



## Love, Dates & Heartbreaks: Grownup Love

Success is usually the result of preparation— not the product of good intentions or mere promises to succeed— and relationships are no exception to this rule. This is why it's so important to get serious about becoming the kind of person the person we're looking for is looking for, rather than simply hoping that once we find "the right person," everything will work out. But to do so, we'll have to examine the fine print of what Jesus asks of his followers in relationships. We'll have to get serious about practicing his particular brand of love, which requires exercises in kindness and empathy *now*, in order to be ready *later*.

### Start Talking

1. What's the craziest misconception you had about life as a child? Did you mistakenly believe anything really strange? (For instance, I thought to get "fired," meant that your boss cooked you in a literal oven as punishment for poor work performance.)
2. Which would you rather do: relive your childhood with the wisdom and experience you have now, or experience the daily realities of adult life with the naïveté and innocence of childhood?
3. What fairy tale or romantic comedy sends the least helpful messages about love in your opinion?

### Looking Back

4. What changes did you make in your life this past week in order to prepare for relational success?
5. If you walked right into this past week without changing anything about your life, what can you do over the next few days to ensure that that does not happen again?
6. Did you find yourself able to put others before yourself in any instances this week? How can you extend that ethos into even more of your daily interactions?
7. If you *are* in a relationship, did you find opportunities to intentionally brag on your partner?



### **What About You?**

8. What "childish" notions or assumptions about love did you carry into adulthood?
9. What surprised you the most about real-life relationships when you first started dating?
10. Do you think emotions like love can be learned, practiced, and intentionally implemented?
11. Have you ever noticed bad habits from other interpersonal relationships leaking into your interactions with a significant other?
12. Have you ever found it easier to treat other people better than those closest to you (family, significant others)? Why do you think that is?

### **Look It Up**

*Read the Following Passages: John 15:12, 1 Corinthians 13: 4 -11, Philippians 2:3 - 8.*

13. How does a person go about trying to become, "slow to anger?" Why is it necessary to be like this in relationships?
14. What are the implications of truly believing that nobody can *make* us angry, but rather that the behavior of others usually only reveals the emotions that already exist in our hearts?
15. What is wrong with holding peoples' past failures against them in relationships?
16. What does the sacrificial life and death of Jesus have to do with our romantic relationships?
17. In your reading, what does it mean to, "protect," the person you're with?

### **Putting It All Together**

1. Where do you have work to do? Are you self-seeking? Easily angered? A scorekeeper? Not protective?
2. What can you do this week to address your weak spots?
3. Be honest: how do you do when it comes to believing the best about your significant other and overlooking the rest?
4. What can you do to avoid succumbing the next time you feel tempted to bring up something your partner has done to wrong you in the past?
5. How do you think your interactions would change if you reminded yourself every time you're wronged that other peoples' behavior makes perfect sense *to them*?
6. Where in your relationship can you intentionally choose a generous explanation rather than attributing ill will to your partner?

