



## Love, Dates & Heartbreaks: The Fine Print

By observing patterns that lead to success in all areas of life, we know that success is always the result of preparation, not just good intentions or a few promises to succeed. Since relationships already carry enough unavoidable problems with them as it is, it's better 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 preparing to practice his particular brand of love, which requires exercises in kindness and empathy.

### Start Talking

1. When you think of the word, 'selfish,' what pictures come to your mind?
2. Do you think human beings are inherently selfish, or wired to cooperate?
3. Have you ever totally bombed on a date? No shame. What happened?

### Looking Back

4. Last week we talked about implementing habits that prepare us for relational success. What proactive steps did you take to start becoming the kind of person the person you're looking for is/was looking for?
5. What did you do to address the areas where you're falling short of the person you'd want your partner to be?
6. If we can classify Jesus' love— which we are called to imitate— as sacrificial, did you take any uncomfortable steps to intentionally practice that brand of sacrificial love this past week?
7. What daily reminders did you give yourself to halt the natural slide towards selfishness every human being experiences on a daily basis?



### **What About You?**

8. When you think about having a hypothetical dinner with a favorite actor, actress, or recording artist, what would you remind yourself not to do or say that you typically do or say?
9. Why do you think those practices that you would avoid in that situation seem more or less okay in other situations? What's the difference?
10. Be honest: what is your default response to weakness in others? (To weaker thinkers? Those with weaker self-esteem in your social media feed? Weaker stewards of their finances? Weaker drivers during rush hour?)
11. Andy defined, 'kindness,' as loaning your strength to another person, rather than reminding them of their inadequacy. This is counterintuitive in a culture where kindness is often characterized as weakness. When have you experienced kindness like this? When have you practiced it?
12. "Honor" is a funny, almost anachronistic term. What does it mean to you to, "honor," someone?

### **Look It Up**

*Read the Following Passages: John 15:12, 1 Corinthians 13: 4 -5, Philippians 2:3.*

13. In one of his most emphatic conversations, Jesus asks us to love one another as he has loved us. How do you understand and describe Jesus' brand of love?
14. Why do you think Paul chose the particular descriptors of "love" that he did when explaining Jesus' command to Gentile audiences?
15. What do each of those aspects of love Paul lists mean to you?
16. How do you interpret Paul's statement that love doesn't 'dishonor' others? What does this mean, practically speaking?
17. Paul seems to lump, 'envy, boasting, and pride' together as related problems. Why do you think that is?

### **Putting It All Together**

1. Since a promise is no substitute for preparation, what can you do beginning today to prepare yourself to be relationally successful?
2. Think back to Paul's list of what Christ-like love looks like in 1 Corinthians. Where do you have work to do? Patience? Kindness? Public celebration of others? Honor?
3. What would happen this week if you began every day by asking God to help you be patient, kind, committed to celebration instead of envy?
4. What are three tangible ways you can consider others better than yourself this week? How will you remind yourself in real time?
6. If you're in a relationship, what are three ways you can brag on your partner this week?

