

Small Group Guide

Week of February 12, 2024
Speaker: Mark Delaney
Devoted not Decayed



Icebreaker



- What's your favorite amusement park ride? Why?
- Who's your favorite famous couple?



Discussion



- The sermon talks about how relationships can drift from vibrant to lifeless without intentional maintenance, like an abandoned amusement park. Have you seen this happen? Share an example of a relationship you've neglected and what happened.
- The secret sauce is "stop being selfish." Easy to say, hard to do! What selfish tendencies mess up your relationships?
- When someone hurts you, what do you want to do - get even, avoid them or make up? Why do you think you tend to respond that way?
- Blessing people who hurt you is tough! Tell about a time you did that. Or when you wanted to retaliate instead. What makes it so hard to "bless and not curse"?
- Do you avoid tension and just let relationships drift apart? Or are you quick to reconcile? What makes it hard for you to pursue restoration?
- How have you seen conflict lead to growth in a relationship? Share an example.
- Has Christ's love helped you with a difficult relationship? How can we get better at relying on Him rather than ourselves?



Thought for the Group



Relationships can decay over time without intentional devotion, to avoid this descent into decay, we must actively nurture our relationships.

When faced with inevitable clashes, our flesh cries out for retaliation and revenge. But as followers of Christ, we are called to take the higher road of blessing those who wrong us and resisting vengeful impulses.

We must value reconciliation above winning arguments. This requires humility to admit wrongdoing, initiate restoration, and reaffirm our commitment to the relationship. The woman in Song of Solomon sets an example by remembering her beloved's admirable qualities even in disappointment. We too must recall the good amidst the bad.

We need Jesus to soften our selfish hearts and fill us with selfless, unrelenting love. Only through surrendering to Christ's transformative power can we find the strength to rebuild fractured relationships and maintain lifelong devotion.

So let us examine where our dedication has wavered and relationships have spiraled into decay. With humility and courage, guided by God's wisdom, we can heal brokenness by blessing others, pursuing reconciliation, focusing on virtues, and relying completely on Christ's love and forgiveness. Our relationships are worth fighting for.



Next Steps



- Identify a strained relationship you've neglected and reach out to schedule intentional time together this week to start rebuilding trust and intimacy. Then be prepared to listen, understand, confess my faults, and extend grace.
- Take time to pray and reflect on areas of selfishness and pride in your life that damage relationships. Make a practical plan to daily surrender your desires to God and ask for guidance.