

# DEEP SIX STUDY

January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026

## ***Newish You – “Invest in Relationships”***

### **MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS** *(You can view the full message online at [capecodchurch.com](http://capecodchurch.com))*

**Opening:** This week’s message continued the “Newish” series by focusing on one deeply practical area of Scripture: relationships. While relationships are essential, they are also challenging—and investing in them requires intentionality, courage, forgiveness, and trust – all rooted in Christ’s unconditional love.

#### **1. Invest in Relationships** (Ecclesiastes 4:9–12)

- Scripture makes a clear claim: two are better than one—for help, warmth, protection, and strength. We were created for connection; even strength and success are framed as communal, not individual.
- The image of a “three-braided cord” is not about exclusivity or finding one best friend, but about mutuality—standing together, reinforcing one another. This includes friendships, family, coworkers, mentors, and community.
- Our culture often pulls us toward isolation, but deep inside we long for meaningful connection. Pickleball is a modern example that reveals how much people crave relational belonging.

#### **2. Relationships Are Hard**

- Relationships become especially difficult when we choose the “*wrong people in the right place*” - relationships of convenience rather than formation.
- Another common trap is building “deal friends” (relationships based primarily on benefit, access, or advantage) instead of “real friends”

#### **3. How to Invest in Relationships:**

##### **a. Go First** (Proverbs 18:24)

- Scripture teaches that anyone who wants friends must show themselves friendly.
- Going first always carries the risk of rejection—but it is often the doorway to meaningful connection. Initiating conversations, invitations, or care is an act of courage, not weakness.

##### **b. Forgive Slight Offenses and Differences** (Proverbs 17:9)

- Love prospers when faults are forgiven; dwelling on offenses separates close friends.
- Most lasting relationships are built through the repeated choice to forgive small offenses.
- Differences in personality, perspective, and communication are inevitable—and survivable—with grace and humility.

##### **c. Use Awkward Affirmations**

- Authentic affirmation often sounds awkward but is a powerful reflection of how we feel about our friends and helps build meaningful relationships. Here are 3 awkward affirmations: “*I appreciate you,*” “*I admire you,*” “*I ask you*”

#### **4. The Foundation: Christ’s Unconditional Love** (Romans 8:35, 37–39)

- Many people stop investing in relationships after experiencing rejection and build walls for self-protection.

- The unconditional love of Jesus reframes rejection: nothing can separate us from His love.
- The acceptance of Christ allows us to risk the rejection of people

## ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

*These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. All verses are NLT unless otherwise noted.*

Proverbs 27:17; John 13:34-35; John 15:12-15; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 John 4:7-12

Video of the Week: [Loyal Love](#) by the Bible Project

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. When you think about your closest friendships, what initially drew you to those people? Was it convenience, shared interests, genuine connection, or something else?
2. A real and unfortunate part of relationships is the feeling of rejection. How do you typically respond after experiencing rejection?
3. The pickleball story illustrates how people often join activities less for the activity itself and more for connection. What activities, hobbies, or groups have brought meaningful relationships into your life? What do those experiences teach us about how community forms?
4. Paul's declaration in Romans 8 that nothing can separate us from God's love is grounded in the finished work of Christ. How does the gospel—particularly Christ's death and resurrection—become the foundation that enables us to risk vulnerability and rejection in human relationships?
5. The message suggests that showing yourself friendly involves three things: going first, forgiving slight offenses, and giving awkward affirmations. Which of these three do you find most challenging, and why? Which one can you see having an immediate impact on a current relationship?
6. The message challenges us to "go first" in relationships. Who is someone God might be prompting you to reach out to (or you have recently) - someone who needs friendship, encouragement, or community? What specific step could you take this week to initiate or deepen that relationship?