Pastor Gary Archer
February 14, 2010

Please use the space below to take notes on today's message:

Take It Homework

We encourage you to not only do these exercises on your own, but also with friends, co-workers, neighbors, small group or family members.

As Eugene Peterson says in the introduction to John's Epistles (in his wonderful paraphrase of the Bible, *The Message*), "The two most difficult things to get straight in life are love and God. More often than not, the mess people make of their lives can be traced to failure or stupidity or meanness in one or both of these areas." (By the way, it is worth the price of *The Message* just to have Peterson's great introductions to the various books and sections of the Bible!)

Tough Love: When we love people, whatever the relationship, it sometimes requires that we confront them, rebuke them—even discipline them.

- Share some ways that tough love could be manifested in the following situations:
  - marriage relationships
  - parent/child relationships
  - extended family relationships
  - the neighborhood
  - the workplace
  - the church
- Share some experiences you have had on both sides of tough love.

David Augsburger, in his book, "Caring Enough to Confront," has coined the word, ***CAREFRONTING***.

- How might this approach make a difference in regard to solving relationship issues?

Tender Love:

- What are some of the motivations one might have in showing tenderness and kindness to someone?
- How does compassion differ from pity or sympathy?

Tried (Tested) Love: True, lasting, growing love is not for sissies! The marriage ceremony says, "For better, or worse, richer, or poorer, in sickness and in health." "Worse" often happens. "Poverty" can suck out hope. "Sickness" is a challenge to both the sufferer and the care giver.

- What are some ways your relationships have been or are being tested?
- What have these "tests" taught you about yourself, your loved one and God's faithfulness?

True Love: Conventional wisdom, poetry and lyrics remind us that "True Love Lasts." 1 Corinthians 13:7 says, "Love never fails."

- From your life and experience, how do you react to these statements?
- Talk about the people in your life who have always shown love and care for you, regardless of your actions—those who have always been there for you, no matter what.
- Do you have a deep sense of knowing that you are unconditionally loved by your Heavenly Father? Explain.