

THE ART OF NEIGHBORING- READ PLANS

Week 1- Who is My Neighbor?

October 7, 2018

Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: John 13:35

REFLECT: We live in a world where it can feel like a race toward the new job, new car, new house, etc. According to this scripture as followers of Jesus, we're called to stand out by how we love others. Ask yourself: Would someone know that I love Jesus based on how I love others?

PRACTICE: Pray and ask God to reveal to you where you need to stand out more in how you love and treat others.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: "If We Love God Most We Will Love Others Best" from Desiring God-
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/if-we-love-god-most-we-will-love-others-best>

REFLECT: According to this article, what happens when we don't love God the most?

PRACTICE: Ask yourself: Do I love God most? Whether the answer is yes or no; pray and ask God to reveal to you the areas where you need to grow.

Day 2-

READ: Philippians 2:1-4

REFLECT: Jesus came as a servant King, humbly loving everyone around him. In this scripture, how does Peter say we should live if we're united with Christ?

PRACTICE: What is one thing you can do this week to love others in a more Christ-like manner? Make yourself a note – in your Bible, on a post it on your bathroom mirror – somewhere you'll see, and pray each day that God would show you how to love that way.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: "Loving the Neighbor We Didn't Choose" from DesiringGod-
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/loving-the-neighbor-we-didnt-choose>

REFLECT: Who is the neighbor whom you did not choose, but you need to love?

PRACTICE: Intentionally pray for this person every day for the next seven days.

Day 3-

READ: **Matthew 25:31-46**

REFLECT: In this passage, Jesus is telling a story about the final judgment, and how our treatment of others comes into play. This scripture makes it evident that Jesus is calling us to love our neighbors, just as we love him. Jesus let us know that when we don't love others that way, we aren't just rejecting that person; we're rejecting our Heavenly Father. There are consequences for how we treat others. How might how you treat those around if you read this story more often? What would happen if you asked yourself "if this was Jesus, how would I show my love?"

PRACTICE: When we treat others poorly, it's a sin issue. Pray and ask the Father to open up the parts of your heart that are lacking obedience in the area of loving others. Ask Him to show you how to be obedient.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: "How Do I Know if I Really Love Jesus?" from DesiringGod-
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/how-do-i-know-if-i-really-love-jesus>

REFLECT: According to this article, how will you know if you really love Jesus?

PRACTICE: What is one thing you can do more consistently to love Jesus better? Start today!

Day 4-

READ: **1 Corinthians 12:1-13**

REFLECT: This passage is often read at weddings to give a picture of marital love. In reality, Paul is writing to all believers about the importance and gravity of love. What does Paul list as the characteristics of love? How does this scripture change your perspective of love if you look at it through the lens of loving those around you (not just loving your spouse)? Why do you think Paul ends this passage by saying "but the greatest of these is love."?

PRACTICE: Write out the characteristics of love as recorded by Paul and put them somewhere so that you'll see them and be reminded daily.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: "God doesn't prove His love when he answers our prayers. He proved His love when He sent His son." Pastor Craig Grosechel, Life.Church

REFLECT: How does this quote make you feel about God's love?

PRACTICE: How can you receive God's love differently if you think of it in terms of his sacrifice, rather than in terms of whether or not you feel he answers your prayers?

Day 5-

READ: **2 Corinthians 5:14-15**

REFLECT: Sometimes we need reminded that Father God didn't send Jesus to die on the cross ONLY for the Jews or for the Gentiles. Jesus' invitation to salvation is free and open to everyone who will receive him. This includes all of those people who are in our daily path. According to this scripture, for whom did Jesus die on the cross? How does that one word impact the mission of our lives as Christ followers?

PRACTICE: Who in your daily path needs to receive love in order to see Jesus? Pray and ask God how you can show this person Jesus.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: "For Whom Did Christ Die?" from DesiringGod- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/for-whom-did-christ-die>

REFLECT: What was encouraging about this article?

PRACTICE: In your prayer time today, spend time thanking God for his gift of salvation – the ultimate sacrifice, yet so freely given for YOU.

Week 2- The Time Barrier

October 14, 2018

Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: **Proverbs 16:9**

REFLECT: In the book, The Art of Neighboring, the author says that “The number one obstacle to neighboring is time.” Do you agree, why? How are you seeing it true in your life?

PRACTICE: Watch this song “Let It Start with Me”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEFhayHfwwE>

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Mark 5:1-20** or watch and listen- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqnE3EY3BRI>

REFLECT: In the Art of Neighboring three myths about our hurried lives are described: (1) Things will settle down someday (2) More will be enough (3) Everybody lives like this. Which of these myths have you fallen for?

PRACTICE: Identify at least one of the myths that you have fallen for and confess them to your Savior, Jesus Christ.

Day 2-

READ: **Psalm 90:12**

REFLECT: In the Art of Neighboring the author says that It’s vital to take a step back and ask ourselves if we live at a pace that allows us to be available to those who live around us.

