

## **“I Want to Hold Your Hand”**

March 8, 2013

There is a law of physics at work in our Universe. It is called the 2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics (which is a really cool sounding name) or the law of entropy. This law says that the natural tendency of everything in the universe is to move from order to disorder. If you buy a new car, it will steadily deteriorate from the day you drive it home. Your body is slowly aging and dying. Your house has to be repainted and repaired every few summers. A business that is not managed carefully will unravel and collapse. A brick that is placed on a vacant lot and left there long enough will eventually turn to dust. Indeed, even the sun and all the stars are slowly burning themselves out. We are, in a manner of speaking, in a dying universe where everything that is not specifically being protected and upgraded is in a downward spiral.

The only way to postpone or temporarily combat its influence is to invest creative energy and intelligent design into that which is to be preserved.

Not so surprisingly, human relationships also conform to the principle of disintegration. The natural tendency is for husbands and wives to drift away from each other unless they work at staying together. Parents become more distant to their kids as they grow, unless you work to combat that drift.

What does this law mean for you? It means that intimacy in your relationships will not happen naturally. But, it can happen *supernaturally*! The law of entropy only applies to “closed” systems...which means that things left by themselves without outside influence move to disorder. But, when our family is opened up to God’s influence His power can move us toward intimacy instead of toward isolation. Remember, God created human beings for intimacy...with Him and with others. So, God is VERY interested in your discovery of intimacy.

What is intimacy? To be known for who we are, and still be loved.

Or, to put it in the terms of today’s song, “to want to hold your hand” and to know that they do too. Let’s listen to a bit of our song ... [Play snippet 1]

Oh yeah, I'll tell you something  
I think you'll understand  
When I'll say that something  
I wanna hold your hand  
I wanna hold your hand  
I wanna hold your hand

Oh please, say to me  
You'll let me be your man  
And please, say to me  
You'll let me hold your hand  
I'll let me hold your hand  
I wanna hold your hand

To know me, all of me, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, and STILL love me...that’s intimacy and that’s a deep hunger within each of us.

Sweaty palms, or dry. Warm hands, or cold, still “you want to hold my hand.” I’m thirsty for that kind of relationship, and so are you.

Left alone, to yourselves, you drift apart, not together, that’s the law of relational entropy. There are forces, seven of them, at least, tugging you away from the people you care about. If we can identify these forces and apply an antidote, then God can bring you together to experience more intimacy with the people that are important in your life ... whether that’s a boyfriend, spouse, parent, or family member.

### **Seven Barriers to Intimacy, and God’s Antidote for Each**

The first three barriers have the same solution, so I’ll group them together:

- 1) Busyness is a barrier to intimacy.**
- 2) Diversions are a barrier to intimacy.**
- 3) Selfishness is a barrier to intimacy.**

**God’s solution is priority.**

2 Chronicles 1:7-12, That night God appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!" [8] Solomon replied to God, "You have been so faithful and kind to my father, David, and now you have made me king in his place. [9] Now, Lord God, please keep your promise to David my father, for you have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth!

- God gives Solomon the throne of Israel AND says “now whatever you ask, I’ll do!”

[10] Give me wisdom and knowledge to rule them properly, for who is able to govern this great nation of yours?"

- Solomon asks for wisdom and knowledge (instead of money, power, revenge...).

[11] God said to Solomon, "Because your greatest desire is to help your people, and you did not ask for personal wealth and honor or the death of your enemies or even a long life, but rather you asked for wisdom and knowledge to properly govern my people, [12] I will certainly give you the wisdom and knowledge you requested. And I will also give you riches, wealth, and honor such as no other king has ever had before you or will ever have again!"

- God rewards Solomon’s PRIORITIES with riches, wealth, and honor.

**BUSY:** Running a kingdom makes you busy. (people as numerous as the dust) Busyness crowds out intimacy.

**DISTRACTION:** Running a kingdom has all sorts of distractions. (did not ask for death of your enemies, which means there must be some enemies around!) Diversions displace intimacy.

