

# SOLVING STRUGGLES

## In Interpersonal Relationships

### **“Learning to Live, Love and Listen to Each Other”**

#### **Ingredient #5: SENSITIVITY – Matthew 22:1-14**

Our Heavenly Father, we pray that as we look at this particular parable that illustrates a very important truth that we would learn this truth and we would learn to do it well. Father, we so often wish that we could pour people into different molds rather than accepting the way they come to us. We pray that somehow You can teach us how to accept people like they are. That we would learn how to live in relationship sensitive to needs that are many times unspoken. We pray that as we pursue the subject that Your Holy Spirit would take some thoughts from the passage and minister to us in a very special way. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The way we are pursuing the ingredients of good interpersonal relationships is we use the illustration of characteristics and we work through the passage of scripture. The picture shows Correct Thinking/Feeling/Acting and Incorrect Thinking/Feeling/Acting as well as Correct Negative and Incorrect Negative.

We are pursuing the subject of SENSITIVITY. Women do not have as much of a problem with this as men do. Men have a

tendency to be kind of packaged within themselves, able to be adequate and they don't have as great a problem. They have a greater problem with sensitivity than women do.

Here's a great illustration by Gail MacDonald to open our time together:

(Keep Climbing by Gail MacDonald)

“When there is a lack of sensitivity, people can be deeply hurt. We see that sad fact all the time.

I have borrowed a term from Esther Howard who, years ago, wrote in *Faith That Works* magazine about what she called “Ialac.” I-A-L-A-C, meaning I am lovable and capable, is that sense of self-necessary to the inner health of every one of us. When we know God personally, we draw the sense of belonging and competence most powerfully from him. In the more immediate sense, however, most of us receive it through other people, just as Benjamin West received a portion of it from his mother when she looked over his shoulder. But we only receive it when people are sensitive.

It is possible to build this IALAC into one another, and sadly enough, it is possible for us to take it away from each other in our insensitive moments. In other words, this IALAC [I am lovable and capable] is generally increased or diminished according to the sensitivity of those about us who, reading our signals, contribute to our sense of value and usefulness just as we hope we will to them.”

p. 59

Then she uses this illustration:

(Keep Climbing by Gail MacDonald)

To illustrate more fully the concept of IALAC [I am lovable and capable], Esther Howard described the rather sad fictional day of a boy she called Peter whose experience seems the opposite of Benjamin West's. Peter, she wrote, imagined that his own IALAC actually hung around his neck like a gigantic cookie. Depending upon the actions of others toward him, affirming his competence and value as a person, Peter's IALAC [I am lovable and capable] "cookie" either enlarged or crumbled.

For example, when Peter dressed for school early that day the IALAC [I am lovable and capable] gleamed prominently on his chest, and he was delighted with the thought of proudly displaying it for anyone who was interested. But his reverie was harshly interrupted when he heard his mother angrily shout, "Peter, get yourself down here before I come after you!" With the cutting sound of that shrill voice, a small piece of the IALAC hanging about his neck fell off and disappeared.

When the boy arrived at the breakfast table, his father was already hidden behind the *Wall Street Journal*. There were no words exchanged between the two until Peter accidentally spilled his milk. Unfortunately, some of the milk splattered on his dad's suit, and so Peter heard his father's first words of the day to him: "You clumsy ...! Look what you've done!" A second time that morning Peter felt his IALAC grow lighter and smaller as another piece of it dropped away. The words of his father, like those of his mother earlier, had the effect of an acetylene torch on his sense of well-being.

Continuing her tale, Esther Howard further described Peter leaving his half-eaten breakfast and heading for the spot down

the street where he would meet his best friend for the walk to school. But the walk could not go well because his friend seemed to ignore him, and the IALAC around Peter's neck crumbled a bit more. Nothing was helped, of course, when he dropped his lunch sack and it split open causing several kids who had joined the walk to laugh at his plight. Peter's IALAC took still another beating.