PRACTICE: Watch video “Love Your Neighbor: Annie’s Story”- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dy6t9TjJwIQ>

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Luke 10:25-37** or watch <https://www.bible.com/videos/35-parable-of-the-good-samaritan-from-jesus-film-project> and notice how the Samaritan allowed his life to be interrupted.

REFLECT: Do you currently live at a pace that allows you to be present in your neighborhood?

PRACTICE: Ask the Lord to show you one way you can serve your neighbor this week.

Day 3-

READ: **Ephesians 5:15-17**

REFLECT: Brian Mavis said, "In this life, we can do only a few things really well; I think it's a good idea to make certain that one of those things is what Jesus says is most important."

PRACTICE: Tell God the name of one of your neighbors that you want to deepen your relationship with in the next month.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Luke 19:1-10** or watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcr7ZC9gx04>.

REFLECT: Jesus was surrounded by people but he stopped and looked at one man up in a tree. Jesus was open to the leading of his Father to stop and look at one man and make the man part of his life.

PRACTICE: Prepare your mind and heart to be open to notice and be part of your neighbor's life.

Day 4-

READ: **James 4:14**

REFLECT: The Art of Neighboring says, "Jesus got a lot done but he never seemed to be in a hurry. He lived a passionate, purposeful life but was never in a rush". The question for us is how can we live like Jesus? The answer: we must learn how to keep the main thing the main thing"

PRACTICE: Listen to “Do Something”, a song from Matthew West-
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_RjndG0IX8

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Acts 3:1-10**. Notice while Peter and John stopped in the midst of trying to worship and preach in the Temple, they took notice of a poor lame man that no one else seemed to care about and gave what they had.

REFLECT: John Ortberg coined the phrase “hurry sickness”. He said, “Love and hurry are fundamentally incompatible. Love always takes time, and time is the one thing hurried people don’t have.”

PRACTICE: Watch this inspiring video and read the article, “Love Your Neighbor: the Inspiring Story of Two Friends”: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/frank-fredericks/love-your-neighbor-inspiring-story-of-two-friends_b_2127070.html

Day 5-

READ: **Proverbs 16:3**

REFLECT: Are there some good things in your life that are keeping you from the “main thing”?

PRACTICE: Tell another believer one of the good things you have been doing that you are replacing with “the main thing”?

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Matthew 6:33**

REFLECT: Ultimately we must identify and eliminate the nonessentials. Which of these three principles do you need to approach first: (1) make the main thing the main thing (2) eliminate time stealers (3) be interruptible?

PRACTICE: Commit to one of these principles. Come before God and ask for His Spirit to lead you. Talk it through with a trusted friend or member of your Life Group and ask them to check in with you in a week or two to ask you the hard questions about how you’re doing.

Week 3 – The Fear Factor

October 21, 2018

Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: Genesis 3:1-10; Deuteronomy 31:8

REFLECT: According to Genesis 3, what is the origin of fear emotion we feel? Throughout the whole Bible God repeatedly tells us not to fear. Why do we have reason to be courageous rather than fearful?

PRACTICE: Make a list of the things your fear. Review the list and circle the ones that relate to people. Praise God that in Him we have strength and courage and ask Him to lead you into a step of faith regarding one of your fears.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: “Be Not Afraid” is a 15 minute clip from Bob Goff, author of Love Does. Watch his training video at RightNowMedia and reflect on the questions that follow-

<https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Training/Post/View/75891>

(If you do not yet have a free Right Now Media account, visit www.whoisgrace.com/rightnowmedia to sign up.)

Day 2-

READ: Numbers 13:25-33

REFLECT: God promised to give the Israelites victory. How did they allow fear to distort this reality? How do you allow fear of people, of culture, of differences, to distort reality (that God loves you and loves each of your neighbors)?

PRACTICE: Ask God to give you eyes to see what He sees in your neighborhood and for a heart of compassion and love.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: "You Can't Win the Neighbor You Fear" from The Gospel Coalition.

(<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/you-cant-win-the-neighbor-you-fear/>)

REFLECT: How does our current cultural and political climate contribute to your fear? In contrast what is the heart of God toward your neighbor?

Day 3-

READ: **Luke 5:27-32**

REFLECT: Put yourself in one of the disciple's shoes and imagine you go to dinner with Jesus and a bunch of "sinners." What kind of fear and discomfort would you experience? Why did Jesus do this (verses 31-32)?

PRACTICE: How can you take a step toward allowing Jesus to work in and through you to reach your "sick" neighbors? Remember, it is Jesus who can heal them, who will call them to repentance.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: "Being a Neighbor Means Being a Missionary" from The Gospel Coalition

(<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/being-a-neighbor-means-being-a-missionary/>)

Day 4-

READ: **Matthew 28:20b** (the final sentence Jesus speaks)

REFLECT: What does Jesus promise in Matthew 28? How does that echo God's promise in Deuteronomy 31:8? This is a great truth of the Bible, that we who believe have the presence of God with us, in us! How would that truth transform the life of a neighbor who does not know Jesus and lives in fear?

