

Part 5 - Small Group Bible Study Guide



Introduction - Lessons for Loving God - Neighbor

For the final installment of our series, we explore the "horizontal" expression of our "vertical" love for God. Jesus teaches that loving God fully (heart, soul, strength, and mind) is incomplete if it doesn't result in loving our neighbor as ourselves. Through the Parable of the Good Samaritan, we learn that a "neighbor" isn't just someone like us, but anyone in need that God places in our path.

Scripture Focus:

- Luke 10:25-37: The Parable of the Good Samaritan.
- 1 John 4:7-8: Love as evidence of knowing God.
- James 2:14-17: Faith without works of mercy is dead.

Discussion Questions:

1. Exploding the Definition: In the parable, the lawyer was looking for a limited definition of "neighbor" to justify himself. In our culture, who are the "neighbors" we often find easiest to ignore or pass by?
2. The Vertical Fuel: How does the "vertical" work we've done over the past four weeks (renewing the mind, surrendering the soul, etc.) actually give us the power to love difficult people?
3. Modern Priest and Levite: The religious insiders in the story prioritized their schedule, safety, or purity over mercy. What are the biggest "threats" (polarization, busyness, fear) that keep you from stopping to help someone today?
4. Beyond the One-Off: The Samaritan didn't just bandage the man; he checked him into an inn and promised a follow-up. How can we move from "one-off" acts of kindness to building actual relationships with those in need?
5. Taking Action: Looking at the "Practical Ways" listed in the sermon (Prayer, Seeing/Stopping, Acts of Mercy), which one feels like the most immediate "next step" for you this week?