



CONNECTING

Message Four

The Enemies of Connecting

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So far in these series, we have come to understand that God designed us to connect—that we were not created out of the loneliness of God, but out of the fellowship of God. We have seen that the church is not about gathering a crowd, but building community—that the church is one of the few places left in society with the hope of true community exists. We have observed how Jesus not only proclaimed community but he also constructed community as the core witness of the Gospel message. Here's the bottom line...**CONNECTING IN AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY IS THE WILL OF GOD.**

Connecting in the truest biblical sense of the word is not easy for many of us. Why? It's because something is getting in the way of connecting. What is it?

THREE FORCES THAT OPPOSE GENUINE CONNECTING

1. The **Devil**

1 Peter 5:8-9, Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour. Take a firm stand against him, and be strong in your faith. (NLT)

He opposes God and seeks to destroy every work of God (Genesis 3:1-6).

His tactics are lies (John 8:44) deception (Revelation 12:9).

2. The **Sinful Nature in Our Hearts**

Galatians 5:17, *The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants...These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict.* (NLT)

The entrance of sin into the human race was the birth of self-consciousness.

It was the beginning of Me-ism.

3. The **Culture Around Us**

1 John 2:15-16, *Don't love the world's ways...Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him.* (Msg)

Culture: *A learned system of knowledge, behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and values that is share by a group of people.*

THE EFFECTS OF THESE FORCES ON OUR LIVES

1. **Individualism**
2. **Isolation**
3. **Competitiveness**

BREAKING THROUGH THE BARRIERS TO CONNECTING

1. **Commit to the Engage in the Struggle**

1 Peter 5:8-9, *The devil is working against you...Stand against him and be strong in your faith.* (NLV)

Romans 8:13, *If you keep on following the sinful nature, you will perish. But if through the power of the Holy Spirit you turn from it and its evil deeds, you will live.* (NLT)

Romans 12:2, *Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it.* (Msg)

2. Commit the Time to Connect

Ephesians 5:15-16, *So be careful how you live. Live as men who are wise and not foolish. Make the best use of your time.* (NLV)

3. Commit to Win

1 Corinthians 9:24, *You also must run in such a way that you will win.* (NLT)