



Raising Your R.Q.

Discussion Guide



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Raising Your RQ: Introduction

Relationships drive us. They either drive us **crazy** or they drive us to a **better life**. More than any other driving factor, our relationships can be our primary source of frustration, joy, headache, heartache, peace, comfort and everything in between! We've all been on both sides of the relationship fence! Regardless of where you are on the relationship spectrum, there are key principles that, if applied to your life, have the potential to change the trajectory of your current and future relationships. Consequently, by changing your relationships, you change your future and those around you!

Most of us are familiar with the term IQ (Intelligence Quotient). Many of us have also heard of the recent term EQ (Emotional Quotient). However, there has been little information available about your RQ (Relationship Quotient)...Until now!

Raising Your RQ is a group discussion guide that will help you navigate the turbulent waters of relationships and help steer you on to relationship success. The principles contained in this booklet come in the form of conversation starters and tools to help you and your group journey through this dynamic 6-week study. Our hope is that you will be able to **Raise your RQ** and the RQ of those around you

To raise your RQ, you must...

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To Raise your RQ, you must...

1: Have Crucial Conversations

1Cor 1:1-19

It's the elephant in the room. Everyone knows it. No one wants to address it. It's the conversation that you don't **want** to have but you **need** to have. Conversations like these are the crux of healthy relationships. Having them correctly can add amazing amounts of **life** to your relationship; however, handled incorrectly they can bring death to a relationship and **hurt** for a lifetime.

What if there was a way for you to have a healthy **Crucial Conversation**? Thankfully, there is!

Here's the **groundwork for healthy communication when...**

- ▶ **The stakes are high...**
- ▶ **Opinions vary...**
- ▶ **Emotions are high...**

In helping us navigate through this, we'll look at how the Apostle Paul had a **Crucial Conversation** with the church in Corinth.

Setting

1Corinthians is a letter of correction from Paul to the member of the church in Corinth. The letter fits the definition of a Crucial Conversation.

1. **Stakes are high:** The Corinthians are on the verge of rejecting The Cross as the center of Christian life. The stakes are very high indeed.
2. **Opinions vary:** Paul and the Corinthians among themselves have no agreement regarding what it means to be spiritual.
3. **Emotions are high:** The Corinthians are full of strife (**1Cor 3:3-4**) and Paul is confrontational (**1Cor 4:18-21**).

Read this week's passage aloud, [1Corinthians 1:1-19](#).

The key to having a healthy, productive Crucial Conversation is to follow the **Safety, Facts, Story, Story** model. Here's how it looks.

Practical Application: 4 Steps

Step 1: SAFETY

As you approach someone (friend, neighbor, boss, spouse, child, etc.) with a potentially volatile situation, it is vitally important that you create safety in the conversation. When a person feels safe, they are reassured what you are NOT saying (i.e. they are NOT in trouble, they are NOT fired, they are NOT off the team).

For instance, if you are going to have a **Crucial Conversation** with a friend about the bad decisions she has made recently, you could create safety by reassuring her that you love her, you will always be her friend, and anything that you say you are saying out of love.

Another example of creating safety is when a boss has to give an employee some constructive criticism. The boss can force the subject by ramming the performance review down the throat of the employee – which usually results in relational devastation. Or, the boss can create safety by reassuring the person up front how much he appreciates the employee's hard work, timeliness, and positive attitude. The boss can make it clear the employee is NOT getting fired and is NOT in trouble, that there are some things that might help improve effectiveness in a particular area. See the difference?

- What are some other examples (from your experience) of people doing a good job of creating safety?

Notice how the Apostle Paul created safety in his introduction to the Corinthian church. Remember, that Paul wrote First Corinthians primarily as a letter of constructive criticism for a church that was extremely dysfunctional.

- What are some ways Paul created safety (**1Cor 1:1-9**)?

Step 2: FACTS

Once you have created safety, it is important to keep your perceived agendas out of the conversation. At this point, stick with the FACTS. This can be tricky, but if demonstrated properly, can be extraordinarily effective.

