

## THE BIG IDEA: Alignment before assignment.

### The Take-Off

Our culture is obsessed with celebrity relationships and that obsession has led to 2 things: a new term and a new fad. The term is “Ship” as in relationSHIP, but it’s not a noun, it’s a verb.

If I “ship” you and another person, what I’m saying is that I can definitely see you and that person eventually having a relationship.

Not ship as in UPS, but ship as in The Bachelor.

The second thing that our celebrity relationship obsession has led to is the fad of ship names. It’s basically a mashup of the people’s names.

Maybe you recall “Billary” as in Bill and Hillary Clinton?

Some of the more famous celeb names have been Brangelina, Bennifer, TomKat, Jelena, Zanessa, and Taylor Squared. It got me thinking about ship names here at The Gathering. Wendy and I could be Pendy. We could have Brichard and Jennifil. Cody and Taylor Teague could be Tody. Jay and Kelley Phillips would be Jelley. I could go on and on but we don’t have time.

Shipping has become an art form, not just for those IN the relationship but for those INTERESTED in the relationship!

Why are we so taken with relationships? Because we all have them.

Maybe not marriage or dating. Maybe it’s a work relationship, or a friendship.

Relationships are something that we all have in common because all of us were created as relational beings.

Even Tom Hanks had Wilson. You probably talk out loud at times when you’re alone. We NEED to relate.

Some of us will fight against this more than others because some of us are more private than others, but the data is irrefutable when it comes to our need for relationships and human touch.

**\*\*Harvard Study of 700 men for 80 years\*\*** Interesting findings! Among them:

- The #1 thing you can do if you want to age well is avoid smoking
- Relationships were a MAJOR factor in health and well-being
- The people in the strongest relationships were protected against chronic disease, mental illness and memory decline (not perfect relationships, just ones the men could count on)
- “Over and over in these 75 years,” Dr. Waldinger said, “our study has shown that the people who fared the best were the people who leaned into relationships with family, with friends and with community.”

The question isn’t whether or not we NEED relationships; it’s whether or not we’ll SUCCEED in relationships

25 years ago a movie came out that perfectly sums up what so many of us face when it comes to relationships.

“Groundhog Day” starred Bill Murray is a news anchor stuck in Pennsylvania living Feb. 2 over and over again

Without giving too much away, at first he feels trapped and fights against it while doing the same things

Finally, he learns to make different choices and when he does, he gets different results.

Over the next 4 weeks, we want to lean into relationships and see what God has to say about them and learn how to navigate the tricky waters of relationships in a way that won’t leave us shipwrecked.

This morning we’re going to focus on a foundational truth that make or break our relationships.

It’s found in Amos - a small 9-chapter book that’s about 3/4 of the way through your Bible.

## 1. The power of alignment

- In **Amos 3:3**, we find a powerful statement about relationships: “Do two walk together unless have agreed to do so?”
- This is not a micro level detailed look at every aspect of relationships - we’ll do a lot of that over the next few weeks. Today, I want to show you the big picture of why we struggle in our relationships
- We don’t agree. We’re busy doing relationship things but we aren’t aligned around the same things.
- The phrase that the Holy Spirit spoke to me months ago for this series was **alignment before assignment**.
- Can 2 walk (assignment - activity) unless they agree (alignment - unity)?
- The implied answer is no, or at least, why would you want to?
- [Tug of war]
- What tug of war teaches us is that there can be a lot of activity and yet no winner
  - **Matt. 7:21-23** / They DID a lot for Jesus, but weren’t KNOWN a lot by Jesus
  - **Matt. 12:30** / Either we’re WITH Jesus or we’re AGAINST Jesus (rejecting Jesus is the sin of v. 31)

- In your relationships, you'll get nowhere if you can't agree on somewhere
- i. Do you know what we learn from tug of war?
- j. **Activity without unity isn't victory**
- k. In every relationship, there must be alignment before assignment
- l. It's true physically. Ever tried to do anything when your back was thrown out?
- m. It's true spiritually. We can be so busy for God (even doing good things) that we no longer even need God.
- n. It's true relationally. Two spouses busy living separate lives. Kids leave and they're left with a stranger.
- o. It's true corporately. Tons of programs all pulling in different directions. Lots of well-meaning activity, but nobody ever really wins and nobody ever really knows each other.

## 2. Stop "+1"-ing God

- a. So, what do we do to align - or realign - our relationships?
- b. We start with the most important relationship and come into agreement there.
- c. **John 15:1-5** / Many of our relationships fail because we +1 Jesus in them
- d. He is invited as a guest if WE deem it a situation in which we want or need him
- e. On the good days, we don't allow him to lead our relationships
- f. But on the bad days - divorce, loss of friend, job problems - we ask to bring him along.
- g. We +1 God.

### The Landing

Here's why that's so dangerous: If we treat our relationship with Jesus as optional, we'll never have what we need to make all our other relationships successful

What happens, though, when we come into agreement with Jesus about the truth of **John 15:5**?

When we live as if we literally can do nothing without him?

Time with him becomes a priority. Time with his family becomes a priority. Time with people he loves becomes a priority.

What we receive from time connected to the vine flows out from us to others around us.

When we all do that together, moving the flag in tug of war becomes a whole lot easier, and it all starts with alignment before assignment.

Let's pray.