

this is LOVE

week four

Instructions for the group:

*(Anyone in the group can read these instructions to the group. Note: The group should run no longer than 90 minutes and it is **not** imperative to answer all of the provided questions each week.)*

- 1) Welcome everyone in the group and invite everyone in the group to share how their week has been going. Have everyone answer the question, "What is your all-time favorite sports team/event?" (15-20 min)
- 2) Going around the group, have each person explain whether they relate more with young David or with Goliath. Meaning: Were they raised with low expectations from their family and community (like David) or very high expectations from their family and community (like Goliath)? (10 min)
- 3) Starting with one person in the group and going in a circle, have each person read a few sentences from the excerpt provided from Chapter Three of *This is Love* (see the back of this page). (5 min)
- 4) After reading the excerpt answer these questions: (20-30 min)
(Everyone in the group should have a chance to answer the question if they choose. Note: be comfortable with quiet moments to allow people to process or think.)
 - What were your talents or hobbies when you were a young kid like David?
 - Follow up question: How have these hobbies/passions shaped who you are today?
 - How do you look at the story of David and Goliath differently based on the author's portrayal of their stories?
 - "Would you be willing to take a bullet for someone? If there was a grenade that was thrown into the room, would you be the person who would throw yourself on top of it to save your friends?" And how does love change your response to this question.
 - Was there a time when you were intimidated by someone in your life? (if so explain) Have you ever revisited that person later on? What was your experience?
 - How does the knowledge of God's love give us a boldness to confront the giants of this world?
 - What does the sentence "perfect love drives out fear" mean to you?
 - How can Jesus' encouragements to lay down our lives for one another be defined more broadly? An example is that of Dr. Moray (James' 6th grade teacher) who lay down her life for her students because she loved them.
- 5) Talk about how this group and the times that you have met have impacted your life. What were some of the more impactful discussions for you? (15 min)
- 6) Go around the group and ask if anyone would like prayer for anything specific in their life. Ask one person in the group to briefly lift up the prayer concerns of the group in a short time of prayer.
- 5) Determine if any of the members of the group would like to continue to meet in the coming weeks (between April 1 and Easter). Make a list of those people who'd like to continue.

Chapter 3 *(excerpt)*

My dad still asks me every year if my kids are old enough to go backpacking with him in the Sawtooth Mountains. Personally, I can't wait for the day that I get to show them how beautiful this world really is.

One thing about mountains is that as you grow up they don't get smaller. The trees are still enormous and the vistas are endless. If anything, getting to the top becomes a little more challenging with each passing year.

Many people will go through their entire life without ever attempting to go backpacking, because the challenge just appears impossible. There are many modern day warriors who shrink back in fear at the Goliaths of life.

The remedy is love.

Love strips us bare and eliminates every fear. Because God has perfect love for us, we can address any challenge with the assurance that we will not be harmed and that no one can take our life away from us.

One of the lessons that we learn from David is that the Goliaths of this life are not really that scary when we meet them up close. While the whole world may be insisting that the giants are unbeatable and invincible, God invites us all to step forward in faith and to lay down our lives.

This kind of faith, demonstrated in a willingness to die, assumes that God's will is for us to live. It assumes that God can manage anything.

This faith only works if we let go and trust that God will take care of the bigger plan.