

Small Group Curriculum

Week of 10-21-12

1. Read Jeremiah 1:5 and Ephesians 2:10. How do these verses change how we should go about finding meaning in our lives?
2. Pastor Derek noted that a researcher named Kinnaman found that in a 16:1 ratio, outsiders had a negative opinion of Christians. Where do you think this negative perception came from? How much of this negative perception do you think we earned?
3. Pastor Derek believes these negative perceptions were born out of the church's inability to practice three great loves. Explain that for the rest of the evening we'll be exploring these loves. Have a volunteer read Mark 12:28-31. Why do you think Jesus replied by offering two commandments when the man only asked for the one greatest commandment?
4. What does it mean to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength?
5. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Why is it important for us to think about God's commandments as we walk through every aspect of our day? How is this different from the notion that faith should be a private venture?
6. Read 2 Timothy 1:5. According to the Apostle Paul, what if this was the desired outcome of his teaching ministry? How would the way we approach Bible study change if our sole motivation was to discover how to love God and our neighbors more effectively?
7. If you were asked to demonstrate your love for unchurched people only using your calendar, how comfortable would you be? Why? What makes it hard to make giving love to those outside the church more than lip service?
8. Have a volunteer read John 13:34-35. What other things could Jesus have offered as proof regarding who his authentic disciples were? Why do you think he settled on love for each other?
9. Have a volunteer read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. What happens when these definitions of love are practiced within a local church? What happens when they are absent? Which of these definitions of love does our small group embody the best? The worst?
10. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7. How does God's strategy of distributing a variety of spiritual gifts throughout the church teach what it means to have love for other believers?
11. Distribute a note card and pen to each person in your group. Invite them to make a goal for each of these loves. Collect the cards. Inform the group that in two months you'll pull them out so they can check on their progress.