



bigIdea small group discussion

We all have vampires in our lives. They're not the ones with pale skin and bloodthirsty fangs – but they do suck the life out of us. They live in your city, across the street and maybe even under your own roof. So how do you love the people who drain you? How do you handle your dysfunctional relationships? How do you make it work when all you want to do is run? It's time to learn how to hug a vampire.



BIG IDEA: Vampires live in houses with moats and walls. Healthy people live in houses with gates and fences.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you have any “Vampires” (people who are sucking you dry) in your life right now? If so, how are you handling it?
2. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Matthew 7:1-5.* Vampires don't do mirrors. Vampires don't do self-reflection. Why is it easier to point out the faults in others and not look at our own faults?
3. Chris said that, “People who are hyper-critical are usually hypocritical—they hide hypocrisy in themselves by being critical of other people.” Do you agree or disagree. Why?
4. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Proverbs 22:28 and 23:10.* Chris said that, “Before you can really reach out to anybody else, you've got to define your own property lines.” This idea of defining property lines is the idea of *boundaries*. What happens when we don't set boundaries/property lines or move them? How has your peace or joy been robbed by not defining boundaries? Name a time when you took advantage of/robbed someone of his or her peace and joy by overstepping a boundary.
5. Chris said unhealthy people build barriers, while healthy people establish boundaries. What are some barriers you have erected out of hurt or fear in your life?
6. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Galatians 6:1-2.* What does verse 2 teach us about responsibility to others?
7. When has someone in your life followed Jesus' example of sacrificial love and denied himself or herself in order to do for you what you could not do for yourself?
8. When have you followed Jesus' example of sacrificial love and denied yourself in order to do for others what they could not do for themselves?
9. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Galatians 6:3-5.*

The Greek words for burden in verse 2 and load in verse 5 give us some important insight. Burden means *excess burdens*, or *boulders*. We all need help carrying boulders. Load means *cargo*, or *the burden of a daily toil*. These loads are like knapsacks. A knapsack is possible to carry, and we're expected to carry our own. We are expected to deal with our own feelings, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as the responsibilities God has given us, even though it takes effort. We are not to carry the knapsacks of others (Luke 9:23).

10. When have you acted as if your boulders are your daily load and have refused help? Where are you doing this today?
11. When have you acted as if your daily load is a boulder that you shouldn't have to carry? Where are you doing this today?
12. What have these two questions helped you see about yourself—and what will you do with what you have learned?
13. What problems have you taken on that God may have never intended you to take on?

14. What motivated you to take on those problems you just listed?
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| a. Desire to do the right thing | d. Feelings of Guilt |
| b. Avoiding conflict and keeping the peace | e. An 'inner' should |
| c. Fear of disappointing someone | f. You wouldn't be liked |
15. Dr. Henry Cloud says in his book *Boundaries* that any time there is confusion about *responsibility* and *ownership* in our lives, it is always a problem of boundaries. What confusion about responsibility and ownership in your life do you need to draw or re-clarify some boundaries?
16. Why are you confused about boundaries—about when and how to draw them for yourself or even whether drawing boundaries is okay? What has happened to foster that confusion?
17. Why are Christians especially susceptible to confusion about boundaries?
18. Jesus always loved people from a place of overflow of the Holy Spirit. When you are seeking to love people, especially those vampires in your life, are you seeking to love them on your own strength or from God's? In other words, are you trying to love today from a place of overflow or from spiritual bankruptcy?
19. How are you “practically” being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit in order to love people?
20. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Mark 2:16-18.* How did Jesus' purpose and vision of people help Him love? Why is loving others from a place of purpose and perspective so key in loving difficult people in our lives?
21. Jesus also loved from a place of wisdom with healthy boundaries that enabled Him to love all people. What boundaries did Christ have that helped Him love others? What boundaries do you have or don't you have that help you love others?
22. What boundaries do you need to have to better love as Christ loved?

MOVING FORWARD

The questions listed below reflect some of the confusion we as Christians may have about boundaries.

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| • Can I set limits and still be a loving person? | • Why do I feel afraid or guilty when I consider setting boundaries? |
| • What are legitimate boundaries? | • How do boundaries relate to submission? |
| • What if someone is hurt or upset by my boundaries? | • Is it difficult for me to hear no from other people? |
| • How do I answer someone who wants my time, love, energy, or money? | • Do I tend to want to control other people when I don't get what I want? |

Which of these questions have you wondered about? Which questions do you especially want answers for?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Unhealthy people create barriers based on past hurts and fears, which creates isolation. Healthy people define boundaries based on self-respect and honoring others, which creates community. What are some relationships that you need to tear down some barriers and have a talk with someone? What are some relationships that you need to define or clarify boundaries?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. Each one should carry his own load.
Galatians 6:2, 5