

Study Guide: 9-14-25 Adjustments - Relational Expectations

Overview

This message explores God's desire for intimate relationship with us, emphasizing the need to adjust unrealistic expectations. It draws from John 14:6, portraying Jesus as "the way, the truth, and the life." Unrealistic expectations (e.g., constant ease or feelings) lead to disappointment and separation, while realistic ones build trust in God's character. Key themes: Covering of sin, knowing God vs. mere works, and shifting from control to trust. Biblical examples include the Prodigal Son, Parable of the Sower, Woman in Adultery, and Samuel vs. Eli.

Key Concepts

- **God's Desire for Relationship:** From Genesis (covering Adam and Eve) to the Prodigal Son (Luke 15), God covers our sin through Jesus' blood for atonement and purity (Hebrews 9:22). This is the foundation of relationship, not based on our merit.
- **Unrealistic Expectations:** Life won't be perfect post-salvation; ups and downs persist. Worship proclaims God's goodness despite feelings. Matthew 7:21-23 warns against outward works without inward knowing ("I never knew you" – Greek: *anomia*, ignorance or violation of law).
- **Good vs. Bad Expectations:**
 - **Good:** Trust God's faithful, loving, present character (not circumstance-dependent).
 - **Bad:** Demand ease, explanations, or timing on our terms (puts God "in a box," like 1st-century Jews missing the Messiah).
 - **Difference:** Control (bad) vs. Trust (good). Bad expectations act like weeds in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-9), choking God's work. Trials can draw us closer, producing fruit (100-, 60-, or 30-fold).
- **Realigning Expectations (John 14:5-7):** Know Jesus to know the Father. Adjust from our ways/truth/life to His.

Core Adjustments

Based on John 14:6, adjust expectations from control to trust by understanding:

1. **The Way** (Practicing Jesus' Disciplines):
 - **Dependence:** Prayer as life source (John 5:19; Colossians 3:17; John 15:5). Root words/works in God.
 - **Obedience:** Submit to God's plan over comfort (Garden of Gethsemane; Hebrews 12:2). Endure trials with joy in restoration.
 - **Intimacy:** Close alignment with the Father (John 5:19). Daily encounters, not just Sundays. Reflect what you see in God.
 - **Service:** Flows from intimacy; know God's ways to act effectively.
 - **Love:** Show mercy, not judgment (Woman in Adultery, John 8:9-11). Born from relationship, not religion.
2. **The Truth** (Build on God's Word – John 1:1):
 - Truth is eternal, not subjective or societal. Accept all Scripture or reject God (not a "buffet").
 - Benefits of Alignment:
 - Builds trust over disappointment.

- Shifts from transaction to relationship.
 - Strength in trials (God with us in suffering).
 - Aligns timing with His (patience forms character).
 - Transforms desires (holiness, love, service).
 - Grounds in God's unchanging nature.
 - Submit to God's truth for deeper relationship.
3. **The Life** (Spiritual Fulfillment in Jesus):
- Not physical, but Spirit-guided contentment (Word alive, guidance in all situations).
 - Example: Eli (knew way/truth but lacked life) vs. Samuel (1 Samuel 2:26; 3:7). Samuel grew in favor but didn't know God until personal encounter.
 - Lessons:
 - Preparation (ways/truth) precedes encounter.
 - Information ≠ Revelation.
 - Proximity to Godly things ≠ Intimacy.
 - Encounter via abiding, Spirit, obedience, worship, community, service, rest. Avoid religious tasks without relationship.

Scripture References

- Genesis (Adam/Eve covering).
- Luke 15 (Prodigal Son).
- Matthew 7:21-23 (*anomia*).
- Matthew 13:3-9 (Parable of the Sower).
- John 14:5-7 (Way, Truth, Life).
- John 5:19; 15:5 (Dependence/Intimacy).
- Colossians 3:17 (Words/Deeds in Jesus).
- Hebrews 12:2 (Obedience).
- John 8:9-11 (Love/Mercy).
- John 1:1 (Word as Truth).
- 1 Samuel 2:26; 3:7 (Samuel's Encounter).
- Hebrews 9:22 (Atonement by Blood).

Application Points

- Examine expectations: Are they rooted in trust or control? Identify "weeds" (worry, doubt) choking growth.
- Practice disciplines: Daily prayer, obedience in trials, intimacy through Scripture.
- Shift truth: Wrestle with but submit to the Word over personal views.
- Seek encounter: Create space for God's life (repent, abide, listen to Spirit).
- Avoid: Religion without relationship; putting God in a box.

Discussion Questions

1. What unrealistic expectations have you had about God? How have they affected your relationship?
2. In Matthew 7:21-23, why does Jesus reject workers despite their deeds? Are you "known" by Him?
3. How can trials produce fruit (Parable of the Sower)? Share an example.
4. Which discipline (dependence, obedience, etc.) do you need to practice more?
5. How does aligning with God's truth change daily life (e.g., trials, timing)?
6. Like Samuel, have you had knowledge without encounter? How can you seek God's life today?
7. What step will you take to shift from control to trust?