For instance, in having a difficult conversation with a friend who has dropped the ball several times on their commitments, state the facts with them:

“Last week, you said that you would do _____, and you didn’t.”

“Today, after you promised to bring me the _____, you didn’t.”

“When I came up to you in the hallway, you turned and walked away.”

These are all facts. You can’t argue with the facts. This is great in principle; however, it is difficult to keep your cool when emotions and stakes are high and opinions vary, because in the heat of the moment, we have a tendency to superimpose our agenda onto the facts. It might look something like this:

“Last week, you were sooo self-absorbed with _____ you didn’t even care about me and forgot to do what you promised you would do.”

“Today, after you promised to bring me _____, you purposefully ‘forgot’ and you meant to sabotage my day.”

“When I came up to you in the hallway, you saw me coming and you went out of your way to snub me! Why don’t you want be around me?”

See the difference? You can’t really know if the other person is “self-absorbed” and “didn’t care.” It’s not fair to assume that your friend “purposefully forgot” and meant to “sabotage” your day. There’s no way you could have known that your friend actually “saw” you coming down the hallway and “snubbed” you. It might be that all three of these examples were 100% accurate; however, there is no way to be certain. At this point, you must simply state the FACTS, not impose your motive onto them.

The Apostle Paul did a masterful job of this in his letter to the Corinthian church.

- Read **1 Corinthians 1:11** and discuss how Paul simply told the **FACTS** in his **Crucial Conversation**.
- What can we learn from this?

Step 3: STORY (my side)

("The story I tell myself is...")

After you have created **safety** and have simply stated the **facts**, it's now time to tell your side of the story, based on the facts. Your story is your interpretation of the facts. It is your theory why, how and what is going on. It could be accurate or it could be completely far fetched from reality. Regardless, you have a story that you have told yourself based on the facts leading up to this conversation.

While in a **Crucial Conversation**, you simply lead into this section by saying something like, "The story I tell myself about this situation is..." That's all. This is how it looks fleshed out...

Jane and Sarah are acquaintances. They attend worship services together. Lately, Jane notices that Sarah seems extremely distant and cold to her. At first, Jane is reluctant to say anything. Now, she knows that she has to say SOMETHING because it is starting to keep her up at night and she is having "imaginative conversations / arguments" with Sarah in her head while she is trying to go to bed (we've all had those conversations)!

Jane does recognize that there might be more to the story so she wisely follows the Crucial Conversations outline.

The next time Jane sees Sarah in the church lobby, she decides to initiate the conversation. First, Jane creates **safety** by telling Sarah, "Hey girl! You look great today. I've really missed you lately. I'm sure that you are really busy with your extra job and your kids. I don't know how you do it!"

Hopefully, this has created some safety for Sarah. Depending on how Sarah responds, Jane might inject more safety statements

Next, Jane sticks to the **facts** (even though everything inside of her wants to say, “You always snub me in the hallway!”), she says, “I’ve noticed that the last couple of Sunday’s, when I walk up to your group, you leave immediately. The **story that I told myself** was that you, for some reason, were upset with me. Is everything okay between us?”

Whew. That wasn’t that bad. She created safety. She stuck to the facts and she told her side of the story.

- This conversation between Jane and Sarah could have gone really badly. As a group, act out some funny ways this story could have turned out by not following the Crucial Conversations model.
- Paul beautifully follows the Crucial Conversations progression in **1Corinthians 1:12-13**. Read this passage and talk about how Paul, in essence, launched into this conversation after building **safety** and stating **facts**, by stating his side of the **story**.
 - ▶ What can we learn from this?
 - ▶ What techniques did Paul use?

Step 4: STORY (other side)

[“What is your story?”]

The final point in helping build the groundwork for great conversions is to invite the person to tell their version of the story. The key point here is **understanding**. When you understand where the other person is coming from, it could change the entire conversation. In fact, it could change the entire relationship!

