring the gospel

Here is a small sample of the promises that flow from the gospel, which 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 | 2Cor. 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*
- "You are God's workmanship, created in Christ to do good works, which God prepared for you long ago." *Eph. 2:10*
- "Never forget that you are part of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation?" *1Pet. 2:9*



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 5



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

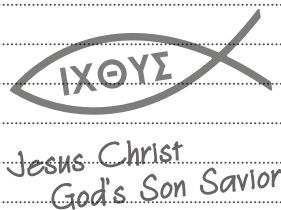
The Christian church has used acrostics for centuries to help Christians learn biblical truths. For example, the letters in the Greek word for fish came to stand for "Jesus Christ God's Son Savior."

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...



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



Practice the SOG Plan™



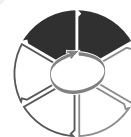
Self-Aware/Engaging: How am I feeling and acting? Ps. 42:5-6

- What am I feeling? Why?
- What do I feel like doing? What are the likely consequences?
- What can I do instead?



Other-Aware/Engaging: 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/Engaging: Where is God leading me? Prov. 3:5-8

- Who is God? What is he up to?
- Do I trust in him or in myself?
- What difference does the gospel make?
- How can I show that I love, trust and obey God above all things?



RW Can Start Anywhere on the Circle

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.

LESSON 6

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)

G **Glorify God:** Trust him absolutely.
Prov. 3:5-7 | Isa. 30:21 | Dan. 3:16-18 | Luke 4:8
Acts 5:27-29 | 1 Cor. 10:31

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

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

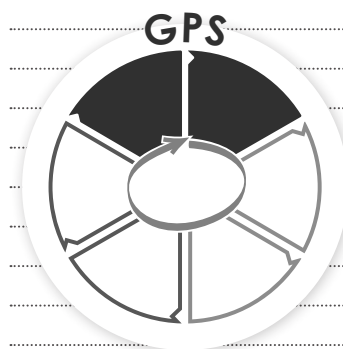
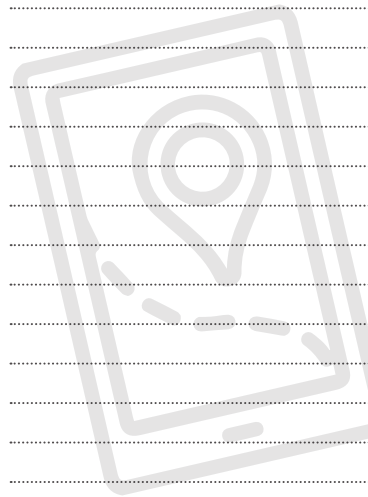


The Lord is
my shepherd; I shall
not want. He makes
me to lie down in
green pastures; He
leads me beside
the still waters. He
restores my soul;
He leads me
in the paths of
righteousness for His
name's sake.

Yea, though I walk
through the valley
of the shadow of
death, I will fear
no evil; for You are
with me; Your rod
and Your staff, they
comfort me.

You prepare a table
before me in the
presence of my
enemies; You anoint
my head with oil;
my cup runs over.

Surely goodness
and mercy shall
follow me all the
days of my life; and
I will dwell in the
house of the
Lord Forever.
- Psalm 23 (NKJV)



LESSON 7

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



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

R Recognize and name your emotions.

Ps. 42:5 | Matt. 14:30 | Phil. 4:6

E Evaluate their sources (thoughts, values, experiences, etc.).

Ps. 73:2-3 | Prov. 20:5 | James 1:13-15 | see rw360.org/cccef-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; 25:15 | John 12:27 | Col. 3:12-13



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

Your God-given neocortex is vital for impulse control. It's also where you store life lessons, sermons and memorized Scripture. Therefore, in emotionally charged situations it is essential that you 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.



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

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. This will give your mind six seconds to synchronize and could save you from hours or even months of relational damage repair. *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.



**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**



LESSON 8



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.



Ask God to enable you to put wind under the wings of every person you meet.



Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a great battle - Philo of Alexandria

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

SERVE every person you meet

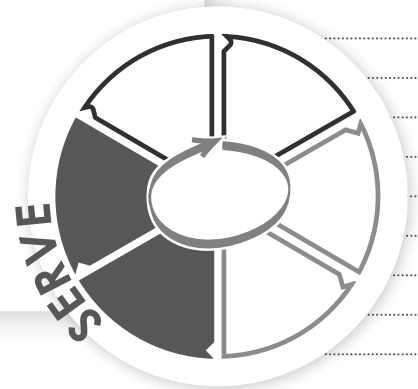
S Smile: Home, workplace, church, store, telephone.
Num. 6:24-26 | Prov. 12:25; 15:13 | Matt. 7:12 | see rw360.org/smile

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

R Reconcile: Be a peacemaker.
Matt. 5:9 | Rom. 12:18 | James 3:17-18 | 2 Cor. 5:18-20 | see rw360.org/peacemaking

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.
Isa. 40:28-31 | Acts 4:36 | 1 Thess. 5:11 | Heb. 10:24-25 | Prov. 11:25



Whoever
 refreshes others will
 be refreshed.
 - Prov 11:25



The complete study guide contains guidance on how to develop a personal growth plan, worksheets for implementing the RW acrostics in daily life, and information on alternative training methods, including our interactive online course, DVDs for small group study and live training, all of which contain several hours of additional information on how to learn, practice and share the principles of relational wisdom.