



Make You Like Me Series

Part 4 - "No More Demands"

Small Group Material

April 29th, 2018

Leader Guide

Bottom Line: *My demand to make you like me becomes my prayer to make me like you.*

Study Verses: *1 John 4:11-12, 1 Peter 4:8, James 5:20*

Define The Win: *Participants would reflect on the demands they place on their relationships. They would understand that God's love is the only power strong enough to restore, reconnect and repair our relationships. Group members would pinpoint one action step they can take from this series and articulate how they will apply it to their connections with others.*

Key Points

- *When love is misused and misunderstood, love becomes conditional and concessionary.*
- *Every deficiency we have will be demanded from others, unless we know God.*
- *Only love can bear the weight of confession and forgiveness.*
- *Love breathes life into the very thing that brings death.*
- *Love connects and restores things that are pulled apart and decaying under the power of separation.*
- *Detachment is more than being disconnected. It causes us to be demanding.*
- *Validation makes my worth dependent on my performance. My demand becomes affirmation.*

- *Isolation makes my worth dependent on my self-worth. My demand becomes punishment.*
- *Being co-dependent makes my worth dependent on other's opinions. My demand becomes the need to be needed.*

ENCOUNTER

- **How does one know whether they've placed demands on their relationships? What are some warning signs that should alert someone that this has taken place?**
- **What fears do people have in extending love and grace to others (get taken advantage of, love not returned, excuse people's behavior, etc.)?**
- **How are our relationships influenced when we feel deficient?**
- **What happens to love when it is misused and misunderstood? In what ways does it become conditional and concessionary?**

FORMATION

- **Read 1 John 4:11-12. What do people see when they witness redemptive love taking place in human relationships?**
- **Read 1 Peter 4:8 and James 5:20. How does love cover a multitude of sins? How does one love another person without condoning or excusing bad behavior?**

EXPRESSION

- **What demands do you have to let go of in your relationships?**
- **How can love breathe life into a relationship of yours that's been dead for awhile? What would it look like for love to reconnect and restore this connection?**
- **Over the course of this series, how has your perspective on your connections with others been influenced? What was the greatest insight you had and how are you going to put this truth into practice?**

LEADER INSIGHT: *Our hearts are like vacuums. When we feel less than, lacking love and acceptance or don't have a sense of security, we look to others to fill the void. We place demands on our relationships. These requests create a strain on the connections we have. The pressure to fill needs become too much to bear. Anytime love is misused or misunderstood, it quickly becomes distorted by being conditional and concessionary.*

Detachment is more than being disconnected. It causes us to be demanding. Some of us seek validation where our worth becomes dependent on our performance. We yearn for affirmation in this case. Others of us react to our demands not being met by isolating and punishing ourselves for not measuring up. We become worse than a victim. We foolishly believe that we deserve all the bad things that come our way. And then there are those of us who live in the land of codependency. Our perceived merit depends on other's opinions. We're okay with this as long as we get to experience the need to be needed.

Every deficiency we have will be demanded from others unless we know God. Knowing we are loved unconditionally by Christ, we are free to let go of our demands, even for those relationships where we might have been hurt or let down. It's natural to think of love covering a multitude of sins as concealing or hiding, and in turn withholding it from others. But, if love is indeed a force, it does something much more powerful. Love breathes life into the very thing that brings death - this is the message of the resurrection.

Love brings the force of Christ's life into things that are meant to bring death. It connects and restores relationships that are pulled apart and decaying under the power of separation. Love isn't merely a behavior or a way of acting with patience and kindness. Love's forgetfulness is not condoning nor is it a passive way to excuse bad behavior without confronting it, which is often what we are most afraid to do. Love is the path that moves us forward.