



October - Love Your Neighbor Month

All month we are focusing on loving our neighbors, one way to do this is to **Slow Down**. This can look like choosing to do less, in order to be more available to meeting and knowing your neighbors. Slow down and think through some activities that you could pause this month to be more available to love your neighbor!

Take a few minutes and discuss together how you could Love Your Neighbor either as a group or individually. There are ideas on the last page of this document.

Introduction

In our passage this week, Pastor Bryan highlights a verse that is central to the mission of our church, Colossians 1:28. And we notice through Paul's firsthand account that carrying out this mission comes at personal cost. Living a life of surrender to King Jesus carries similar impact and urgency for us today.

To think through the main ideas in the sermon and prepare for your discussion together, we invite you to look over all the questions on the following pages and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group.

Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

Share about a time you felt a sense of accomplishment for a job well done. What made that time so memorable for you?

- 3) The Greek word for “mystery” is “mysterion” and differs from the way we commonly use mystery in English. In the New Testament, rather than being something strange, a mystery is something that was hidden, but has now been revealed, as described in 1:26. The mystery Paul is referring to in this passage is something that was previously unknown but has now been revealed. **In verses 1:25-27 and 2:2, what is the mystery that Paul is discussing? Is there more than one mystery or is he talking about the same thing in both places?**

How does this “mystery” relate to the previous week’s passage (Colossians 1:15-23)?

Think about areas of struggle, fear, anxiety, or insecurity in your life. **How does the assurance that Christ is IN you, encourage you in those areas?**

What habits can you begin to build now to grow towards a more consistent awareness, “the full assurance of understanding” (2:2) of your completeness in Christ?

- 4) According to the mission Paul describes in Colossians 1:28 (which is also the basis for our church mission statement), **what activities in our church fulfill the mission?**

If Paul were to participate for a week in various activities you enjoy through our church, what might he point out as extraneous to this mission?

(question 4 continued on next page)

If Paul were to stay in your home for a week, what might he point out in your lifestyle as being irrelevant to the mission of the gospel?

Spend some time discussing how you can encourage each other within your group to be about the kind of mission Paul describes.

- 5) Throughout this passage Paul underscores his purpose for living on mission while using words like “suffering”, “labor”, “striving” and “struggle”. **What does this indicate about the feelings he has for those to whom he is writing?**

To what does he attribute such a passionate response?

Think of the words you would use to describe your commitment to carry out the mission of the gospel. **If you feel comfortable, share with your group how they compare to Paul’s words.**

Personal Spiritual Exercises

Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts. **Next week in Life Group, take a few moments to share how the Lord may have used this exercise in your life.**

Sitting With God: Plan for 10 minutes each day this week to be present to God. Set a timer if you need to, but don’t bring anything else into this quiet space. Your body will want to fidget, and your mind will wander, but each time it does, redirect back to being present to God. Saying a phrase like “My soul is quiet before You, God” or “Christ be all around me” might help to focus on Him. The exercise is not so much about conquering 10 silent minutes as it is about redirecting your focus each time it wanders.

Meditating on Scripture: Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. As you read, try to put yourself in the scene Paul’s describing. What does God want you to learn about His nature through this passage? What does He want to teach you about purposeful living? Close with a prayer of gratitude for this example to follow.

Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

A significant part of “coming together” is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say “Amen” aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?

Next Week: Read Colossians 2:6-15

(Love Your Neighbor Ideas on next page)

Loving Your Neighbor

Ideas & Resources

Loving your neighbor doesn't have to be complicated or hard – it can even be fun!

All it takes is a willingness to change our patterns or plan ahead.

Here are some ideas and resources to get you started.

As a Life Group

A great way to build community as a Life Group while also impacting your neighborhood is to serve your neighbors together. We know that many of you will not live in the same neighborhood, and that's okay! Pick a neighborhood (perhaps the one you meet in) and love those neighbors.

1. As a group, take a prayer walk around the neighborhood.
2. Drop off treats (baked goods, candy, etc.) at 5 neighbor's houses on the street.
3. Hand out candy together on Halloween.
4. Fill up the neighborhood pantries in your area.
5. Pick up trash and debris around the neighborhood or in the neighborhood park.
6. Write uplifting Scripture in chalk in the driveway together to encourage those who walk by.
7. Throw a neighborhood block party/backyard party – click [here](#) for resources

Individually

If you're not in a life group, or if you want to serve those in your own neighborhood, here are some ideas!

1. Offer to mow a lawn or do some other outdoor/household chores.
2. Chat with your neighbors while outside doing chores.
3. Pray for your neighbors individually.
4. Meet a tangible need.
5. Give holiday gifts (Halloween is coming up!)
6. Take walks outside in the neighborhood – stop and say hello to your neighbors.
7. Check to see if there's a Facebook Group or join the Next-Door App & interact with your neighbors there!
8. Learn about your neighbors – Are there elderly or disadvantaged people that need help or community?