



DISCUSSION GUIDE

::Week 5::

::February 20 & 21, 2010::

Small Group Warm-Up

:: What is one thing you did with a friend recently—just for fun?

Or: Where do you like to take out of town company when they visit you in San Diego? ::

Opening Prayer

:: Jesus, thank you for showing us what love looks like through your actions and your sacrifice. ::

Discussion Questions

1. :: This weekend James used a make-believe illustration in which he told his daughter to clean her room. She came back and said she had memorized his words, she really believed his words, and that she was going to have some friends over to discuss his words. The problem is, she didn't actually clean her room. Sometimes that is how we respond to God's Word. Think back over the past 5 weeks of this relationship series. What is one thing you actually did in order to put love into action toward someone you know? If you can't think of something you did, tell us one thing you will do this week to put love into action in one of your relationships. ::

2. :: Read John 13:34::

:: Our culture is captivated by the idea of love, but not so good at acting in love. Make two lists:

1. List One: What kinds of things does the romantic idea of love include?
2. List Two: What does biblical love include and how did Jesus model it for us?
3. What are the most striking differences between these two lists?::

3. ::Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7::

:: In this short passage, the Apostle Paul tells us what love looks like.

- Which one thing from this list is hardest for you to do? Why?
- Which one thing from this list is fairly easy for you to do? Why?

Pastor James focused on verse 7 and taught us that **when there is a gap between our expectations or needs and reality**, we need to **believe the best** about the other person involved, rather than the worst. For example: James promises to come home from work at 5:00 for an early dinner, but 5:30 arrives and he is not there. Becky can believe the worst (he is thoughtless and rude) or the best (he is caught up in an important work project and will call or be home as soon as possible.)

- Give an example from your life of how you could choose to believe (and say) the best about another person in a stressful situation, and how it might improve the relationship. ::

4. ::Read Romans 5:8 and Romans 8:38-39::

:: Sometimes we get stuck believing that we have to do something special to earn God's love. But the message of the Bible is that God loves us unconditionally and came to die for us when we were at our worst. This weekend, we celebrated communion as a tangible reminder of Jesus' sacrifice unfailing love.

- What is most meaningful to you about receiving communion?

This weekend we also celebrated baptisms. This is when a person goes public with their faith in Jesus. **Tell us about your baptism or the baptism of a special friend.** If you haven't been baptized as an adult, check out the details on the website at: <http://www.eastlakechurch.com/next-steps/member-services/baptism/>.

Closing Prayer

::God, thank you for your faithful, unfailing love for us. It gives us great security to know that there is nothing we can do to stop you from loving us. Today we choose to open our hearts to receive your love. Help us to extend your love to others in practical ways in the week to come.