At school his teacher scored his sloppy writing, and at recess his playmates called him a sissy. The whole day seemed to go that way. The IALAC, once sizeable and visible in the early morning hours, seemed on the verge of disappearance, and when he felt that happening, Peter began to compensate for its loss. He decided, for example, that when he got home he'd tell his mother he was sick. Maybe she'd offer medicine or something that would provide attention and reaffirm his value and his competence.

But when he got home, his mother wasn't there, and that meant that there was no medicine, no "something." Instead what was there was a note that read, "Take the TV dinner out of the freezer and turn the oven to 425 degrees. I'll be back at 5:30."

By now Peter had lost the will to go out to play or to do anything constructive. He simply slumped in a chair and watched television. At 5:30, his parents came home. The good news was that Peter had taken the dinners out of the freezer; the bad news was that he'd forgotten to turn on the oven. Both of his parents commented in his hearing that their son was irresponsible and could never seem to remember anything.

When dinner was finally served, Peter sensed a hope of something good about to happen when his dad asked him about school. But just as he started to answer, the telephone rang and his father left the table in the middle of his sentence. When he

returned there was something else on his mind. By now, it was hard for Peter to remember that his IALAC had ever existed.

Howard writes, “When Peter went to bed that night he lay thinking about the little piece of the “I” that was all that he had left. He felt so sad and lonely that he put the pillow over his head so that no one could see him suck his thumb. It was the baby thing to do, but the only way he knew to comfort himself for what had happened to his IALAC that day.”

Esther Howard ended her description of Peter’s sad but untypical day by noting that the boy wished there were a way to explain his feelings to his parents so that tomorrow he wouldn’t have to watch his IALAC being torn apart all over again, “But he fell asleep before he could think of anything.”  
pp. 59-61

When you hear a little story like that, you think about how many times we are aware that we are married? That we live with children who have the desperate need for that value, for that self-esteem, for that sense of encouragement and affirmation, an expression of value to one another?

We have become so self-contained and so selfish in the process, we’ve become hardened and sensitive. It almost seems like it is a very rare gem when you find it in someone that really is like that.

The first ingredient of good interpersonal relationships is a relationship to God.

We found a judge in our first parable that had no respect for God nor did he have respect for fellow man. The second study we

talked about unconditional love. That was the parable of the prodigal son and how God never needs to be reconciled. We are the ones that need to be reconciled to Him.

In our third episode we talked about compassion. That is the feeling inside for the needs of others to the point that we take action to alleviate those needs.

Then we talked about forgiveness. Letting the pot drop. Dealing with the offenses in our lives that keep us from having healthy interpersonal relationships. Now in this study we delve into sensitivity.

We are going to be in Matthew 22:1-14. Let's read some verses from Revelation 19 to set the stage for this,

### Revelation 19:6-9

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the sound of many waters, and as the sounds of mighty peals of thunder, saying....,

These are the true words of God.

This parable that we are looking at is called, "The Parable of the King's Son" and the wedding, "The Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son."

It's a royal marriage feast. There are similarities between many of the parables because Christ talks about marriages and about wedding feasts. When you have the possibility of a marriage in

those days, it was a little different than our marriages.

A year before the marriage would begin to take place there would be announcements that would be sent out to invite you so you would have no excuse for not coming. You had a whole year to get ready to go to the wedding. Then when the day of the wedding arrived, it involved a whole week.

The groom went to the bride's house to get her and usually there was a feast there. Then he brought her back to his house and there was a whole week-long celebration there. And so they had a good time when they got married in those days.

Now there is a foregone conclusion that's it's been a year. The invitations have been sent out and no one has an excuse for not showing up for the wedding.

In the Luke passage there is another story of a wedding. In Luke 14 we read where one guy says "I've purchased some real estate and I can't come to the wedding." And another guy says, "I've bought some oxen and I need to go out and see if they work." And the third guy had the flimsiest excuse of all. He said, "I've married a wife and I can't come."

