

CHEMISTRY | ELEMENTS: Why Do I React this Way | Week 1

June 9, 2019

Heb 10:24-25; Rom 12:3; Matt 7:1-5; Psalm 139:23-24

Opening: The greatest influence on how we experience the world comes through our relationships. These connections can bring us great joy or pain and they shape how we engage with both the stressors and opportunities in our life. Each of us maintains a complex mixture of connections — colleagues, friends, siblings, parents, children, spouses, classmates, etc. Creating the right chemistry in these places honors God and the people God has placed in our life. The heart of God inside each one of us is made known—or not—through our chemistry in relationship.

Context: Read Psalm 139:23-24. Do we ever slow down and ask “What’s going on here? Why am I so tense (or angry, or frustrated)? Why am I reacting this way?” *Consider the answer to that question. Is the answer related to another person? What chemistry is going on? Who is the most active element?*

Interaction: Pastor Chad Negley described chemistry as the interaction of two atoms or molecules changing each other in a predictable manner. He likened that to our interactions with each other.” *Have you ever considered your “reactivity”? What examples of positive predictable reactions can you name? What about negative reactions. What is the difference in the “chemistry”?*

Purposeful Chemistry: Read Heb 10:24-25. Pastor Chad presents the underlying sense of Agape (a love that is not self-seeking, a love whose paradigm is the Cross) as the description of relationship in this passage. *Consider these words in the context of relationship:*

- *Stir up one another invite, encourage **or** correct, direct*
- *To love and good works love others, meet needs **or** love me, I love you*
- *Meet together be together, time, presence **or** be faithful, be seen, appear*
- *Encourage one another positive, specific, see and say **or** aren’t we great*

Have you experienced these differences? Talk about the contrasts.

The Need for Reaction: Consider Pastor Chad’s quote: “Love is thus a product of community activity, for it is a virtue that requires others for its exercise. One may practice faith or hope alone, but not love”. *How do you react to this? How does this change your impression of the chemistry of relationship? How does it influence the kind of “reactant” you want to be?*

True Molecules: Read Eph 4:22-24. Consider the contrast of “old self” and “new self” in this metaphor of Chemistry. *What is your reaction? Can you see anything you would call “our former way of life” in your way of relating? What can you do with that?*

An Attitude of Humility: Romans 12:3 is a “sleeper verse” immediately following the classic text on transformation 12:2. *What does this say about relationship and interaction? What is your first reaction?*

Our “Presence”: We’ve have stopped seeing relationship as a window to life, a self-altering interaction with others, an opportunity to encourage and love others. St. Augustine wrote in Confessions, in 400 A.D., “How can you draw close to God when you are far from your own self? Grant, Lord, that I may know myself that I may know thee.” *What is the need for knowing ourselves? How can you become more aware (and change) your presence with others?*

A Reactive Mask: A byproduct of not knowing ourselves is hiding or pretending. Peter Scazzaro says this in *“Emotionally Healthy Spirituality”*. “One of our greatest obstacles in knowing God is our lack of self-knowledge. So we end up wearing a mask – before God, ourselves and other people. And we can’t become self-aware if we cut off our humanity out of fear of our feelings”. Scazzaro uses “humanity” to mean open, genuine relationship. *How do you react to the idea of a mask, a false self, as a way of relating?*

Practice of the Week: Getting “Insight” Help

This week we recommend some expert help. The Enneagram is a personality profile with the added context of strengths and growth areas. The blessing of the profile, besides many resources available, is that it can be a great relationship assist. Married couples or small group studies can use it together. Like the comments on Hebrews it is less valuable alone. Take the test at www.WEPSS.com and contact Eric Haskins to get connected with someone to help you through it.

Family Formation: Wearing a Mask

What can we pray about? Using last week’s posted prayer requests, talk about things going on and pray for requests and thanksgiving where appropriate. Find a Halloween mask or make one with a paper plate. Play a game of being yourself without the mask and someone else with the mask. Go back and forth a few times. Let them try it. Then use the idea to talk about honesty (telling the truth). Depending on age you could also do integrity (being true to who you are).

Additional Resources: *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Peter Scazzaro

We’d love to hear from you!

If you have thoughts questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you and your group, please let us know.

We also enjoy hearing how God is using these scriptures and study guides in your lives.

Roger Peer: [contact through Eric](mailto:contact_through_Eric) * Eric Haskins: ehaskins@christchurch.us