

Authenticity 4

How to Love Your Neighbor

For the last three weeks we have been looking at the traits of a REAL Christian. We have looked at a Righteous Lifestyle, Evangelical Passion, and an Authentic Walk. Today we will finish it out with the letter “L” which stands for Loving your Neighbor.

So, let’s look at two separate scriptures that will be the basis for our study today.

Matthew 22:37-40 “Love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Matthew 28: 19-20 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

What does an Authentic commitment to the Great Commission look like?

Let’s look at the importance of Love.¹ John 4:19 says “We love because he first loved us.”

I love this part of scripture because God has taken all of the pressure off. Guys do you remember when you were dating your wife and you wanted to say the “L” word? You know I Love You!!! But you had a little thought in the back of your mind that said “What if she doesn’t say it back?” Illustration: The first time Dana and I said I Love You.

One of the important things we need to understand about love is that “God loved us first.” And he proclaimed it loudly on the cross. Our relationship with God is based on that word “Love” without it, we have no relationship.

So what does this have to do with loving your brother or neighbor? I’m glad you asked.

1 John 4:20 says “If anyone says, “I love God” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.”

Anything short of loving our brother would be short of loving our Father in heaven. I know this is heavy stuff, because frankly some brothers and sisters and neighbors are very hard to love. The command did not say it was going to be easy.

So how do we implement LOVE? You guys are asking all the right questions this morning.

Let’s look at forgiving love.

Luke 17:3-4 “If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, “I repent,” forgive him.”

The first thing we need to remember is that all of us are in need of forgiveness. If we are going to demonstrate the love of Jesus in our lives, if we are to love our brother, then forgiveness is not an option.

Deserve has nothing to do with it. None of us deserved forgiveness but He freely gave it to us anyway.

“But pastor you don’t know the hurt he or she caused me!” Even the Psalmist writes about the reality that we will be hurt by our friends.

Psalms 55:12-14 "If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once shared sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God."

When someone has hurt you, the best way to get over that hurt is to forgive!!! Booker T. Washington once said, "I shall allow no man to belittle my soul, by making me hate him."

If you do not let go of the hurt it will bring you to ruin. Illustration about how a tribe in Africa catches monkeys.

Jesus himself bore the scars as a reminder of the pain he had to go through. You and I will bare scars too. But they should be scars that shout Forgiveness.

Let's look at future love. This is the love your neighbor part.

Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrated His love to us in that while we were sinners Christ died for us."

When Christ died for us He died for future generations. We are that future generation. We need to implement this love by looking for ways to love our brother or neighbor. Maybe you have a neighbor who is isolated by bitterness or is going through a hard time in their lives. Remember none of them are beyond the reach of God's touch through you.

So here is what we do; We bless our neighbor. Luke 10:5 "Whenever you enter a home give it a blessing."

Our assignment is to speak peace over them in prayer.

Know Your Neighbor. Luke 10: 7 "Stay in one place, eating and drinking whatever they provide for you."

What does this mean? It means we need to get to know them. A good meal will do that.

We need to help our neighbor. Luke 10: 9 “and heal the sick.”

Our assignment is to meet a felt need. The healing we can offer through Jesus certainly includes physical healing. But it also means we extend care towards our neighbor who may be hurting because of broken relationships or loss.

But the greatest way we can love our neighbor, is winning them to Jesus. Luke 10:9 As you heal them say, the Kingdom is near you.”

Our assignment is to share our faith. Let’s get over our fears and lead people to the point of our faith and that is Jesus.