Those are basically the excuses. Now we are going to see some excuses in this particular parable as well.

Where does this parable fit in our Lord's ministry? It is probably one of the last parables that He tells. It would be during the last week of His life here on earth. He is coming down to the very end of His life—you could call it "Passion Week."

The last verse in Matthew 21, which is just before the story is told, we read in verse 46, “When they sought to seize Him, they became afraid of the multitudes because they said to Him, they held Him to be a prophet.”

Most people, when they outline these verses, outline it into three parts. Our outline has five parts.

1. Invitation #2—verses 1-3.
2. Invitation #2—verses 4-6.
3. The Response of the King—verses 7-9.
4. The Banquet Hall is Finally Filled—verses 10.
5. The Missing Wedding Garment—verses 11-14.

In His audiences are scribes, Pharisees, and Herodians—very religious people. Most them do not have any understanding of what a relationship to God is all about, although they are very religious.

We are pursuing this parable with an understanding of SENSITIVITY. That’s our main ingredient in good interpersonal relationships.

We want to see it in contrast by how insensitive these people are to the Lord or to the one that is inviting them to the feast.

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1. Invitation #2—verses 1-3.

**v. 1 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying,**

“And Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying,”

**v. 2 The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man, a king, who made a marriage feast for his son.**

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man, a king, who made a marriage feast for his son.”

What is “the kingdom of heaven”?

“The kingdom of heaven,” when you have that term in the Bible, refers to the period when the king is absent. If you took when the Jews rejected Christ and crucified Him—they rejected their King—from that time until the King comes back to set up His Kingdom, that is called “the kingdom of heaven”.

We are living in the period right now of what’s called “the kingdom of heaven” in the gospels. It is the time when the King is absent. The “King” in this passage represents God—God the Father. The “Son” represents Jesus Christ. This is the marriage feast for the King’s Son.

In Revelation 19 there is a record that there is going to be a marriage. It is the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Do you know who the bride is? The bride is *US*. We are it! The Church is the bride of Christ. Everybody who becomes a Christian becomes a part of the Church.

Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is going to have a fantastic marriage feast which is going to take place at this future day described in Revelation 19.

Here we are having the discussion the Father presenting this invitation to this marriage supper of the Lamb, and we are going to see why people don't come to it.

This is the marriage of the King's Son. What a fantastic privilege to be invited to this and to be a part of it. It's like going to the White House for dinner.

### Song of Solomon 2:4

He has brought me to his banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.

She says, "He loves me so much. He took me to the banquet and he shows me off. His banner over me is love. He is so proud of me." It's like everybody stands and salutes when she's around because of his respect and his love for her.

### Song of Solomon 3:11

Go forth, O daughters of Zion, And gaze on King Solomon with the crown with which his mother has crowned him. On the day of his wedding, And on the day of his gladness of heart.

The happiest day of his life.

The invitations have been out for 12 months. That's the picture. Everybody's had 12 months to get their act together.

**v. 3 And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited [12 months before] to the wedding feast and they were not desiring to come.**

“And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited [12 months before] to the wedding feast and they were not desiring to come.”

That's the epitome of insensitivity. Here's a time of great celebration and there are intense botched-up priorities. Such selfishness that they have not worked this into their schedule. They're so insensitive, they are not desiring to come.

You could say they all began to make excuses. Can you hear them? “Hey, buzz off man, leave me alone. Quit. I don't want to go, okay? Just give me some space. I don't want to be involved in this thing.”

They're refusing to go to the marriage of the King's Son and this is an act of rebellion. There is really no excuse for not having a part in this.

Ask yourself the question, “Why were they not desiring to come?” It doesn't tell us.

We know in that Luke passage, they got some flimsy excuses like marrying a wife, and buying some livestock that they've never tried, and bought some real estate that they haven't looked at. Here they're just not desiring to go.

### John 1:1

He came unto His own and His own received Him not.

