

The Power of Care

One of the most *powerful* things we can do is: to care for others.

One of the most *valuable* things we can give is: care for others.

One of the *biggest blessings* you can ever have in your life is: people who care about you.

The early Christians understood God as a caring God.

Peter, wrote, ***“Cast all your worries upon God, for He cares for you...” (1 Peter 5:7).***

Becoming God-like is to become a more caring person.

Nobody in this room can care for everyone here, but we can contribute to creating a caring community.

(FOOLS GOLD PIC)

Not everything that looks like gold is really gold, and not everything that looks like “care” is really God-like care.

- Just as there is fools-gold, there is also fools-care, or counterfeit care.
- Through this message, we will seek to point out the differences and hopefully continue to progress in the heart of true care and the art of true care.

“I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.” (1 Corinthians 3:6-7)

As we care for people: God works and they grow.

Let's not underestimate the power of caring for others. It's something God works in and through, to bring others into greater wholeness and strength.

As we care, people GROW: they grow out of their bondages, limitations, and addictions. They grow into their: purpose, destiny, and callings.

(GARDEN PIC)

For a garden to grow, it needs seed and water....and more...

- Seed alone won't do, you need seed and water.
- Water itself won't do, we need seed and water.
- Seed and Water is just the beginning, not the beginning and the end.

How do we care for people?

To care for people, we sow seeds into them and also water them.

- **1) The SEED has to do with words.** (Jesus shared a parable about how the word of the Kingdom of God was *seed*.)
- **2) The WATER has to do with time, attention, and prayers.**
 - 1) Plant seeds: We give them the word of life, we plant thoughts that can lead them into enjoying God's Kingdom, we give them ideas and share revelation that can potentially bring forth spiritual growth. That's planting.
 - 2) Take time to water: We also invest time, thought, relationship, and prayers. We *show* people that we care about them, in more than words, but through our actions.

As we sow seed and water, they *can* grow.

I didn't say, "They will grow"...

I said, "They *can* grow."

Our job is to care for others, and that's where our role ends.

- That is something we can do, but there are things that are out of our control.
- We simply do our part and need to leave the rest up to God.

(FARMER PICTURE)

A farmer can do his part, but there are so many things out of his control. For example, the weather is not in his control.

He can be faithful to do his part, but then, while he is sleeping, the higher forces does their part.

- This reminds us that all we do is care, and we shouldn't lose sleep while caring for others. Because all we can do is our part, then while we sleep, the Higher Forces (Higher Powers) will have to do their part.
- In our rest, God works. He's not sleeping, so there is no reason everyone needs to stay up.

When it comes to gardening, you can have the healthiest seed, and faithful watering, and yet, the plant may never grow, because of other variables/ contributing factors:

- For instance, perhaps there is unhealthy soil.
- Maybe there is not enough sunlight.

When it comes to caring for people, we must understand:

- 1) It is ultimately not our job to change and transform people.
- 2) We can have been faithful in our care and not see desirable results.
- 3) Accept that there are variables or factors that are out of our control (soil condition, climate, weather, etc.)
- 4) Let's not take on false burdens, which is a recipe for burnout.

What if someone is not responding to my care?

Just because someone is not responding to our care, it is not reason to be discouraged:

1. Some plants don't grow right away, it's developing an un-seen root system.

- The Scriptures remind us that there is seed, time, and harvest....it's not seed then harvest. Time is essential to spiritual growth and personal transformation as well.
- So in our caring for people, we need to be patient, understanding that spiritual growth is more like a *crockpot* than a *microwave*.

What if someone is not responding to my care?

2. Refrain from trying to force change and transformation upon someone.

- It's like a gardener trying to stretch out a plant by pulling on it, because it's not growing fast enough, which may be more harmful than helpful. People are delicate.
- **Our job is to CARE, not to CONTROL.**

What if someone is not responding to my care?

Let's not get discouraged, bitter, and worried, because we aren't seeing the results, for it's only going to tire us out, and we will burnout.

- Burned out people don't have the energy to care for others. When we are burned out, we care for others grudgingly, and caring for others becomes a burden.
- Another sure way to be an abusive gardener when we get really angry and impatient with a plant, when instead of sowing words of life, we plant words of death. (Instead of watering them, we sprayed pesticide.) Speaking negatively to and about our plant, is not going to help it to grow. Sowing seed and watering it will.

