

Weekly Message Study Guide

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Date _____ Speaker _____

WHAT IS LOVE | Baby Don't Hurt Me | Week 1 | February 7

Genesis 2:18, 23, 25; Genesis 3:16; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Mark 12:28-30

CONTEXT | As we approach Valentine's Day we often lapse into the romantic view of our closest earthly relationship. Sometimes a spouse, sometimes a boyfriend or girlfriend and even in some cases our favorite pet. It's a tribute of chocolate and roses to those close to us and the relationship that we value with them. But isn't that important every day?

- What is your most Important earthly relationship right now? How have you honored that relationship in the past week?
- What is your greatest hope and your greatest concern over the coming year for your relationship? If you are with that person answer that question together and compare notes.

We All Start Somewhere | There is always a beginning, the first date, the first song, the first dance or movie.

- Talk about your first encounter with a significant Impact. What do you remember? If you are with your spouse, compare stories, what do you discover?

Irritation to Serious Problem? | Expectations, family of origin, communication styles, managing money.....so many new Issues.

- What is your earliest memory of a problem you had to solve in a relationship? If you are married was It before or after the wedding? Describe the Issue and the resolution.
- It might seem like a basic question at first but what does it take for us to get along with one another? What gets in the way?

Created for Perfect Harmony | We know God's story for humankind begins with Creation and the Garden of Eden.

- What was God's plan and hopes for this "good couple"?
- Read Genesis 2:18. God's plan was to make a companion for Adam. What Is your response to this verse?
- Read Genesis 2:23-25. Describe this relationship in your own words. What is God's intent for them together?

The Flaw of Free-Will | There are many aspects of the event of the Fall. In short, Adam and Eve chose to take things into their own hands verses trust God and we have paid the price in our world ever since.

- Read Genesis 3:16. How do you read that? What does It mean to you? Are you seeing It through a cultural lens or through a Biblical lens?



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- Explain how this could describe our reality but be counter to God's PRESCRIPTION for us?
- Genesis 4:6-7 used the same word desire. How is the relationship between Adam and Eve impacted?

The Battle Begins | Because of the Fall marriage has become a power struggle. Read Genesis 3:15-19. Marriage is hard, it is far from what God has ultimately intended.

- In our relationships in this fallen world what is God's counsel to us? What provision has God made for us to thrive in spite of the fractured relationships around us?
- Talk about it. Has God left us on our own to flounder among our broken nature?
- How can we nurture each other and respond in all our relationships to overcome the fallenness?

Blinding Love | Deb Hirsch calls Eros love alluring and obscuring. We don't see realities and instead imagine a perfect mate, a perfect union and no disagreement.

- Have you had such a "wake-up call" in your relationships? What happened? Talk about it.
- Our culture tries to tell us the "secret sauce" of thriving marriage is: Common Interest or hobbies; Equal domestic responsibilities; Conflict avoidance & perfect compatibility; More time in the bedroom; More money & vacations.
- How would you describe a thriving relationship pursuing these attributes? What's working? What's missing?

Covenant Love | Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Pastor Tara Beth draws three attributes out of this beautiful passage. A redeemed marriage is based on covenant / agape love:

- God is Involved - read Mark 12:28-30. How do you pull God into your relationship? Why is that important?
- Truthful love, vs 6. No hiding, true trust. Talk about a time you learned the importance of truth--what happened?
- Persevering love--vs 7. What have you learned about perseverance? Talk about a time when it was important for your relationship.

Practice of the Week | This week, approaching Valentine's Day, use the opportunity to find time with your spouse (every day if possible) to read together 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. If you have children, use the scripture as your devotional or your Grace before dinner. If you are single, read it as a personal meditation and ponder the word that pops out at you from the list, use it as a breath prayer for the day to remind you. These words are each rich in meaning, particularly in the context of relationship. Let them speak into your life this week.