### Isaiah 1:2-4

“Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth, for the Lord speaks. Sons I have reared and brought up, but they have revolted against Me. An ox knows its owner and a donkey its master's manger, but Israel does not know. My people do not understand. Alas, sinful nation! People weighed down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who act corruptly. They have abandoned the Lord. They have despised the Holy One of Israel, They have turned away from Him.”

Let's go to our chart. Let's see if there are any words on that chart that help us understand why these people are turning Him down. Can you find anything there that fits?

Usually we have start down in the lower left-hand corner. Most of the problems of interpersonal relationships are down in the lower left. To get people into the upper left-hand corner, which is where you need to be, you have to go to the upper right first.

Are there any words down there in the lower left-hand corner that we can put on these people who are not desiring to come?

Selfish is a big one. That just leaps out at you because that's just being contained in yourself and you just don't want to trouble yourself to go be with anybody else.

What about looking down on others? Maybe feeling superior to others? Over-committed? Over-involved? Self-centered is excellent. Yes, Any others? Pride? The big one at the top of the page.

What does Incorrect Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting do to your interpersonal relationships? It hardens your heart.

It's like Ginny Lou. She wrote a book called *Loving Again*. Her husband left her. She had a divorce. She said: "I'm going to build a plastic bubble around and I'm going to know but I'm not going to be known." (source unknown)

There's a shell there. And you've been around people like that. It is so hard to get beyond the shell to the real person because they've got a shield. They've been hurt and when you've been hurt in interpersonal relationships like so many people have today—marriage, divorce, or death of loved ones or something else—it's almost like you come and have to knock on shields to get in. A lot of times people won't let you in.

That's a hardness of heart that is there. Satan does exactly the same thing. When you don't respond to these things, that shell gets harder and harder.

Guys involved in all these cults and "isms," they can literally

sacrifice little babies on their altars. You talk about a hard selfish heart with no feeling of love and compassion. It makes you revolt inside.

Each of us have different degrees of shells around us and it makes it hard for us to get to the soft spots. It makes it hard to get in close and to trust one another and to reach out to one another and be transparent and vulnerable because we've been hurt so many times.

So, yes, selfishness produces that kind of a hardness of heart. It comes from pride and from sin and from guilt.

### Jeremiah 2:13

My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns, That can hold no water.

We could put down pride, prejudice, and personal reasons as three good statements for why these individuals don't want to go and they spurn invitation #1.

2. Invitation #2—verses 4-6.

**v. 4 Again, he sent out other slaves saying: "Tell those who have been invited: "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my steers and my fattened livestock I have butchered and everything is ready. Come to the marriage feast.""**

“Again, he sent out other slaves saying: “Tell those who have been invited: ‘Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my steers and my fattened livestock I have butchered and everything is ready. Come to the marriage feast.’””

In these two invitations you have a difference of words.

In in verse 3 you have the word “call.”

In verse 4, you have the word “tell.”

You get the idea that with the second invitation there is an intensification of emotional involvement. Tell them, “You don’t have any excuse. I sent the invitation to you a year ago and now I have killed the fatten calf. We’ve got the barbecue going and everything’s ready. All you have to do is come. Everything is here.”

In essence the host is saying, “I have prepared and thought of everything.” Now, is that God? God is saying to you if you don’t have a personal relationship with His Son, he has everything ready. It is all yours by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

## 2 Peter 1:3

seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness. . . .

He’s paid for it all. It’s yours for the taking. Everything is ready and all you have to do is come.

Charlotte Elliott said it well when she wrote that invitation hymn:

Just as I am, without one plea,  
but that Thy blood was shed for me.  
O Lamb of God, I come. I come.

Everything is ready. All you have do is come and take it.

### Revelation 21:6

He says, “. . . I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.”

### Revelation 22:17

And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

Isn't it amazing how people will fight and they will turn down the one thing that could really bring them joy and fulfillment? They have all kinds of excuses and reasons why they don't want to take the one thing that would provide all the answers for them in their lives.

