

life group study guide

CORE VALUES: RELATIONSHIPS



Week 3: February 19 - CORE VALUE - Relationships

Bottom Line: Relationships = "loving one another through life's ups and downs"

Scripture: John 13:34-35; 1 John 2:7-11; 1 Peter 1:21-23

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Items needed: Bibles, pens/pencils, index cards or post it notes, paper hearts (about 4X4), notebook or plain paper

Get Started: Ah, Relationships. A loaded word, wouldn't you say? It's a catchall for many different types of interactions – we often use it when we don't know how else to categorize what we have with another person. You have friends on Facebook who are "in a relationship". You have a relationship with your parents, your friends, your co-workers or teachers, God....but how would you define and differentiate those relationships?

Imagine you are on a team of people who've been hired to define/describe relationships in today's culture. Think about it: We have tons of different kinds of relationships, many different levels of trust, time-spent in different relationships differs, amount of investment or concern differs. Some relationships require – and you are happy to give – loads of time and energy. Some require very little upkeep.

Break into groups of 2-4 and create a list of different types of relationships with short, catchy descriptions for each.

Example: *Dating relationship:* you think about him/her all the time, but you haven't yet decided what the future holds. Sweet music or suspense score – it depends on the day.

Co-worker relationship: You do what you have to do to get through the day without causing any riffs between you. If it's a good day, you don't think about this person at all the rest of the day. If it's a bad day, you'll complain about him/her all evening.

(Be purposefully vague about what types of relationships they are to define; this is a chance for us to discover just what relationships they deal with on a regular basis.)

Have groups share their Relationship definitions

Get the Scoop:

Q: How are most people today learning how to navigate relationships?

Q: How do your peers figure out how to make things work?

Q: How would you say our culture does in building and maintaining quality relationships? Explain.

God's Word gives us a lot of direction in building and maintaining healthy relationships. Instead of checking out the latest Cosmo or Seventeen mag, for relationship advice, why not go to God – who created each of us and knows us inside and out?

If you're doing this lesson after hearing the sermon, you've explored John 13:34-35, 1 John 2:7-11, and 1 Peter 1:21-23.

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Q: What are the 2-3 biggest things you took away from the sermon?

Dig In:

We're going to dig a little deeper into learning what it means to have healthy relationships. If we truly love someone, we will love them "through life's ups and downs." The Apostle Paul breaks it down for us in his description of love and how-to-show-it in Romans 12:9-21. (If you want to grow in your personal faith journey, check out Romans 12:1-8 for even more ways you can honor Christ in your daily choices.)

Break into 3 groups, assigning each group a section of scripture: Romans 12:9-13, 12:14-16, and 12:17-21. Have each group read and then re-write the passage in a way their peers would understand it.

Give groups about 10-12 minutes to work. Call them back together, and hand out an index card or post it note to each person.

As we listen to what each group found, keep a running list of things you hear that could apply to you. (It may be that you are doing a good job in that area, or that the Spirit is nudging you to improve in that area, etc.)

Have each group read their re-written passage.

There is a lot to think about in this passage. I'm sure you realize that we, as Christians, don't often love the way we are called to love. I, for one, find myself realizing that I need to grow in the area of _____. Circle or star the area you feel God's Spirit leading you to improve.

Take It Home

Pass out a paper heart to each person in your group.

Not only are there relationship skills we need to improve, there are people affected by those relationships. Paul gives us a ton to think about regarding how-to-love. You may be struggling with loving someone unlovable. You may be dealing with someone super-difficult. Maybe God's calling you to forgive. Maybe He's asking you to mourn with someone who's hurting, or lift someone up in prayer who's struggling or ill.

Allow your students to spread out and find somewhere to think/write/pray by themselves. Take a minute and write down the area of love you'll surrender to God this week. (from Romans 12:9-21)

Then, write down the initials or the name of a person you're going to intentionally love this week. This could be a sibling, a peer, a parent, someone new at school...

Turn the heart over and write Romans 12:10 on the back:

"Love each other deeply. Honor one another above yourselves."

Take your paper heart home and put it somewhere where you'll see it daily. Pray for God to grow you in this relationship area, and ask Him to help you love the person who's name you wrote.

Prayer time

Spend some time praying for each other – specifically about loving someone else and growing in their love-skills. ☺ It depends on how well your students know each other, but they may be willing to share what they wrote on their paper hearts. You can spend time praying specifically for each one of them – or pray for them as a group. Follow up this week to see how they're growing, and how they're loving.