SELFISHNESS: Running a kingdom can lead to selfishness. (did not ask for money)  
Selfishness chokes out intimacy in our relationships.

But, Solomon's *priority* protected him from all of that. When we establish God as our first priority ("You have made me King," "Your nation") God makes us ready for intimacy by limiting busyness, removing diversions, and eliminating selfishness from our lives.

**Key statement:** "Intimacy requires denying self and pursuing holiness."

#4 and #5 are grouped together because they share the same solution:

**4) Independence is a barrier to intimacy.**

**5) Diversity is a barrier to intimacy.**

**God's solution for intimacy is interdependence.**

Romans 12:4-5, Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, [5] so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of his one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others.

- Independence is best known as the 50/50 marriage. I'll do my half, you do yours. I'll do my thing, you do yours...and we'll meet in the middle.
- Interdependence says we are "one flesh", "one body", and I need you as much as you need me.
- Diversity is a reality that every couple must face. Different likes, dislikes. Different styles. Different EVERYTHING. Remember that God can bring people into your life (mate, kids, coworkers, friends) who can smooth off our rough edges and fill in the gaps in our lives.

**Key statement:** Intimacy requires allowing another's strength balance your weakness.

Before we get to the next barrier, which is a BIG one, let's return to our song. Here's the last two verses ... [Play snippet 2]

And when I touch you I feel happy inside  
It's such a feeling that my love  
I can't hide, I can't hide, I can't hide

Yeah, you've got that something  
I think you'll understand  
When I'll say that something  
I wanna hold your hand  
I wanna hold your hand  
I wanna hold your hand

Can we admit that sometimes, you're just too tired to hold hands? Too worn out to recognize "that something" that usually makes you smile. Stress and pressure can build up quickly to the point of making me angry instead of happy when I'm touched. The feelings of love I have for you I can easily hide when I'm under heavy stress.

To overcome that, and get back to holding hands, we need to recognize that ...

## **6) Stress is a barrier for intimacy.**

### **God's solution for intimacy is perspective.**

2 Corinthians 4:16-18, That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. [17] For our present troubles are quite small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us an immeasurably great glory that will last forever! [18] So we don't look at the troubles we can see right now; rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen. For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.

- Stress can kill intimacy, just squash it like a bug. You can become so worried, stressed out, cautious, reactive, and defensive that no one can get into your life (including spouse, kids, and God).
- Perspective is saying "the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever." (v. 18)

**Key statement:** "Intimacy requires adopting God's view of life as your own."

## **7) Fear is a barrier to intimacy.**

God's solution for intimacy is Perfect Love.

1 John 4:16-19, We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in him. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. [17] And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect... [18] Such love has no fear because perfect love expels all fear ... [19] We love each other as a result of his loving us first.

- The fear of rejection (by God for eternity, or by people for now) is crippling. The solution is experiencing God's perfect love ... then we can share it.
- V. 17, "And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect."

**Key statement:** Intimacy requires replacing our own partial way of loving with God's perfect love.

**Bottom line: the big barrier to intimacy is sin.**

99% of relationship problems are rooted in sin. Okay, honestly, it's 100%. Sin causes hurt.

Ephesians 2:13, But now you belong to Christ Jesus. Though you once were far away from God, now you have been brought near to him because of the blood of Christ.

It is Jesus who can reshape your priorities.

It is Jesus who can build interdependence into your life.

It is Jesus who can give you the BIG VIEW of life.

It is Jesus whose love is perfect enough to overcome our broken loving.

A closing prayer... "Dear God, use your perfect love to cleanse our life of busyness and distraction. Let Your love reshape our priorities. Give us Your view for our future. Give us the humbleness to admit our interdependence on others. Help us to accept others for who they really are and grant us the blessing of intimacy in our homes. In Jesus name, amen."