**v. 5 But they paid no attention and went their way, one to this own farm, another to his business.**

“But they paid no attention and went their way, one to this own farm, another to his business.”



What'd they do the first time? The phrase we had the first time was “they are not desiring to come.”

Now we know a little more. What are they doing? When this invitation comes there are two things:

1. “They paid no attention” and
2. they “went their way”—their own way.

Can you find any other words on the chart now that describe these characters?

Self-righteous, self-sufficient, self-indulgent, self-centered, and know-it-all.

They don't have to go. They know their rights. They don't pay any attention and they have botched-up priorities. They are going to go about business as usual. That's the way they're going to live their life.

### Isaiah 53:6

All of us like sheep have gone astray . . .”

### Proverbs 14:12

There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end of the way is death.

## Isaiah 30:21

And your ears will hear a word behind you, This is the way, walk in it, when you turn to the right and when you turn to the left.”

1. No sensitivity.
2. No servant attitude.

When you become a Christian, one of the ways you can tell that a person is a Christian is the Spirit of God makes them sensitive to the needs of others. Along with that sensitivity comes a sacrificial servanthood—wanting to be involved in helping meet needs.

If you don't have either one of those things it's a good indication that you've never come into a personal relationship with Christ. The Spirit of God makes us sensitive to the needs of others. Accompanying that is a sacrificial servanthood desiring to alleviate and to meet needs in whatever way possible. These fellows are demonstrating the fact the Spirit of God has not worked in their life.

A little fairy tale at the beginning of our study about a little boy that gets his IALAC cookie eaten up was one thing, but let's now take it and put flesh and blood on it in the Bible so you can see how it acts.

One of the most sensitive persons in the Bible is Mary of Bethany. Mary was always sitting at the feet of the Lord every

time we see her. She is a precious lady.

The first time we see her is in Luke 10. Jesus has just come to the house. Martha, her sister, hits the swinging doors to the kitchen to get the microwave going to get supper ready and dear Mary of Bethany is sitting at His feet listening to Him talk. Now Martha goes up in smoke over Mary's inactivity. She blows in there with her hands on her hips and wants everything straightened out.

The Lord looks at her and says, "Martha, Martha. You sure got your nose out of joint. You're troubled by a lot of things. Mary has chosen that good part."

What is the Lord saying about Mary? The one thing God wants from us more than anything else is our fellowship and not our fruit and our food. It's more important that we spend time with Him than anything—to be still and to know that He's God.

Mary was sensitive to that. She was sensitive that Jesus needed to talk and wanted to talk and so she sat there at His feet and learned from Him.

The next time we see her at His feet is after her brother has just died. Jesus waited 4 days to get there (John 11) and she comes out and she craters right on the road. She falls at His feet and says, "If You had been here my brother would not have died." Jesus begins to weep because He realizes her tears and her deep sensitive spirit.

The next time we see her is in John 12 and she's sitting at His

feet anointing them with the costly perfume and wiping them with her hair. She knows He's not going to be here long. She has that sensitive spirit that's heard Him say that He's going to die. This probably happened just about the time of the telling of this particular parable.

She expresses the epitome of a sensitive spirit, doing the right thing in the right way at the right time. She is a beautiful, beautiful person.

Another beautiful person is Nicodemus. You wouldn't think that when you see him in John 3. "We know You're a teacher come from God, what have you come to teach us?" "Well, you must be born again."

In that encounter Nicodemus, although he was a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin, entered into a relationship with Christ right there. In John 7 he's the lone voice on the Sanhedrin who says, "Does our Law judge a man without first knowing about him? Isn't that what the Law says?"

Who is it when all the other disciples scatter into the woodwork on the day of the crucifixion, steps forward to beg the body of Christ and to prepare it for burial? Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. He's an incredible illustration of a person who is sensitive.