Instead of attacking, strive to understand. Instead of defending yourself, strive to hear the other person’s defense. Instead of jumping to irrational conclusions, learn to listen to the person’s story. This could be the difference in marriages staying together. This could be the key factor in preventing children from running away from home. This could save your company years of HR headaches.

This is what Paul was doing in his letter. The entire purpose of First Corinthians was to prepare the Corinthian church to tell their story in person. He wanted to give them time to process what he had just told them, and then for them to share their story upon his arrival. It

is a brilliant example of how we can take practical steps in raising our RQ through having Crucial Conversation!

- Why do you think Paul did this?
- What was his motivation for doing this?
- What should OUR motivation be?
- What are areas of improvement that you can focus on this week to improve your ability to have a Crucial Conversation?
- What would your marriage / friendship look like if you consistently applied this conversational model?

Further Study

- Among the many problems in the Corinthian church, Paul chose to first deal with relationship issues. Why [**John 17:11** and **John 17:21-23**]?
- Compare **1Corinthians 1:9-10** with **1Corinthians 15:58**. Problems arise when we do not clearly understand our RELATIONSHIP with our Lord Jesus Christ. In what way does this principle affect our Crucial Conversations?
- Consider how damaging it can be to allow convictions to turn into contention. What can you do to be sure your convictions don't become contentious [**Eph 4:1-7**]?

To Raise your RQ, you must...

2: Always Be Motivated by Love

1Cor 13

mo · tive [moh-tiv] noun – the reason for doing something, esp. one that is hidden or not obvious

Motive is unseen. It can be a silent killer or a source of servanthood. It is inescapable from our actions yet we often don't even realize it.

Have you ever taken the time to actually think about WHY you do what you do? What is the root cause of a certain friendship? Is it to get ahead? Is it to get a promotion or to be noticed? Is it to maneuver? Is it to get back at someone? Is it to appease a parent or fulfill an obligation? Is it to relationally medicate your inner depression?

To successfully raise your RQ, you must get to the root of your motivations. Why? Because in relationships, our inner motivations fuel our actions (and reactions), which then determine our relationship outcomes.

- What are typical “inner motivations” that seem to drive our relationships?
- Consider each of those motivations. What would be the natural “actions and reactions” that we might display for each one?
- After we realize our “inner motivation” and feel our “actions and reactions,” what is the likely “relationship outcome” that we will experience?
- Discuss a time when you have been the recipient of improper relational motivations. How did that make you feel?

Context:

The Corinthian church fell into the trap of being motivated by everything BUT genuine servanthood and love. Because their inner

motivations were skewed, their actions produced a multitude of flawed relationships. The outcome of this was a congregation full of relational misfits who were characterized by divisions, fights, suing, immorality and awful amounts of pride.

Paul wrote this letter (1 Corinthians) to correct these erroneous behaviors and to give them a better way. After introducing the Crucial Conversation (see Raising Your RQ part 1), Paul addressed the root cause of their behavior – their motivations.

Read this week's passage aloud, [1 Corinthians 13](#).

Why are weddings filled with [1 Corinthians 13](#) while so few marriages are? Why do we hang these verses in our office hallways and still lie, steal, cheat and cover-up? Here's why. We have a tendency to KNOW the truths we find in [1 Corinthians 13](#), but we find it difficult to APPLY them to our lives – especially in our relationships.

There is hope! By changing our motivation, we can change our actions. If we change our actions, we can then get the relationship results that will ultimately change the trajectory of our lives.

Here's how you get there in THREE steps:

1. In your various relationships, examine your current motivations. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in the process. When He reveals an inner motivation that might not be of genuine biblical origin, stop, repent and ask Him to fill you with the proper motivation.
2. Once you have done the hard work of self-examination, it's time to fill your heart with the proper motivation – biblical love as seen in [1 Corinthians 13](#).

- Write down what the following mean to you...

