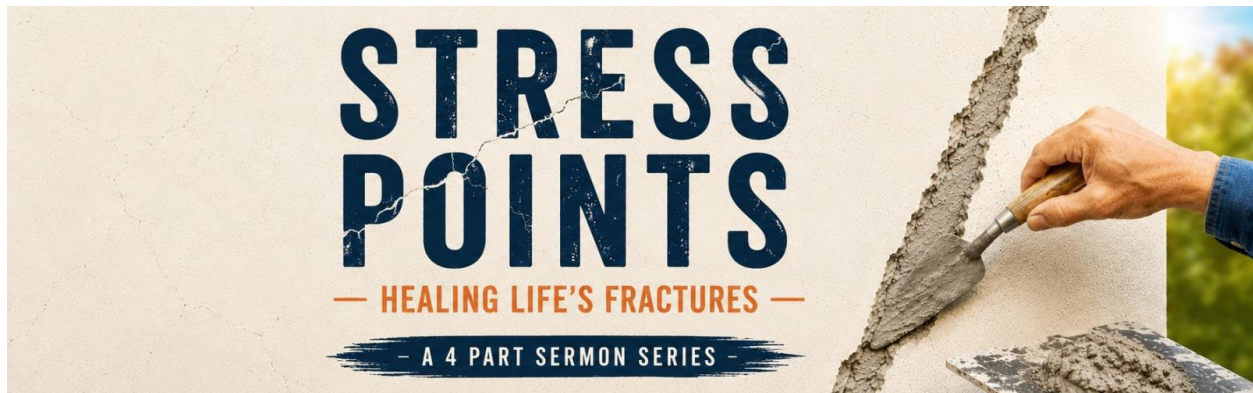




Group Guide

Week Four // Relationships: Healing What Matters Most

Scripture Focus

Matthew 5:43-48 & I John 4:7-12

Big Idea

Relationships often reveal the deepest fractures in our lives, but they also provide some of God's greatest opportunities for healing. As we experience God's love more fully, He transforms the way we love, forgive, and pursue peace with others.

Read Together

Invite someone in the group to read Matthew 5:43-48 and I John 4:7-12 aloud. Encourage everyone to listen for what these passages reveal about God's love and how followers of Jesus are called to reflect that love in every relationship.

Setting the Scene

Whether it's conflict in a marriage, tension within a family, disappointment with a friend, hurt from someone at church, or a strained relationship at work, broken relationships have a way of affecting every part of our lives. Left unresolved, they can lead to bitterness, isolation, and lasting emotional pain.

Our natural instinct is often to protect ourselves and put ourselves first. We avoid difficult conversations, keep score, or wait for the other person to make the first move. Jesus invites us into a different way of approaching fractured relationships. In Matthew 5, He calls His followers to love not only those who are easy to love, but even those who oppose or hurt them. John reminds us that this kind of love is possible because God first loved us. As we receive His love, our hearts are changed, and we begin to love others differently. Healing relationships begins with allowing God's love to transform us first.

Digging Deeper

Jesus commands us in Matthew 5 to "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." He points to the Father as our example to show kindness and grace to both the righteous and the unrighteous. John expands this truth in I John 4 by reminding us that God's love is not merely something He gives, but it is His very nature. The greatest demonstration of that love was sending His Son so that we might have life through Him.

Because we have been loved so completely, we are called to love others with the same grace we have received. Christian love isn't based on another person's behavior; it flows from our relationship with Christ. However, this doesn't mean every relationship will be restored or every conflict will be resolved. Scripture recognizes that reconciliation requires the participation of both people. Followers of Jesus are always called to pursue peace, extend forgiveness, pray for others, and refuse to let bitterness take root.

Group Discussion

Getting Started

- Who has had one of the greatest positive influences on your life? What made that relationship so meaningful?
- What qualities make someone easy to love?

Digging Into Scripture

- What does Jesus command His followers to do in Matthew 5:44? Why is that so difficult?
- According to I John 4:7-12, where does genuine love come from?
- What relationship principle from these passages stands out most to you?

Personal Reflection

Take a few moments for quiet reflection.

- Think of someone you've struggled to forgive or love well?
- What is one step God may be asking you to take toward reconciliation, forgiveness, or greater love?

Looking Forward

Relationships are rarely healed in one conversation or one decision. God often restores them through consistent acts of humility, forgiveness, prayer, and grace.

This week, when tension or conflict arises:

- Pause before reacting.
- Pray for the other person.
- Ask God to help you see them through His eyes.
- Choose one response that reflects Christ's love instead of your emotions.

Individual Application

This week, read Matthew 5:43-48 and I John 4:7-12 each day. Pray daily for someone who has been difficult to love, and ask God to help you respond with His grace rather than your natural instincts.

At the end of each day, ask yourself:

- Did my words and actions reflect the love of Christ today?
- Did I choose grace over resentment?
- Is there someone God is inviting me to love more like He loves me?

Consider memorizing:

I John 4:11

"Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

Closing Prayer

Close your group by thanking God for demonstrating His perfect love through Jesus Christ. Thank Him for loving us first and for extending grace when we least deserved it. Pray that He would heal broken relationships, soften hearts, and remove bitterness, pride, and unforgiveness. Ask the Holy Spirit to help each person love others with the same compassion, patience, and grace they have received from God. Amen.