

LOVE
YOUR
NEIGHBOR

DIGGING DEEPER

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

JUNE 26

When asked to choose the most important and greatest commandment, Jesus pointed towards loving God and loving your neighbor as yourself. He summarized all 613 commandments in the Hebrew Scriptures into these two interconnected ideas. The world is a better place when we decide to love our neighbors.

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or friends and family to talk through what you are learning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does “loving one another” mean to you? Who have you seen live out love in a way that resembles how Jesus loved people?
2. What stood out/intrigued you from the messages?
3. Read **Mark 12:28-34**.
 - a.) Make some observations about this passage (What does the text say):
 - Who is talking? What is the circumstance?
 - Any repeated phrases?
 - What surprised you?
 - What stood out to you?
 - b.) Make some interpretations (What does the passage mean)
 - What questions do you have?
 - Summarize the passage in 1-3 sentences - what are the main points?
 - What do you learn about the nature and character of God as you read this?
 - What do you learn about yourself or the world around you?
 - c.) Now make some applications (what’s my response)
 - How do you respond to what you are reading?
 - How could this apply to your life today?
 - What is the central truth that you could put into practice from this?
 - Who could you share this with for the sake of encouragement?
4. Reread Mark 12:29-30. How do you put God first in your life? If you call yourself a Christ-follower and don’t put God first, what is getting in the way?
5. In verse 30 of Mark 12 Jesus tells us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Ask yourself these questions (not for the sake of condemnation over your answers, but to be honest with yourself about where you are right now):
 - Do my heart/emotions/desires line up with God’s (or do I even know what God’s desires are?)
 - Is my soul at peace/rest with the one who created me?
 - Are my thoughts ones that reflect God’s thoughts?
 - Do I have misplaced efforts trying to earn God’s affection or favor?

6. Read **John 13:34-35**. Is your life one that is marked by loving others? If so, who are the others - are they just people who are like you, or do you love the neighbors God has put around you at work and home?
7. What holds you back from loving your neighbors with a Christ-like (agape) love? Would you commit to taking 1 step toward loving your neighbors with Christ-like love? If so, what could that look like?

KEY SCRIPTURE

Mark 12:28-34 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

Romans 3:22-24 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

TAKE A NEXT STEP

Who is your neighbor? Look around you. Your neighbor is anyone God has put in your sphere of influence, including family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. This 4th of July weekend we want to challenge everyone at Gateway to BE the church (a representation of God's love and goodness) to those who are our neighbors. Below is a way to begin to pursue a life of loving and serving others in our life the way Jesus did.

The following can help you be intentional with the relationships around you. This takes time. So, be patient and continue to engage intentionally even past connecting with your neighbors over the 4th of July.

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Begin with prayer (Ask God to lead)

Listen (Listen to their stories, their interests, and look for ways to connect)

Eat/Entertain (Share a meal with them or Engage with them in a fun or meaningful way)

Serve (Once you've developed a relationship, you'll know specific ways to care)

Story (Look for an opportunity to share your faith story and THE story - Jesus' story)

START HERE

STEP 1: Begin Praying- Pray and ask God to show you WHOM in your life He wants you to pursue intentionally. **Write their names here and pray for them:**

STEP 2: Listen to their Story - Now, start engaging with those people so you can begin to hear their story & what they are interested in. This takes time, so pick a few people & choose to consistently invest in your relationship. *Maybe this is what you do to serve your neighbors if you don't know them well.*

Here are some ideas:

- Hang out on your front porch or outside, so you can say "hi" to a neighbor
- If you don't know your neighbors, introduce yourself!
- Then, Invite your neighbors to hangout at a neighborhood pool together
- Engage with your neighbor or other parents at your child's activities and be curious about their lives and interests.

- Be curious ? Ask questions, and let people talk.

What is your plan to start connecting and listening to those God brought to mind?

STEP 3: Eat and Engage - A big part of building relationships with people is enjoying a meal and having fun together. Whether you know your neighbors or not, the ideas below could be a great way to connect over the 4th of July.

Here are a few ideas of ways to engage:

- Invite your neighbors over, drag your BBQ grill out in your driveway (or at an apartment pick a place that has a grill) and cook hotdogs for everyone (your neighbors can bring sides to share)
- Host a game night at your home (or outdoor games like corn hole)
- Invite neighbors or friends to go watch fireworks somewhere with you.
- If you have kids, put a sprinkler in the front yard and invite neighbors/ friends' kids to come play in the sprinkler with yours then talk while the kids play.
- Get sparklers for your neighbors and invite them out to do sparklers.
- Pick an event in your city and invite a neighbor to go to it with you.
- Etc.

How will you invite the people God has put on your mind into FUN with you?

STEP 4: Serve - Once you have been praying for someone, listened to their story, and eaten with them, you will know how to serve them. Don't worry about being weird; step in to serve them in a way you know will bless them. This could be mowing their lawn, bringing a meal, picking up their kids, picking up a coffee, etc. John 13:35 says, "By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Let's be known for our love and service to one another!

If you've already built a relationship with your neighbors, what could be your plan to serve them?

STEP 5: Share Your Story - While building a relationship with your neighbor, co-worker, acquaintance, be real. Talk about your life and your story of faith. Don't be preachy, but talk about God and how you see him show up in your life.

In what relationships have you been holding back on sharing about your relationship with God? What step could you take to change that and be more real?