“Love thinks no evil”
“Love does not rejoice in iniquity”
“Love rejoices in the truth”
“Love bears all things”
“Love believes all things”
“Love hopes all things”
“Love endures all things”
“Love never fails”

3. Grow Up. Yes, that is harsh, but that is what Paul told the Corinthian church right after he gave them this famous “love” passage.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. (1Cor 13:11)

It is interesting that immediately after his lengthy discourse on love, he talked about the difference between being a child and an adult. He does this to drive home the point that in to Raise Our RQ, we need to grow up and stop acting like children!

In the midst of talking about love, the Apostle Paul commands us to “put away childish things.” In essence, God is telling us that we need to approach our relationships [all relationships] with a grown-up mentality. Here’s a list that explains the difference between means children vs. adults...

Children	Adults
Selfish	Giving
Makes Ultimatums	Self Sacrificing
The Grass is Greener over There	The Grass is Green Where I Water It
I Want what They Have	I'm Content with What I Have
My Needs are First	Others' Needs are First
Unforgiving, Hold Grudges	Abound in Forgiveness Like Christ
Quits and Moves On	Sticks It Out
Finds Fault in Smallest Detail	Loves the PERSON for Who They Are
Superficial	Deep
Focuses On Happiness	Focuses On Holiness

Let's make a commitment to become the men and women that God has called us to be. Grow up. Put away childish things. Love like you mean it.

- Write a prayer to God to help you grow up and become genuinely motivated by love.

Further Study

- Consider how loving someone deeply gives you strength. When you love Christ deeply, He becomes your strength [**Psa 18:1**]. In what ways can you use that strength in your relationships?
- Consider how safe you feel when you know someone loves you. When you come to truly understand how deeply Christ loves you, His love will give you courage [**1John 4:18**]. In what ways can you use that courage to maintain loving relationships?
- When is it loving to help others [**Gal 6:2**] and when is it loving to allow them to carry their own load [**Gal 6:5**]? For an in-depth study of this topic, read "Boundaries," by Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend.

To Raise your RQ, you must...

3:Cultivate a Forgiving Spirit

2Cor 2:1-11

The noose is around your neck. Chains are around your wrists and feet. Tape is over your mouth. You are bound, trapped, and suffocating. The harder you try to escape, the further entangled you become. This is the tragic result of what happens to someone who cannot forgive. Un-forgiveness will ruin your life – spiritually, physically, emotionally and financially. It is an unwelcome enemy that we all-too-often embrace like a friend.

Although we recognize the FACTS that we SHOULD forgive, our stubborn sin-nature musters up it's own courage preventing us from making the giant leap into the uncharted waters of cultivating a forgiving spirit.

Setting

Paul explained that he had earlier sent a letter and delayed his visit to give them an opportunity to address their issues before he visited. He wanted an opportunity to praise them in person. (**2Cor 1:23-24**). He tells of his motives for his corrective letter, (**2Cor 2:1-4**). Just as he was seeking to restore their relationship with Christ and himself, he wanted them to seek to restore the person they had corrected, (**2Cor 2:5-11**).



Key Idea:

*You are MOST like Christ
when you forgive.*

Using **2Corinthians 2:1-11** and the following table, analyze what is at stake with forgiveness.

	Benefits of Forgiveness	Results of Not Forgiving Someone
spiritual		
relational		
physical		
emotional		
other		

We should forgive others so that Satan does not use our un-forgiveness to take advantage of us. [2Cor 2:11] How, do you think, Satan can “take advantage of us” in the realm of un-forgiveness?

Practical Application

- If you are struggling with cultivating a forgiving spirit, what can you do to move in the right direction?
- Cultivating a forgiving spirit doesn’t happen in a day. It happens DAILY. With this in mind, what can you do everyday to make this “forgiving spirit” become a lifestyle?
- As you have been doing this study and reading these passages, assuredly God has brought people and situations to your mind. Be sensitive to what the Spirit of God is saying to you. Who the Lord is prompting you to forgive? What action steps are you going to do this week to apply what the Lord is prompting you do do?

