

Week 1: We believe relationships are worth dying for.

INTRODUCTION:

Relationships can be extraordinarily complicated and messy. But like it or not, they are necessary. It is the only way in which we can give and receive love; the very things we were created to do. Rarely do we ever have an opportunity to die for someone physically, but every day we have opportunities to sacrifice, or “die to ourselves,” for the sake of a relationship. That relationship could be with a spouse, a friend or even a co-worker.

The Bible teaches us that every relational struggle can be traced back to some kind of selfishness. We want something that we don't have and so we fight for it. Thankfully, Jesus came and gave up His life to restore us back to God. And because there was no obstacle so great to prevent Jesus from dying for a relationship with us, we don't think there's any obstacle so great that can keep us from “dying to ourselves” for the sake of relationships with others.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are you more introverted or more extraverted? What does this life group need to know about you when it comes to relationships?
2. What makes your best relationship so good? What has made your worst relationship so bad?
3. We've all had painful past relationships. What role does “fear” play in your pursuit of deep relationships with others? Ultimately, what does this fear rob from you?
4. What do you see as the current cultural challenges we face when it comes to building and growing relationships?
5. Read James 4:1-3. How does this help us better understand relationship dynamics?
6. Read Acts 2:42-47. Describe in your own words the relationship people had in the early church.
7. How did Jesus do relationships? What types of people did He spend time with? And, as best as you can estimate, in what proportion? Why do you think that was?
8. Explain in your own words the significance of relationship when it comes to disciple-making.

9. Relationships, no matter how extraverted you are, can be draining over time. Read Mark 1:35-36. How did Jesus deal with being needed by so many? How might knowing that help you in your relationships?
10. Pastor Dave mentioned in his sermon that we naturally value relationships based upon what we can get out of them rather than what we can put into them. How would our relationships look differently if we chose to do the latter?
11. Read Philippians 2:3-4. Which relationship would be most impacted if you applied this to all your relationships?
12. Great relationships require authenticity (realness), transparency (openness) and vulnerability (willingness to be helped). Which one do you struggle with the most and why? How does the Gospel help us practice each of these with other people?
13. Read Matthew 26:37-38. What can we learn about Jesus' authenticity, transparency, and vulnerability from His struggle in Gethsemane?
14. How does the Gospel help us better understand and live out the following statement, "Relationships are worth dying for"?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Relationship challenge: You can wait for a relationship to "magically" appear or get deeper, or you can put to death whatever has been keeping you from initiating a deeper relationship with someone. Identify whatever has been holding you back, and then pursue a new or deeper relationship with someone this week based upon what you can give rather than what you can get. (i.e. Invite someone from your Life Group over for dinner!)

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Memorize John 15:12-13 - "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."