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Hey small group leaders! We are in the third week of “Real Talk” this week! Relationships are beautiful AND complicated, aren’t they? Whether it’s friendship, family, or community, navigating them isn’t always easy. In this series, we’re having honest, biblical conversations about what matters most. When Jesus is at the center of our relationships, everything begins to change. We’ll explore real talk about how to build stronger, healthier connections that reflect God’s heart and His design for us!

Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

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“When God would have us die to self, he always touches the tenderest spot.”
[Francois Fenelon]

LEADER RESOURCES || **Leader Note** *We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!*

- [Imitators of God](#)
 - Use this short article (audio available also) for background and encouragement. This would be a good resource to share before you gather.
- [What Is Love?](#)
 - This would be a good resource to share with your group after you gather.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || **Leader Note** *The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another’s hearts and building joy together.*

How has an act of love done for you recently impacted you?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || **Leader Note** *Begin your time together thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, taking a posture of humility and dependence!*

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

“We wait in hope for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you.”
[Psalm 30:20-22]

BIG IDEA || **Leader Note** *Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today’s reading and discussion.*

What in me or about me must die (be given up) for me to really love?

PASSAGES & DISCUSSION || Leader Note Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they're for guidance!

There are a few short passages to be read for the discussion today. First have someone read aloud Ephesians 5:1-2.

1. What are believers commanded to imitate? How is Christ's love described? *Believers are called to "be imitators of God" and to "walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us." Christ's love is sacrificial and initiating, reflecting the heart of God. It sets the model for how believers are to live toward others.*
2. Why does love compel us toward sacrifice? How is this different from cultural understandings of love? *Biblical love, rooted in Christ's sacrifice, moves us to lay down our rights for others. In contrast, culture often defines love by feeling or self-fulfillment, not by giving ourselves for the good of another.*

Have someone read aloud 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.

3. How does the love of Christ affect how we live and whom we live for? *Paul writes that the love of Christ compels us. Because Christ died for us, we should no longer live for ourselves but for Him. It means our life orientation is re-centered from self-focus to Christ-focus, affecting all decisions and relationships.*
4. In what area of your life are you still "living for yourself" instead of for Christ? What might surrender look like in that area? *This is a good opportunity to go first!*

Have someone read aloud 1 Corinthians 7:35.

5. What purpose does Paul give for living in "undivided devotion" to the Lord? *Paul wants believers to be free from distraction so they can live in "undivided devotion to the Lord." This speaks to spiritual priorities—living without unnecessary entanglements that divide our focus from wholehearted discipleship.*
6. What could it look like in your current season of life to pursue "undivided devotion" to the Lord? *It might mean saying no to certain distractions, adjusting how you spend time, or creating rhythms of spiritual focus. It's about being mentally, emotionally, and spiritually available to God.*

Have someone read aloud Matthew 12:48-50.

7. How does Jesus redefine what it means to be His family? How does this challenge how we treat our fellow believers? *Jesus says His true family are those who do the will of the Father. Spiritual kinship is not about bloodlines but about obedience and shared mission, reinforcing the primacy of kingdom allegiance over even biological ties. It calls us to a deeper commitment. Church isn't just a place we attend; it's a spiritual family we serve, sacrifice for, and prioritize. It confronts individualism with covenantal belonging.*
8. What relationship or ambition is competing with your devotion to Jesus? How can you navigate that wisely? *Answers will vary: relationships, even good ones, can pull your attention from Christ if they become central to your identity. Navigating this means holding them loosely and seeking God's will above all.*

9. How does the truth that we are part of Jesus' true family affect how you view your role in the church? *Answers will vary: it invites us into deep relational commitment to our local church—not just attending, but belonging, serving, and investing like we would in a family.*
10. What specific ways can we help each other maintain “undivided devotion” in a culture that constantly pulls us in different directions?

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || **Leader Note** *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

The cross shapes our priorities, compelling us to live for Christ, pursue undivided devotion, and embrace the church as our true family. *Real transformation comes when we align our hearts with the gospel*—surrendering to Jesus, loving sacrificially, and finding our place in God's spiritual household. *As you consider your next step, here are two questions to reflect on:* 1) Where in your life is comfort still ruling your decisions more than Christ? 2) What distractions or affections do you need to lay down to pursue undivided devotion?

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question. The possible next steps of faith below are not for discussion, but simply a resource for your group members.

Possible Next Steps of Faith

1. Write out one practical way you will prioritize your devotion to Jesus this week (e.g., limiting phone use, setting prayer time, stepping back from a commitment).
2. Identify one relationship in your life where sacrificial love is needed—and take one step toward loving that person like Christ loves you.

PRAYER FOCUS || **Leader Note** *We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5-10 minutes for prayer at the end of your gathering each week to pray together. Pray for one another as well as the prompts below!*

**This is the final short blurb about the Red Letter Challenge, along with reflection questions, so that our church family is encouraged to keep what we experienced last fall in mind.*

Red Letter REMEMBRANCE

GOING → We worship by generously investing our gifts, time, talents, and resources as worship.

- How have you invested your gifts, time, talents, and resources over the past few months?
- In what specific way do you sense God inviting you to invest your gifts, time, talents, and resources in the life of our church this summer?