Jesus modeled care for his disciples, and wanted them to pass on that care to others.

“Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” (John 21:16)

Again Jesus didn't say, “*control my sheep...*”

Most definitely, Jesus didn't say, “*manipulate my sheep...*”

Jesus didn't say, “*be angry with and curse my sheep....*”

And, Jesus didn't say, "*Spoil my sheep...*"
He said, "*Care for my sheep.*"

TRUE CARE VS. FALSE CARE

When we have true care, contrary to false care, we truly want to see the other person grow, flourish, thrive...and that's it.

Remember, Paul said that he planted seed, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth. When we truly care about someone, we only want them to grow in and by God.

- We want them to grow emotionally, spiritually, financially, in character.
- We want them to grow *out* of their addictions, bondages, limitations, and issues.
- We want them to grow into their purposes, callings, and destinies.
- *And that's it. Our motive must be simple.*

False care is when we act like we care about their souls, but we only care about their services.

- We act like we CARE about them, but at the end of the day, we just care about ourselves.
- This is selfish, deceptive, and manipulative. It's false care.

False care is when we solely use people as a means to our end:

- 1) **We want to groom them for a position in our organization.**
- 2) **We want to use them to further our agenda.**
- 3) **We want to use them to feed our ego and make us look or feel good.**

Usually when true motives behind false-care surface, the people on the receiving end of the false-care are very hurt and feel very devalued.

Be discerning:

- **Manipulative people can act like they are caring people.**
- **Caring people are often the victims of manipulative people.**

A manipulative person is drawn to those with caring hearts and will seek to take advantage of their care.

Manipulative people use deceptive means in order to benefit self, controlling others through their emotions.

Not everyone who acts like they care about you really do. I'm not saying we should be cynical...but Jesus said, "be wise as a serpent...." (Matthew 10:16), and the Scriptures admonish us to not be deceived, by false-prophets who employ false-care.

Some ways you can tell if they really care about you, is:

- 1) **You don't sense an agenda or ulterior motive.**
- 2) **They give you the freedom to say no.**
- 3) **They still like you, even when you don't comply to their wants.**

Manipulative people usually play the strings of people's emotions:

- 1) **They make you feel sorry for them.**
- 2) **They make you feel angry on their behalf.**
- 3) **They make you feel intimidated to say no.**

We are called to be empathic towards others, but not engulfed by others.

- When manipulation enters into a relationship, it often feels one-sided.
- We are called to build each other up, but rather you feel someone is sucking you dry.
- You feel more like a tool than a human being.
- **We are to use things and care for people, not care for things and use people.**

How can you stay clear of being manipulated, as a caring person?

As a caring person, give them what they need, do not comply to all their wants.

- Parents can be manipulated by their six year old, to give them six scoops of ice-cream for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. That's what they want...the kid may make you feel sorry for them....but you can't give them what they want....you have to give them what they need...if you really care.
- If we just want people to like us and be happy with us....we are self-centered...and you don't really care for others, as much as yourself.

As a caring person:

1) You want to sow seeds and give encouragement through your words. (In life, so many things will discourage us, we can always use some encouragement.

2) You also want to water others- and care with your actions, but you don't want to drown them, for that's counter-productive.

(PICTURE OF DROWNING PLANT)

- I'm speaking of enabling or spoiling people by just giving them what they want....rather than discerning their needs. It is possible to drown a plant.

I HOPE WE BECOME A COMMUNITY OF CARE...so we look like this...
(PICTURE OF BEAUTIFUL GARDEN...this is REVIVAL...we can't make this happen on our own...but we can do our part...)

Questions to Ponder:

- **Is there anyone in your life that needs extra care in this season?**
- **How well do you care for people? Can we be more skilled in our encouragement? Can we be more wise in our watering?**
- **In what ways are we engaging in false-care, where we care about ourselves more than others?**
- **Are you carrying false burdens and relying on yourself to change and transform people?**
- **Is there anyone you feel is manipulating you, and you need to stop giving them everything they want?**