PRACTICE: Review the list of fears you wrote down on Day 1. If God is indeed with you *always*, how does that give you moment-by-moment courage as you confront these fears?

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: "Faith Steps: What are You Afraid of?" from Cru.org (<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/share-the-gospel/evangelism-principles/faith-steps-what-are-you-afraid-of.html>)

Day 5-

READ: Acts 1:8; Philippians 4:6-7

REFLECT: Who is your “Jerusalem”? Draw or make a list of the neighbors around you.

PRACTICE: PRAY! Use Philippians 4 to help you- tell God what you are afraid. Tell him what you are thankful for. Tell him about the people who live around you. Ask Him for courage to be bold in His name and by His Spirit. Ask Him to use you to impact your neighborhood!

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: “Four Reasons We Don’t Share the Gospel” from DesiringGod.org
(<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/four-reasons-we-dont-share-the-gospel>)

PRACTICE: Who are you meeting regularly with to encourage your faith? How can you apply these principles together? If you’re interested in joining a Life Group at Grace Church, check out www.whoisgrace.com/lifegroups to get connected!

Week 4- The Art of Receiving

October 28, 2018

Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: Luke 7:36-50

REFLECT: The Pharisee only saw this woman's history of sin. What did Jesus see? How did the story Jesus told the Pharisee reveal the heart of both the Pharisee and the woman?

PRACTICE: Think of people you pass every day—especially neighbors—and ask Jesus to give you an opportunity to really see them and learn their stories.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: Psalm 139:1-3; John 13:34,35

REFLECT: God knows us intimately and that is one way He shows His love for us. How does getting to know our neighbors show we care about them?

PRACTICE: Watch this short video about neighboring by Eddie Mosley on Right Now Media.

<https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/VideoElement/123377>

(If you do not yet have a Right Now Media account, you can register for one here:

<https://whoisgrace.com/rightnowmedia/>)

Day 2-

READ: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; 1 Timothy 2:1

REFLECT: God tells us to pray always and for everyone. Do you pray for your neighbors? Make a list of ways you could pray for them, even if you don't yet know their names.

PRACTICE: Watch this video about a story behind every door, then take some time to walk around your neighborhood and pray for those who live in those houses.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKNXMfXb6IE>

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Job 42:10; Romans 8:26-27**

REFLECT: "Jesus says being a good neighbor is exactly the kind of life that can change the world. This simple truth can change everything: *small things matter*. They really do."—from The Art of Neighboring by Pathak & Runyon

PRACTICE: After praying for your neighbors, ask God to give you an opportunity to have a conversation with one you have never met.

Day 3-

READ: **Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6; James 1:19-22; Philippians 4:8**

REFLECT: Think about how you can bless your neighbors with your words. Could you offer help or hope or praise?

PRACTICE: Plan what you will say the next time you greet a neighbor—something beyond the usual comment about the weather—that could start a conversation.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Matthew 12:36; Proverbs 15:1,4; Proverbs 12:25; Titus 3:2**

REFLECT: Jesus is called the Word—God spoke His love through the life of Jesus. How can the way we serve our neighbors be a type of conversation that leads them to Jesus?

PRACTICE: Read this article from Desiring God on the art of conversation:

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/lets-bring-conversation-back>

Day 4-

READ: **John 4:1-10**

REFLECT: Jesus was vulnerable enough to ask a woman to meet a need for Him. How did He use that to continue a conversation that led her to faith?

PRACTICE: Make a plan. The next time you have a need for a tool or just an egg for a recipe ask a neighbor to meet your need and see how that could open doors to a relationship

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **John 6:5-12; Luke 8:1-3**

REFLECT: Jesus used a little boy's lunch as well as the financial support of some wealthier women to support His ministry and build community. How can you help your neighbors meet one another's needs?

PRACTICE: Watch this short video about meeting needs...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eR0Sn6Kvruc>

Day 5-

READ: Hebrews 13:2; Luke 6:31, 35; Matthew 10:42

REFLECT: How can you share hospitality with your neighbors? “One of the easiest things to do is eat together. So it’s easy to say, ‘You’re eating; we’re eating; let’s eat together.’ Yes, that does require some intentionality. But it’s not hard to invite others to join you because you are already going to eat anyway, right? Just try it.”—from The Art of Neighboring by Pathak & Runyon Think of a neighbor you could invite to share a meal.

PRACTICE: Listen to “Dream Small” by Josh Wilson <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOBaLrItEyc> and ask God to show you what you can do TODAY to bless a neighbor.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Philippians 2:3-8; John 2:1-11

REFLECT: How did Jesus model community for us? Jesus’ first miracle was to change water into wine—something that wasn’t necessary for life but for celebration. What do you think about that?

PRACTICE: How can you make celebration a greater part of your own life and that of your neighborhood? It might be as small as baking some extra cookies to share or as large as a block party. Ask God for some ideas.