Another tremendous biblical illustration is Joseph in the Old Testament. Joseph had that ability to be sensitive to the needs of his brothers and of his father and he was very, very gracious in the way he dealt with them and met their needs.

God is at work in all of our lives to make us sensitive. What about your sensitivity to God? Are you very sensitive to Him? Have you sensed His presence with you today as a believer? Have you walked with Him? Have you sensed His smile in that still small voice that's saying, "It's okay. This is the way. Walk ye in it. Everything's going to be fine"?

Have you had that sensitivity in your marriage with your spouse, recognizing needs and trying to live in their world and wanting to reach out and meet those needs? Or have you become hardened to those needs? How about your family? Are you really sensitive to your kids and where they're coming from and what they are asking? Do you hear them saying, "I am lovable and capable"?

How about your sensitivity toward the people that God has entrusted to you for ministry? Maybe it's people at work. Maybe it's people at church. But they're special people. Are you really carrying their burdens and are you sensitive to some of their needs and is there anguish in your heart over what they are going through?

Sensitivity can be seen in 3 words:

WORDS,

WORKS and

WILLINGNESS.

Is that an easy prescription for sensitivity? Sensitivity can be seen in your words, in your works and in your willingness.

Sensitivity can be seen in your WORDS because you are affirming and encouraging. That's how you become sensitive.

Secondly, it's in your WORKS. In the deeds that you do for others that nobody knows anything about but you're doing it to assist and to help.

And third, your WILLINGNESS. Willingness to be involved. That is the most beautiful thing among some Christian people. They just gravitate. They have a willingness to do things. It's a sensitivity that brings great joy and delight.

Now test your own level of sensitivity in view of that.

### **v. 6 And the rest, having seized his slaves, treated them shamefully and killed them.**

“And the rest [those guys that didn't pay any attention, the rest of them], having seized his slaves, treated them shamefully and killed them.”

Who do you think these slaves are? Most likely John the Baptist, Peter, James and John. It's a foreshadowing of their martyrdom and their death, and the stoning of Stephen. This is the picture described in these servants of the Lord that have been sent to give an invitation to the salvation wedding feast.

Thus far we've had four responses to the invitations:

1. They had no desire.
2. They paid no attention.
3. They went their way.
4. They killed and persecuted the slaves that he sent.

What's the king going to do? The ball is in the king's court.

3. The Response of the King—verses 7-9.

**v. 7 But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.**

“But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.”

He does 4 things:

He's “enraged,”

He “sent his armies,”

“destroyed those murderers,” and

“set their city on fire.”

What kind of thinking, feeling and acting is that?

It is Correct Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting.

It is right to be angry when your anger is not selfish. It is

righteous indignation here. He certainly is competent. He's a steward. He realizes this. He's independent and he moves forward in taking action.

This is a prophecy of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. that Christ is talking about here. In that horrible experience 1.5 million Jews were killed by the Roman Empire. The last little pocket of them lasted for 3 years at Massada and finally when the Roman soldiers got to the top of the mountain fortress, all of them had committed suicide.

### Matthew 23:37

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen would gather her chickens under her wings, but you would not.”

You were just stubborn, selfish, hard of heart. No sensitivity to your present plight and condition. Unwilling to respond to the wedding feast.

**v. 8 Then he is saying to his slaves, ‘The wedding feast is indeed ready, but those who have been invited were not worthy.**

“Then he is saying to his slaves, “The wedding feast is indeed ready, but those who have been invited were not worthy.”

Here a few verses:

### Acts 13:46-48



And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first, since you repudiate it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life. Behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For thus the Lord has commanded us; I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you should bring salvation to the end of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Of course Paul and Barnabas took it to the Jews. They didn't respond and so they go to the Gentiles. That's the picture that you got here of the gospel message.

### Proverbs 1:24-33

Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention. And you neglected all my counsel and did not want my reproof. I will even laugh at your calamity...

### Proverbs 29:1

A man who hardens his neck after much reproof will suddenly be broken beyond remedy.

What have we had in the passage so far?

