



DATE January 10, 2016

SPEAKER David Smith

TITLE Intentional Love

SERIES No one can live without it. If you have everything, but this, you're left with nothing! There is no replacement for it as it's at the heart of humankind's existence. It can be the most difficult word to define, and yet it's essential for emotional health. No relationship can survive without it, and every person can live because of it. Love! So, how do we intentionally love?

In today's lesson, we were reminded that God calls us to love through intentional action toward others. Not only can we bless others through personal relationships, but we can spread God's love in the community by having a kingdom attitude expressed through service.

1. As this is the final week in the "Intentional Love" series, you've probably already discussed which of the five ways to express love (acts of service, words of affirmation, gifts, physical touch, and quality time) is the most important to you, but which of these five do you struggle with practicing more than the rest? Why is that particular method difficult for you to practice and express to others who need it?

2. Do you agree with Pastor David's claim that kingdom action is different than acts of service? In what ways do these two differ? Do you think the other love languages can be expressed to people you don't know personally, and practiced in a community-oriented approach?

3. In today's lesson, Pastor David mentioned that "a kingdom attitude should lead us to kingdom action." What is a "kingdom attitude"? Search through the gospels and find passages in which Jesus discusses the kingdom of God/heaven. What principles do we learn from these verses and how do they apply to building a kingdom attitude?

4. In Luke 17:7-10, Jesus makes the point that our sense of entitlement and underperformance get in the way of being worthwhile, joyful servants. Have you ever simply "showed up" to serve and considered that enough? Was that experience a blessing to you? How can you shift your spiritual motivation from self-interest to love for others?

5. The Apostle James wrote, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world" (James 1:27).

What is the significance of serving these two particular groups of people? Why do you think such service is central to what we believe as Christians and our relationship with God?

6. Ephesians 2:10 says that we were created to "do good works." What gifts has God given you that you can use to serve the community with? Have you ever taken a spiritual gifts assessment? Share any insight you learned from that self-assessment with the group and how you've applied that awareness to your acts of service.

7. Pastor David suggested that one of the biggest battles we face in life is selfishness, and that it often keeps us from serving others (Romans 12:3-8). What keeps you personally from serving others? Is your desire to serve inhibited by selfishness, laziness, social anxiety, pride, insecurity, or something else? How will leaning into God's love ease this spiritual obstacle in your heart?

8. Where are you on the scale of attitudes toward serving: think it's a good idea but are too busy; desire to serve but never get around to it; serve occasionally and feel heroic; serving consistently. What can you do to overcome what's keeping you from getting to the next level? What is the next specific step you can take? What can other members of your community group do to assist you in taking that next step?

Take time with your group to log onto the Fairhaven website and explore which service opportunities you can volunteer for as a group or individually. Make a specific plan of action and share that goal with your group so they can keep you accountable. By serving for merely two hours a month over the next year, you can be a blessing to those in the community while experiencing God's greatest blessings in your life.