



Rising out of Relational Distance

Listen! Have you ever heard or said these words, “I don’t even know you anymore.”?

- **Reality:** Relational closeness has a real short shelf-life.
- **Question:** How do we combat relational separateness and maintain relational intimacy?

The Major Causes of Relational Distance:

#1 Emotional Injuries:

#2 Expectation Disappointments:

#3 Circumstance Changes:

#4 Ideological Divergences:

#5 Subtle Drifting:

Foundational (counter-cultural) Premise: If I become aware of relational distance...I am responsible to take initiative to close the relational gap.

A Model of Restoring Relational Intimacy—Paul, Onesimus, and Philemon:

First, pray for them. (v 4)

Second, appeal to them. (vv 8-14)

Third, remind them of your relationship. (v 17)

Fourth, offer restitution/reconciliation to them. (v 18)

The Model Articulated Another Way (by Pastor Steve Meeks):

1. The Honeymoon.
2. The Disillusionment.
3. The Reconciliation.
4. The Synergy.

Application: In order to address relational separateness in my relationship with

_____ I will _____ today.

Walking Papers

Practical helps for walking with Christ and pursuing God through obedience, reflective living, and community.

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Please take some time each day this week for "spiritual recalibration" by thinking through the following ideas and questions related to having "eternity in our hearts:"

- **Today:** List the people with whom you feel relational distance—especially those people in your family and people to whom you were preciously close.
- **Monday:** What are the specific reasons, as best you can tell, for the relational distance between you? What is your part in the relational distance?
- **Tuesday:** Can you see any "creeping separateness" in your marriage or other family relationships? What has caused it? What do you need to do?
- **Wednesday:** Do you see the truth of your responsibility to take initiative in closing relational distance? Are you willing to take that initiative?
- **Thursday:** How would you be willing to pray for someone from whom you are relational distant?
- **Friday:** What appeal would you be willing to make to someone from whom you are relationally distant?
- **Saturday:** What restitution might you need to make to someone from whom you are relationally distant?