Further Study

- Forgiveness is difficult because you have to let go of something you believe someone “owes” you. What is the power of forgiveness (**Col 2:14** and **Col 3:13**)?
- As a personal exercise, consider the things for which God forgave you. Why did He forgive you (**Eph 4:32**)?
- What is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation (Mat 3:8)?
- Jesus said in **Mark 11:25-26** “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” How does this produce an urgency to your forgiveness?
- The Apostle Paul told the Ephesian church to “not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” (**Eph 4:30-32**). In what way can having an unforgiving spirit “grieve the Holy Spirit”?

“And Jesus answered and said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” So he said, “Teacher, say it.” “There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?” Simon answered and said, “I suppose the one whom he forgave more.” And He said to him, “You have rightly judged.” (Luke 7:40-43)

This example that Jesus gives is indicative of His forgiving nature. What does this mean to you? Is this kind of forgiveness fair?

To Raise your RQ, you must...

4:See Beyond Our Differences

Gal 3:26-29

Why is it that 11:00 a.m. on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in America? Why are we so prone to seeing fault in others because of cosmetic differences and blind to the glaring faults in our own lives? How can we say we love God with ALL of our hearts when we have a tendency to judge and treat people differently based on either how they look, what their social status is, what church background they have and where they live?

These are similar to the issues that the church in Galatia struggled with 2000 years ago.

To address these issues, the Apostle Paul pointed out the ways that we are all **EQUAL**. It's a great model for RAISING OUR RQ!

● We all have the SAME SPECIAL CREATION

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them...³¹ Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. (Gen 1:27, 31)

● We all have the SAME SIN

For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Rom 3:23)

● We all have the SAME SAVIOR

Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.' (John 14:6)

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

● We all have the SAME SALVATION

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Eph 2:8-9)

● We all have the SAME SPIRIT

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. (1Cor 12:4-6)

● We all have the SAME STATUS

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:26-29)

These are just a FEW of the MAJOR areas where all of humanity is the SAME. With that in mind, if we are the SAME in our core identity as children of God, why is it that we have a tendency to become so fickle in our human relationships?

Setting

Paul's letter to the Galatian church was one of his most direct letters. As you read it, you can almost sense Paul's righteous indignation as he pens these words. It is interesting to note that Paul often had someone (i.e. a scribe) write for him as he audibly spoke the letter's content. This was because Paul's eyesight was extremely impaired. To the Galatian people, probably out of anger, Paul penned the letter himself. ("see with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!" [Gal 6:11](#)) This was Paul's way of saying that this topic was of the utmost importance and they (and we) should listen to what God has to say!

Paul was frustrated that some agitators had come into the church at Galatia. They wanted to focus on WORKS instead of God's GRACE through faith in Christ. Although they **knew** about God's free gift of salvation, they were trying to **please God through their works!** Their focus was on the **external** instead of the **internal**, on appearances instead of heart. The Galatian church struggled with people puffing themselves up because they were Jews. They looked down on Gentiles as inferior. Men thought they were better than

women. Free men thought they were superior to those in slavery. Consider how Paul reprimanded that line of thinking.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:26-29)

This passage does not deny that God has designed for racial, social, and sexual distinctions among Christians, but it affirms that those do not imply spiritual inequality before God. Nor is this spiritual equality incompatible with the God-ordained roles of headship and submission in the church, society, and at home. Jesus Christ, though fully equal with the Father, assumed a submissive role during His incarnation ([Php 2:5-8](#)).

Seeing Beyond Our Differences: [Gal 3:28](#)

- **Racial and Religious:** There is neither Jew nor Greek.

Since the division between Jews and Greeks had created generations of walls between the two, they hated one another. Yet, once we become believers and are “baptized into Christ and put on Christ” our perspective must change. We must see as God sees. When we see as God sees, we will do as God says! What are modern day expressions of overcoming the challenges of seeing beyond our racial and religious (denominational) differences?

- **Social and Economic:** There is neither slave nor free.

Be honest with yourself. Do you struggle with labeling people based on their social status? Do you tend to favor those who are similar to you ([Jas 2](#))? What can you do today to reverse this thinking and attitude?

