

## 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

### Opening Questions

1. How were you able to B.L.E.S.S. someone this week?
2. If you could have invented one thing, what would it have been?
3. Relationships, no matter how healthy, are hard work. If we have relationships we'd like to improve or restore, the best place to start is with ourselves and our identity. Where do you find your identity?

### Bible Discussion

4. Read 1 John 4:7-12. What do you notice? What statements are being made about love?
5. Read 1 John 4:18. John is saying fear and love are mutually exclusive. God's love is so great for us that we have nothing to fear. What makes fear and love mutually exclusive?
6. In "Abba's Child", author Brennan Manning says this about our identity in God:

"Living in the awareness of our belovedness is the axis around which the Christian life revolves. Being the beloved is our identity, the core of our existence. It is not merely a lofty thought, an inspiring idea, or one name among many. It is the name by which God knows us and the way He relates to us."

What stands out to you about this statement?

### Life Application

7. One temptation most of us face is to develop a sense of self as we compare ourselves to others. What has been your experience when you've tried to compare yourself to others?
8. If your self-understanding was based on God's love for you, how would that change you and your relationships?
9. Breath prayers can help us "be with God" and experience God's love for us. Try it now in your small group for one minute. Relax your body and sit up straight like you're trying to touch the ceiling with the top of your head. Relax your shoulders, close your eyes, and focus on your breathing. When you breathe in, say a silent prayer in your head, saying, "God is love." When you breathe out, pray, "I am loved." Do this for one minute, and then talk about this experience as a group.
10. How might you incorporate breath praying in the next week? As you get more familiar with it, try working your way up to five minutes of praying and being with God. Be ready to share your experience next week!