First of all, we've had two invitations from the king. Then severe action is taken because of those two rejections. Then the rejection issues in an invitation to anybody who would come.

Does that sound like the gospel message? Yes.

“Whosoever will may come.”

That is a prophecy of what is taking place today. Anybody can come. The banquet is ready. The price has been paid. Everything is yours for the taking.

**v. 9 Go therefore to the main intersections, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.**

“Go therefore to the main intersections, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.”

And now the banquet is filled.

4. The Banquet Hall is Finally Filled—verses 10.

**v. 10 And those slaves went out in the streets, and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with those reclining at the banquet tables.**

“And those slaves went out in the streets, and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with those reclining at the banquet tables.”

What can you say about this motley multitude that fills the banquet and is there for the wedding supper of the Lamb?

Correct Negative Thinking/Feeling/Acting. They knew they were sinners. They knew where they came from and they didn't reject it. They know they're imperfect and in humility they accept the gracious invitation. They come to enjoy all that the Lord has provided for them at the feast.

Now the story ends with kind of a sad, sad note in verses 11-14.

5. The Missing Wedding Garment—verses 11-14.

**v. 11 But when the king came in to look over those reclining at the table, he saw a man there not dressed in wedding clothes.**

“But when the king came in to look over those reclining at the table, he saw a man there not dressed in wedding clothes.”

When you came to a royal feast like this, you had garments at the door that were provided for you so that you could be acceptable—acceptably attired in the king's presence. As the king comes in, there's one guy that stands out like a sore thumb. He doesn't have his garment on.

“He doesn't have his garment on.”

Where do you think he fits in the picture as far as interpersonal relationships are concerned?

He didn't take the garment that was provided for him. Where do you think he fits? Incorrect Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting.

What words do we use? Arrogant.

“This garment might be for everybody else, buddy, but not for me, man. I’m cool. I don’t need this. I can come in on my own terms.”

Boasting. Bragging. “Sit next to these guys in these weird garments. I don’t have to get one, man. I got in here without it. I’m really cool.”

Self-righteous. Feeling superior to others because they all needed the garments but certainly not him. “It’s great for these other poor folks but I’m an exception.” You can see this self-satisfaction and the defiance in the picture that’s described.

The king comes in and he notices he doesn’t have a garment. In John 13 when the king comes into the upper room just before He dies on the cross, He found a bunch of dirty feet. He found some proud hearts. He found some idle hands and some busy mouths and He found one without a wedding garment. Judas Iscariot was sitting there. He was the one who would ultimately betray the Lord. We almost have another picture of the parable here in the experience of Christ just a few hours before He hangs upon the Cross.

**v. 12 And he is saying to him: ‘Friend how did you come in here not having a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless.**

“And he is saying to him: “Friend how did you come in here not having a wedding garment?” And he was speechless.”

He didn't have any excuse at all.

### Hebrews 2:3

how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? . . .

There was no escaping it. He was speechless.

### Romans 3:19

“Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.”

**v. 13 Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’**

“Then the king said to the servants, “Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.””

What a sad, sad picture. He's a picture of all those who have refused. He's a picture of those who try to fake it. And he's a picture of those who think that they can get in on their own terms.

There are millions of people like that on the face of the earth, thinking that they are going to be an exception and that they are going to get in. But Jesus says, “Many will say unto Me in

that day, ‘Lord, Lord, haven’t we done many wonderful works?’ and I will say, ‘Depart from Me; I never knew you. You workers of iniquity.’”

**v. 14 For many are invited ones but few are chosen out ones.**

“For many are invited ones but few are chosen out ones.”

Only a few respond.

Jesus describes the broad road that leads to destruction and the narrow way which leads to life and then He says, “Few are those who find it.”

We hope you are among those who find it.

Here are a few points to remember:

1. It’s a dangerous thing to disregard the invitation of the King.

He could be knocking on your heart’s door, wanting to come into your life. If He is, don’t disregard it.