- **Physical and Gender:** There is neither male nor female.

Obviously God designed males and females differently. We each have equally important (yet different) roles and functions. One is

not more important than the other, just different. How can we add value to each other in this capacity?

A.W. Tozer: "Our lofty idealism would argue that all Christians should be perfect, but blunt realism forces us to admit that perfection is rare even among the saints. The part of wisdom is to accept our Christian brothers and sisters for what they are rather than for what they should be. ...the plain fact is that ...even the true Christian is yet a long way from being like Christ in character and life...it is fitting that we recognize it and call upon God for charity to put up with one another."

Italian Proverb: "He that will have none but a perfect brother must resign himself to remain brother-less."

Further Study

- We have no choice regarding entrance into a physical family. We do have a choice regarding our spiritual family (**John 1:12-13**). Describe your spiritual birth process. What characteristics do you share with your spiritual family? In what ways can remembering those characteristics help you see beyond your differences?
- Regarding importance and value, how do you compare yourself to others (**Rom 10:12**)?
- At what point do differences become a hindrance to relationships (**Rom 16:17**)? Have you ever been surprised to find that you agree with someone with whom you previously disagreed? Do you think you can learn from someone even if you have disagreements?
- What are your privileges and obligations as an heir?
 - ▶ **Rom 8:14-18**
 - ▶ **Eph 3:6**
 - ▶ **Titus 3:7**
 - ▶ **1John 3:1-3**

To Raise your RQ, you must...

5: Think of Others

Php 2:1-8

Selfishness. Unfortunately, this word has wrecked homes, families, churches and organizations faster than most other factors combined. Sadly, even among Christians, we are selfish. We have bought into the lie that it's all about us.

Selflessness; Being selfless is intentionally placing the needs of others above your own.

Think of 9/11. We still get emotional when we see the images of courage and selflessness. Total strangers were bound together for a common purpose larger than themselves. These men and women selflessly gave their lives for their fellow man.

How and why is this possible?

Setting

The Apostle Paul was able to live the heroic life of extreme selflessness day in and day out. Regardless of how he “felt,” he put others first. Regardless of what circumstances he was in, he put others first. Regardless of what danger it might put him in, he put others first. **How** did he put others first? **Why** did he put others first?

Read [Philippians 2:1-11](#).

It is interesting to note that the Apostle Paul wrote this letter of encouragement to the Philippian Church from a Roman jail cell! Many scholars believe that while writing this letter, Paul was chained to a Roman soldier. Yet the constant theme in Philippians is JOY! The word “rejoice” or its equivalent occurs 16 times in this short letter!

- If you were wrongfully placed in jail for your Christianity, and you could speak to those closest to you, what would you say? What would you request? What would your attitude be?

How Was Paul Able to Think of Others First?

He remembered his blessings in Christ (**Php 2:1**):

- Encouragement from being united with Christ
- Comfort from His love
- Fellowship with the Spirit
- Experiencing Christ's tenderness and compassion

How can **Philippians 2:3** help you see how to place the following people's needs above your own?

- Your spouse
- Your children (physical and spiritual)
- Other members of your family
- Your friends
- Your co-workers
- Your enemies

Why Was Paul Able to Think of Others First?

When Christ saves you, He doesn't simply change your eternal address. He gives you a new heart – a new identity. He gives you HIS identity! Your life is not rehabilitated. It is revolutionized! You do not merely turn over a new leaf. You are transformed into a new creation!

When Paul says in **Philippians 2:5** that we should "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" he is saying that God expects us to have the mind of Christ on this earth in our generation!

- Walk slowly through **Philippians 2:5-11** looking for key truths. Pray, asking God to help you apply these truths to your life this week.
- Write a one-sentence summary of our call to action based on **1John 3:16-20**.

