



## Give Love [1 John 4:7-12]

*exercise*

**Break out into groups of two or three.**

**On a sheet of paper, list the top eight things in your life in order (relationships, work, things, history, events) that you garner identity from.**

**1. Of these eight things, mark which give you more life and which take more life.**

**Why?**

**2. Then mark which ones you feel control over and ones you feel little to no control over.**

**3. Then mark which ones you are fighting for control over and which one you have surrendered to (either to God or to just being.)**

Eugene Peterson writes: The idol is a form of divinity that requires no personal relationship. The idol is a divinity I can manipulate and control. (*Christ Plays In Ten Thousand Places*)

Are you surprised by your findings? How does knowing God gave up his life for our sins as an act of love (according to 1 John 4) affect these findings?

Come back together as a group and share with the group your findings.

--

*deeper*

**Imagine a non-believing friend of yours asks you what love is according to the Bible. Your friend tells you she believes love is when you feel you complement someone and your happiness and joy increases because of it. According to 1 John 4:7-12, list 8-10 words or phrases that you might use to describe love to your friend.**

**Your friend, now quite into the discussion, looks you in the eye and says to you: "You know what I really like about your faith? It's that it doesn't seem to make any significant difference in your life."**

Is this true? How would you respond to your friend? What does it look like for God's love to be breaking into your life and relationships?

--

*community*

**According to 1 John 4, love is defined as God sending his son Jesus to be an atoning sacrifice for our sins (v.10).**

A church community can be loving to those on the margins. But in the hard work of becoming a be"loved" community, forgiveness of sins seems to take an especially important place in corporate life.

In community, what is the relationship between sin and love?

How would you describe the place of forgiveness in the life of a loving community?

What, if anything, needs to happen before forgiveness?

How are we doing with forgiveness? How are you doing?