



Make You Like Me Series

Part 1 - "Relationships Are Simple"

Small Group Material

April 8th, 2018

Leader Guide

Bottom Line: *Relationships are the FRAMEWORK through which LOVE gets EXPRESSED and EXPERIENCED.*

Study Verses: *Ephesians 4:13, John 17:20-23, John 13:34-35, 1 John 4:8*

Define The Win: *Participants would begin to explore their connections with others and examine the state of their relationships. They would recognize the tensions that exist and what fuels these issues. Group members would understand that God's purpose for their relationships with others is to express and experience His love.*

Key Points

- *We want people to BE LIKE US and we want people to LIKE US.*
- *When I can't MAKE YOU LIKE ME, I will DIMINISH you and work to DISMISS you.*
- *Intimacy requires AWARENESS. You can't SHARE if you're not AWARE.*
- *Intimacy is simply a SHARED EXPERIENCE.*
- *Intimacy needs the SAFETY of LOVE. LOVE makes INTIMACY possible.*
- *We are built to RECEIVE love as well as created to GIVE it away.*
- *Love is exchanged through a RELATIONSHIP.*
- *Love is a force that breathes VALUE and WORTH into another.*
- *Deeper CONNECTIONS create deeper INTIMACY.*

- *We love when we GIVE ourselves away for the GOOD of another.*
- *To be LOVED is RECEIVING good for ourselves without TRYING to EARN it.*

ENCOUNTER

- **What is the purpose of a relationship? Why did God create and design relationships?**
- **As a society, do you believe we are becoming more or less connected to each other? What makes you answer in the way that you do?**
- **MAKE YOU LIKE ME. How do you hear this statement? When it comes to your connections with others, which one do you struggle with the most: wanting people to be like you or wanting people to like you?**
- **What drives our desire to make people like us (seeking approval and fighting for conformity)?**

FORMATION

- **Read Ephesians 4:13. What insight does this passage provide in regard to the purpose of our relationships? How does our willingness to pursue connections with others influence our faith and overall impact as a church?**
- **Read John 17:20-23. Of all the issues Jesus could've prayed for, why do you believe He centered His prayer for the church on oneness and unity?**
- **Read John 13:34-35 and 1 John 4:8. How should the way we treat our relationships cause the world to take notice?**

EXPRESSION

- **What is the greatest tension you tend to experience in your relationships with others? Why do you believe this tension continues to pop up?**
- **Intimacy requires awareness. You can't share if you're not aware. How would you describe your level of awareness when it comes to yourself as well as your connections with others?**
- **How well are you known? Who knows the real you?**
- **How well do you allow yourself to be known? What encourages you to be seen and what causes you to be guarded and hide?**

LEADER INSIGHT: *“Make you like me.” No matter “how you say it,” (or hear it) there’s a tension that exists in every relationship. In our attempt to construct a system where everyone gets along, there’s one desire that trumps every other concern. We want people to be like us and we want people to like us. What we’re searching for in the connections we pursue is either approval or conformity.*

How can we achieve the unity and peace the world so desperately needs? In our minds, the solution is reasonably straightforward. If people were more like us, the world would be a more excellent place. So, we spend our time and energy attempting to get individuals to think and act like us.

On the flip side, there are those of us who are people pleasers. We yearn for affirmation and approval, and do everything in our power to get our hands on it. Our push for acceptance is not sustainable for our hearts as well as our relationships.

When we can't make others like us, we work to diminish others and ultimately dismiss them. As a result, God's vision for our relationships and the unity He desires for the church struggles to take root. Jesus understood how simple, yet at the same time incredibly complicated, our connections with others can be. The oneness of believers was such a part of His heart that it served as the focus of one of His final prayers.

God wired us for intimacy, but intimacy needs the safety of love. Love makes intimacy possible. We're built to receive love as well as created to give it away. Love is a force that breathes value and worth into another. The exchange of love takes place in our relationships. Relationships are the framework through which love gets expressed and experienced. We love when we give ourselves away for the good of another. To be loved is receiving good for ourselves without trying to earn it.

The way we treat, care and love each other sends a message to the outside world. Our redemptive relationships should cause those around us to take notice. If this is the case, we have to get gut-level honest about our relationships and the job we are doing regarding living together. Intimacy requires awareness, both about ourselves and our connections. We can't share if we aren't aware.

We are loved only to the extent we are known. A connection with another person requires vulnerability and transparency. The first step in influencing our relationship is pausing and reflecting on how well others know us. Who has access to the real us? And, we need to take it a step further by considering how well we allow ourselves to be known.