

**LOVE
HANDLES**
Get a Grip on Your Relationships
Jan 27 - Feb 17



Parkway Fellowship

Love Handles: Get a Grip on Your Relationships • When It's Out of My Control •
Philippians 2:3; Mark 10:42-45; • 01/27/2019

Main Point

The best way to get a grip on my relationships is to value the needs of others above my own.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What are some relationships where you like to have control? On a scale of 1 to 10, how hard would you say you work to maintain control in those relationships?

What are some relationships where you feel someone else has control? Are you okay with that, or do you struggle to have the upper hand?

In your opinion, what does it mean to have a good grip on your relationships?

In this week's message, we asked the question, "What does God say about getting a grip on my relationships without squeezing the life out of them?" In some relationships, we're the ones doing the "squeezing" and in others, we're the ones feeling "squeezed." Either way, as we examine Philippians 2:3 and Mark 10:42-45, we'll find out what God's Word says we should do to get a handle on our relationships.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Ask a volunteer to read Philippians 2:3.

In this passage, Paul urged believers in the church at Philippi to reflect on Christ's example in order to change their mind-set about their relationships.

From Paul's words in verse 3, what might have been a potential problem for the church at Philippi?

In this week's message, verse 3 was put this way: do nothing that primarily benefits you. Is that an overstatement or something God actually expect you to do? Explain.

The second point in this week's message was "die to self." What does that mean practically in terms of your relationships?

What are some worries or hangups people have with living out Philippians 2:3? How do you handle those concerns?

It's never easy to think of someone else's needs and desires ahead of your own, especially when you live in close proximity with those people. We feel like we have to look out for our own needs, or no one will. But if we truly believe God can and does care for our needs, one of the ways we show that belief is by putting others first. If you find it a challenge to take this approach to relationships, remember that everyone is dearly loved by God. You are not more valuable than anyone else in God's eyes. All are of equal, and great, value.

| Ask a volunteer to read Mark 10:42-45.

How were relationships commonly handled in Jesus' culture?

What did Jesus teach, instead, about how to handle relationships?

Jesus perfectly modeled the true standard of kingdom greatness. No one is greater than He is, yet He came to serve. Selfless ministry to others' needs marked His entire ministry. Not only did Jesus come to serve others, but also to give His life as a ransom for many. When we do something to serve someone else, no matter how small, we're living out the seemingly impossible task of Philippians 2:3, valuing others above ourselves.

In what ways are Jesus' words here counter-cultural both today and in Jesus' day? What does this say about the condition of the human heart and our natural assumptions about service?

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Jesus gave a strong command to all who seek to follow Him. He redefined greatness as servanthood. Here, His servant, Paul, pointed to Christ's love for others and His obedient service to God as examples for Christ

followers. From these passages, we can see that we are challenged to live with an attitude of humility as we relate to and serve others. With busy schedules and self-consumed lives, simply “finding the time” to serve can become difficult.

What’s one way you can humbly and selflessly serve other people this week?

Is it difficult for you to let someone else think of your needs above their own and serve you?

Why or why not?

What can you do to more consistently serve in the church and in the community? How can we as a group intentionally encourage one another with this effort?

Pray

Thank God for Christ’s ultimate example of service through giving His own life for our sake. Ask Him to help you reflect on the gospel daily, consider the needs of others, and serve them as a response to what He has done for you.

Commentary

| Mark 10:42-45

This passage is part of Jesus’ response to a question from James and John. Incredibly, James and John, brothers who were part of the disciples’ inner circle, came to Jesus with an open-ended request. They requested places of honor in Jesus’ coming kingdom. The place on a ruler’s right was the place of highest honor, and the place on his left was next in prestige. Both were positions of power. When the remaining 10 disciples learned of the exchange between Jesus and the brothers, the 10 became angry—perhaps because they thought James and John had taken advantage of their relationship with Jesus to grab prized places in the earthly kingdom they expected Him to establish. They well may have wanted the coveted positions.

In sharp contrast to Gentiles’ standard of greatness, Jesus’ followers were to adopt a different and higher standard. Jesus indicated that greatness has a place in God’s kingdom. The ambition to attain greatness can be healthy and laudable. His followers should want to be great—great servants! The Greek term rendered “servant” means “one who ministers or waits on” someone in the sense of waiting tables. It presents the idea of performing menial, personal ministry to others.

Jesus continued with a second surprising condition. Whoever wanted to rank first in God’s kingdom had to be a slave to others. A master owned a bondsman outright, and the slave had only the rights the owner granted.

| Philippians 2:3

Paul expressed the measurement of true humility both negatively and positively. Negatively, the Philippians were to avoid “selfish ambition” and “vain conceit.” Selfish ambition motivated the preachers Paul described in 1:17. Perhaps that was fresh in his mind. It led him to think about conceit, a seeking of glory which is, in reality, empty because it focuses on the individual rather than on the Lord. The positive side corrects improper attitudes. They were to act in humility.

Paul further described humility in 2:3 and 2:5–11. He urged the Philippians literally to “count others as excelling over themselves.” This also relates to the mind and values. The word “excelling” (“better,” NIV) occurs in 3:8, where the pursuit of Christ excels anything Paul had before he engaged in it. The word “consider” occurs in the hymn to Christ (2:6), as does the word for “humbled” (2:8). Since the model of Christ loomed in Paul’s mind, Christ’s actions provided the necessary motivation. Christ’s humility is the standard for evaluating the worth of others and actions toward them. This does not mean that personal concerns should be overlooked. Elsewhere Paul clearly stated that Christians must take care of their own affairs as an act of love for the congregation (1 Thess 4:9–12). The next verse implies the same truth. Humility begins with a realistic appraisal of oneself and others as being in the image of God.