2. Everything is ready. All you have to do is come.

3. You must accept 2 things: (1) the King’s invitation and (2) the King’s provision.

4. The call of the gospel is “whosoever will may come.”

“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever . . .”

5. His righteousness is the only garment that will satisfy the King.

Remember how the hymn writer says, “Dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before His throne. On Christ the solid Rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand.”

6. God is a God of grace and judgment.

7. Judas Iscariot is an illustration of a man without a wedding garment. He was with Christ. He had every opportunity but he never availed himself of those opportunities in those 3 years to come to know Christ personally.

8. The King is waiting for your response to His invitation.

How sensitive are you? This is one of those things that God has a way of doing in our life. If we get hardened in heart and we get distant and we get selfish, God has an incredible way of cracking the hard shell of selfishness so He can get down to the real meat where we're tender and sensitive.

The person was so right who said, “God sometimes has to hurt a person deeply before He can ever use Him greatly.”

Maybe you're going to have to go through some suffering and some difficulty in your life as God disciplines to break the shell

to intensify your sensitivity level.

Ask God to make you a sensitive person that can feel the hurts of others and have a deep desire to alleviate those hurts and move into their lives and have a constructive involvement in ministry with them.

Father, it's our prayer as we read in this parable and we've seen such insensitivity that we would be those who are characterized by Correct Negative Thinking/Feeling/Acting. That we're humble and broken before You. That we're really sensitive to the needs of others and that You will do a good work in our lives of providing us opportunities to sacrificially serve in meeting the needs of others and finding real joy in that kind of service. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



# SOLVING STRUGGLES

## In Interpersonal Relationships

### “Learning to Live, Love and Listen to Each Other”

#### **Ingredient #5: SENSITIVITY – Matthew 22:1-14**

#### NOTES

##### I. Invitation #1 – Matt. 22:1-3

v. 1 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying,

v. 2 “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man, a king, who made a marriage feast for his son.

v. 3 And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were not desiring to come.

##### II. Invitation #2 – Matt. 22:4-6

v. 4 Again, he sent out other slaves saying: “Tell those who have been invited: “Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my steers and my fattened livestock I have butchered and everything is ready. Come to the marriage feast.”

v. 5 But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business.

v. 6 And the rest, having seized his slaves, treated them shamefully and killed them.

##### III. Invitation #3 – Matt. 22:7-9

v. 7 But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.

v. 8 Then he is saying to his slaves, “The wedding feast is indeed ready, but those who have been invited were not worthy.”

## NOTES

v. 9 Go therefore to the main intersections, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.’

### IV. The Banquet Hall Is Filled – Matt. 22:10

v. 10 And those slaves went out in the streets, and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with those reclining at the banquet tables.

### V. The Missing Wedding Garment – Matt. 22:11-14

v. 11 But when the king came in to look over those reclining at the table, he saw a man there not dressed in wedding clothes.

v. 12 And he is saying to him: ‘Friend, how did you come in here not having a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless.

v. 13 Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

v. 14 For many are invited ones, but few are chosen-out ones.”

## LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

**Lesson #1:** It’s a dangerous thing to disregard the invitation of the King. And He could be knocking on your heart’s door, wanting to come into your life. If He is, don’t disregard it.

**Lesson #2:** Everything is ready. All you have to do is come.

**Lesson #3:** You must accept 2 things: (1) the King’s invitation and (2) the King’s provision.

Lesson #4: The call of the gospel is “whosoever will may come.”  
“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever . . . .”

Lesson #5: His righteousness is the only garment that will satisfy the King. Remember how the hymn writer says, “Dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before His throne. On Christ the solid Rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand.”

Lesson #6: God is a God of grace and judgment.

Lesson #7: Judas Iscariot is an illustration of a man without a wedding garment. He was with Christ. He had every opportunity but he never availed himself of those opportunities in those 3 years to come to know Christ personally.

Lesson #8: The King is waiting for your response to His invitation.