

Do the Work | Week 1 - Restoration Starts With You

Message Big Idea

To restore relationships, we must do the work of identity formation.

Scripture

1 John 4:7-12, 1 John 4:18

Points to Keep In Mind

1. Relationships are hard work. As we think about hard relationships in our lives, often we tend to think that if only the other person realized how wrong they are and changed, everything would be resolved. However, what we will challenge one another to recognize throughout this series is that relational restoration begins with us. We can't change other people; we can only work to change ourselves.
2. Often we base our identity on what other people think or say about us. We create a distorted image of who we are. When we aim to please others or outperform others, we manage our image in person or online to create an identity that people will like. Yet, there are consequences of trying to find our identity in relationships. That can leave us feeling rejected when we don't get the response we seek. We might place unrealistic expectations on others for our well-being which can lead to blaming others for our missteps.
3. When our relationship with God is secure, that gives us a foundation from which to relate to others in health, wholeness, and love. We no longer need other people to fill the longings within us for acceptance, approval, and meaning. We can be free from needing other people to define us because God's love defines us, and we find peace, belonging, and joy in God.
4. Challenge your group to practice the breath prayer for 1 minute. Some groups might try for 2 minutes. Encourage the group to lean into this practice for the duration of this series.

Additional Questions and Resources

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now?
2. What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?
3. Have you considered getting baptized? Learn more at communitychristian.org/baptism
4. If you missed Vision Sunday, check out the video here: communitychristian.org/you

Quotes

- "Experience has taught me that I connect best with others when I connect with the core of myself. When I allow God to liberate me from unhealthy dependence on people, I listen more attentively, love more unselfishly, and am more compassionate and playful. I take myself less seriously, become aware that the breath of the Father is on my face and that my countenance is bright with laughter in the midst of an adventure I thoroughly enjoy."
Brennan Manning, *Abba's Child*
- "And now Lord with your help I shall become myself." - Soren Kierkegaard