

Daring Faith: Week 8

Daring to Love My Neighbor

Getting to know one another...

As many as are able, describe what the neighborhood was like where you grew up. How different is your current neighborhood today?

Centering...

As an expression of worship (turning our focus of worth to God)... take a quiet moment to hear God's heart. Allow all participants to center down... close their eyes... take a deep breath...and prayerfully listen as the group facilitator reads (Psalm 73:1-3, 17, 21-28)... slowly...three times.

Exploring...

This week we are engaging one of the great Priorities of life in the Spirit: Daring to Love My Neighbor

Read Luke 10:25-28

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"²⁷ He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"²⁸ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

1. At the beginning of this "Story of the Good Samaritan", we read that the Greatest Command is:

Luke 10:27. *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ... 'Do this and you will live.'"*

What does it mean to "love your neighbor as yourself?"

Discuss some reasons why you think this is so vitally important.

2. **Luke 10:29** says this about the teacher of the law: *"But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'"*

In what ways do we attempt to justify ourselves in order to avoid taking the Great Commandment literally?

3. As we seek to grow in learning to love our neighbors as ourselves, one practical step is to begin with learning to love actual neighbors! Jay Pathak writes, *"If we don't take Jesus's command literally, then we turn the Great Commandment into nothing more than a metaphor. We have a metaphoric love for our metaphoric neighbors, and our communities are changed— but only metaphorically, of course. In other words, nothing changes. The problem is, however, that when we aim for everything, we hit nothing. So when we insist we're neighbors with everybody, often we end up being neighbors with nobody."*

4. **Read together Acts 17:26-27**

From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.

According to these two verses, why do we live where we live? Why has God placed us in our neighborhoods? What about those that surround us? Why are they there?

5. What would happen if everyone made it a point to know and befriend their literal neighbors? Take a few moments to dream together about how the world would change if this were true.
6. **Towards learning to love our literal neighbors, look at the “Neighbor Map”.** Get a pen. Take a moment individually to fill it in right now (the best you’re able). Most of us don’t live in a block neighborhood like this. Use your imagination. Think vertically or creatively. The center block is “Your House.” On the top of each block, write the first names of your neighbors. All 8 of them!
7. In the middle of each box, write down something you know about them (not “drives a yellow car”, but something you know about them from a conversation).
8. At the bottom of each box, write down something significant about them (a recent struggle, a hope, dream, fear, etc)
9. Go around the room and share how many of the names you knew? (*Typically, around 10% of people can do all of #5, 1.3% can do #2, and under 1% of people can do #3*). Did you have any epiphanies as you did this exercise? What did you learn or feel as a result of doing this exercise?
10. Many find that the upcoming holiday season is an ideal time to bridge the neighborhood gap. What are some practical steps you can take to get to know your neighbors? Share any ideas.
11. At the Vineyard we are having a “Host a Holiday Party Challenge”. We’re encouraging everyone to consider hosting a simple holiday party for immediate neighbors. **The steps are simple:**
 - Make a commitment to hosting a holiday party this December
 - Pick a date on the first few weekends in December
 - Define the most natural group of 6 to 30 households around you.
 - Make simple invitations
 - Pass the invitations out
 - Have a party and get to know your literal neighbors!(find out more at westsidevineyard.com/party)
12. Share one small “next step” that you feel God is calling you to take in the next 7 days. Share one small “next step” that you feel God is calling you to take in the next 40 days.
13. Read **Matthew 5:14-16** *“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”*
14. Conclude this time of exploring by reading together **1 Thessalonians 2:8b** three times aloud...which is this week’s memory verse:

*“Because we loved you so much,
we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.”*
– 1 Thessalonians 2:8b –

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?



YOU ARE HERE

