

Fall 2009

SERMON BASED
SMALL GROUP SERIES:

Radical Road Trip:

Revelation 2 and 3

Discussion Guide
Week #1

Small Groups
Transforming Community @ RBCPC



Week #1 LOVE TAKES WORK

You have abandoned the love you had at first

1 John 4:7-12 (TNIV)

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Revelation 2:17 (TNIV)

¹ "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. ² I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. ³ You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. ⁴ Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. ⁵ Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. ⁶ But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To those who are victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Notes For Reflection:

Facilitator's Guide

Facilitator's Tip of the Week:

Remember what God tells us in the scriptures: "It's not by force, nor by strength, but by my Spirit" (Zechariah 4:6). A Small Group is about connecting in friendship, opening up in conversation and prayer, leaning on each other, and inspiring each other into a fuller experience of life and faith. It takes work, but it also takes God's spirit to build a successful group. Pray everyday for your group, and pray for each person by name.

New Groups Tip:

- Building trust is extremely important for groups just starting out. Be mindful of welcoming new people, thanking each for coming, and leading the discussion. Don't wait for others to introduce themselves to each other- be the host. Start conversations and fill the gaps of conversation. Maybe think through a couple conversation starters before you come.
- Organize a social event in the first month of the group.

Possible Schedule:

6:30-6:45 Welcome and Mingling
6:45 Facilitator gathers, asks someone to pray for the Small Group
6:47 Introductions, Names (For new groups). Why did you join a Small Group?
6:47 Best of the Summer conversation (For returning groups)
6:57 Ask 1 or 2 'Start It' questions for open discussion. Let at least half the group share.
7:07 Invite someone to read the 1st passage
7:10-7:35 Read the questions, contribute, discuss
7:35 Ask for Prayer Requests
7:40 Either one person or several pray for the requests
7:45 Ask for feedback for the group, logistics and plans for following week
7:55 Finish

Event Suggestion:

Consider attending together as a group:

The Generosity Factor, Wednesday, Sept. 23rd, 7:00 p.m., RBCPC Sanctuary. One of the most insightful, powerful and compassionate leaders today, Ken Blanchard, speaks from the heart with warmth and humor. Spend the evening with us as Ken teaches the meaning of generosity. Make it an evening out! Join us for Wednesday supper in the Fellowship Center at 5:30, followed by a truly engaging evening with Ken. No reservations necessary, childcare provided.

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Start It: connecting with each other

- Talk about a dust covered item now in storage that you used to be crazy about.
- Who do you know who is a true fan or enthusiast about a hobby/sport? How do they show their passion?
- What does it feel like to first fall in love?

Study It: understanding God's word

- Someone read **1 John 4:7-12**. In this section, the word love, in some form is used 12 different times in 5 verses. What do you think the author is trying to convey to the reader?
- What does God's love look like in this passage? What is the result of receiving God's love?
- Read **Revelations 2:1-7**. What are Jesus' messages in this open letter to the Church in Ephesus?
- The church of Ephesus was doing so many things well. They endured hardships for the faith, and stood up for what was righteous among other deeds. Yet, they did not love Jesus the way they first converted to the Christian faith. Why do you think the "first love" is so crucial?
- Do you think there is a connection between coming back to your "first love" (Revelations 2:4) and loving one another (1 John 4:11b)? If so, what might they be?

Live It: making truth stick

- What can drift us away from our "first love" and how can we get back?
- Are there any areas in your life where you need to come back to your first love? What are practical ways to make this happen?

Pray It: inviting God's spirit to change you and the world

- For ourselves: that we might be people who repent, know God more deeply, and grow in passion for Jesus.
- For our church: that we can become people who put love into action.