

## Sermon-Based Small Group Preparation

For the week of November 6, 2011

### “Make It All About Love”

Sermon Series: *How to Wreck Your Life* (week 4 of 5)

Judges 14 & 16

» Please look over these questions *before* your Small Group meeting «

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### Getting Started

- 1) Think back over this past week. How many times have you made the following statement:

“I love \_\_\_\_\_.”

What has filled in that blank (names, places, events, objects)?

- 2) In his sermon, Pastor Tom asked us to think about the possibility of love becoming an idol. What was your initial response to this idea? After hearing the sermon, did your response change?
- 3) Where does your understanding of what love should be come from? Furthermore, where have you seen love modeled in your life (whether it was true love or incomplete love)?
- 4) *Read John 13:34*

“A new command I give you: Love one another.  
As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” (NIV)

Why does Jesus refer to this idea as a “new command”?

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### Into the Bible

While there are many passages in the Old and New Testament that talk about love, one of the most notable and commonly used set of verses comes from 1 Corinthians.

*Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a*

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup> It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

<sup>8</sup> Love never fails. (NIV)

These verses speak to a type of love that is ideal but not an idol. Within these verses there are a lot of adjectives that describe love and how it should be.

- 5) Can these verses help us understand love in a way that keeps it from becoming an idol? If so, which verses are particularly helpful to this discussion? Are any of these adjectives foreign to how our society often regards love today?

*Read Matthew 22:36-40*

<sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

- 6) What is significant about the order of these commandments?
- 7) Is it possible to love others in a way that 1 Corinthians describes and still keep true to what Jesus asks of us in Matthew 22?

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### Digging Deeper

Love is something that we encounter daily through relationships, TV shows, music lyrics, and elsewhere. However, many of these daily encounters offer us counterfeit definitions and examples of love.

- 8) Have you allowed love to become an idol in any of the ways Pastor Tom touched on in his sermon (or any other ways)?

9) Looking back at your past, have you had an incomplete view of love or expectations for love that were inconsistent with an understanding of how God desires that we experience love? Have you been able to move past some of these harmful views? If so, how?

10) We often settle for good things instead of ultimate things. Are there any good things in your life that are keeping you from expressing love to or receiving love from God and others?

11) "We put love on a pedestal. God put love on a cross."  
What does this statement mean to you?

During the upcoming week, take time to reflect on the relationships in your life. Do any of them put you in jeopardy of idolizing love? If so, please pray for God's strength and wisdom to allow you to understand and express love according to His example of *hesed* (unfailing love).

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### **Prayer Requests and Closing Prayer**

## **Sermon Notes**

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