Further Study

- Read the parable about choosing the lowly place (**Luke 14:7-8**). What are some ways you could apply this to your own life?
- What is the difference between simply pleasing others and pleasing them for their good (**Rom 15:1-3**)? Are there times when “pleasing” them may not be for their good?
- In what ways can kindness and patience keep the “unity of the Spirit” (**Eph 4:1-3**)?
- Though there is great liberty in Christ, what must we consider before exercising that liberty (**1Cor 9:19-23**)?
- What behaviors could others see in your life that would demonstrate that you live together with Christ (**1The 5:9-11**)?
- Think of examples of what it looks like to “in honor give preference to another” (**Rom 12:10-12**).

To Raise your RQ, you must...

6: Build Others Up

1The 5:11-22

*“Sticks and stones may break my bones
but words will never hurt me!”*

Yeah right!

Stop for a minute to remember a time when someone’s words hurt you. Who was speaking? What did they say? How did they say it? What feelings erupted inside of you after they said it? Did you explode? Did you implode? Did you fight back or did you run away?

Whew. That was hard. Why did we have you do this?
We want you to vividly recall the power of words.

Let’s now explore the power of positive words. Stop for a minute to remember a time when someone’s words encouraged or strengthened you. What was the situation? Did someone catch you doing something good and they praised you for it? Was it the last words of a loved one before they passed away? Who was speaking? What did they say? How did they say it? What feelings welled up inside of you after they said it?

Do you see the difference? That’s why the Bible paints the picture this way...

Death and life are in the power of the tongue... (Pro 18:21)

Setting

God established the church in Thessalonica in the short time that Paul and Silas were there [Acts 17:1-10]. Upon hearing Paul’s words, the unbelieving Jews caused an uproar and assaulted Paul’s host, Jason. They called the Christians those that “turned the world

upside down.” Concerned for their safety, the believers insisted that Paul and Silas leave.

The Thessalonians were new believers with much to learn. Paul sent Timothy to them to strengthen and establish them. Paul wrote to encourage them and remove their confusion on some issues such as Christ’s return. He instructed them in how to behave keeping that reality in mind.

Read aloud, 1Thessalonians 5:11-22.

Practical Application

In **1Thessalonians 5**, Paul, gives the church members and leaders some short but sweet directives. If they followed these instructions, they would most assuredly RAISE Their RQ!

- ▶ Comfort each other (1The 5:11)
 - ▶ Edify one another (1The 5:11)
 - ▶ Recognize those who labor among you (1The 5:12)
 - ▶ Be at peace among yourselves (1The 5:13)
 - ▶ Warn those who are unruly (1The 5:14)
 - ▶ Comfort the fainthearted (1The 5:14)
 - ▶ Uphold the weak (1The 5:14)
 - ▶ Be patient with all (1The 5:14)
 - ▶ See that no one renders evil for evil (1The 5:15)
 - ▶ Always pursue what is good (1The 5:15)
 - ▶ Rejoice always (1The 5:16)
 - ▶ Pray without ceasing (1The 5:17)
 - ▶ In everything give thanks (1The 5:18)
 - ▶ Do not quench the Spirit (1The 5:19)
 - ▶ Do not despise prophecies (1The 5:20)
 - ▶ Test all things (1The 5:21)
 - ▶ Hold fast what is good (1The 5:21)
 - ▶ Abstain from every form of evil (1The 5:22)
- What are some common themes that emerge from these directives? What is God calling YOU to do, be, or become after reading these?

- What stands out to you as you look at both **1Thessalonians 5:11-22** and **Ephesians 4:29**?
 - ▶ What is convicting?
 - ▶ What is encouraging?
 - ▶ What are some practical steps God is leading you towards to become a better follower of Christ and to Raise Your RQ?

Further Study

- When your personal circumstances change, how does that affect your prayer life, attitude, and treatment of others?
 - ▶ **Psa 92:1**
 - ▶ **Luke 17:11-18**
 - ▶ **Heb 13:15**

- In what ways can an over-focus on gathering knowledge hinder your spiritual development and the way you treat others (**1Tim 1:4**)?

- When suffering comes, how can you help yourself and others place it in the proper context (**1Pet 5:6-11**)?



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