

LIVING SENT

Week Two: Knowing Your Neighbors

INTRODUCTION

The average American knows about 600 people. You have approximately 12 social interactions per day. Human interactions have significant importance in our everyday life. Beyond these statistics, there seems to be evidence of medical benefits of socialization: like better mental health. It can lighten your mood and make you feel happier. It can lower your risk of dementia. It also promotes a sense of safety, belonging, and security. It could be said that social interactions are vital to a healthy existence.

While there are physical benefits of interactions with others, we must also think of the spiritual benefits. Developing relationships allows us to confide in each other. It is also the best way to share the gospel. People do not care about what you know until they know that you care. It's like the Lord knew the importance of healthy relationships when He told us that there was no commandment greater.

BIBILICAL MATERIAL

We've all heard the famous words "[love] your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27). The command to love one's neighbor as oneself comes originally from Leviticus 19:18, which says, "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord." The Jews of Jesus' day would largely have understood their "neighbor" to be their fellow Israelites. But God has a broader definition in mind. Loving one's neighbor is more than simply loving those who are like us and who can love us in return.

In Luke 10, in a moment of sarcasm, a scribe asked Jesus a question — Who is my neighbor? Jesus replied to the scribe with the parable of the good samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). In the parable, we see a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho who is attacked and left for dead on the side of the road. Two Jews, a priest and a Levite, both of whom should have known and followed God's law, failed to show love to their fellow Israelite in need. They saw the man and passed him by. However, along came a Samaritan (a person generally disdained by the Jews because of cultural and religious differences). Yet, it was the Samaritan who stopped to help the injured man. Jesus asked the scribe which of the three passersby was a neighbor to the injured man. "The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.'

Our neighbor is thus anyone in our proximity with whom we can share God's love and mercy.

We are called to love beyond those who are similar to us or with whom we are comfortable. We are called to love all whom God places in our path. Romans 13:10 tells us — "Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." In fact, Jesus goes further and says, "I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..." (Matthew 5:44-48). God shows love to all people and, as His children, we are commanded to do the same.

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MISSIONARY TASK RELEVANCY

The greatest way to show love and mercy to your neighbor is to introduce them to Jesus. This is why it is important to know your neighbor and build relationships with the people God has placed in your path. Get to know their culture, research their worldview and their learning styles, or craft conversations about the gospel in a way that they will understand.



LIFE APPLICATION

This life application is simple. Examine your everyday life. With whom will it be most natural to share the gospel with? Actual neighbors? Colleagues? Recreational teammates? Is there a new believer you could disciple and encourage to share their faith with someone else? Zone in and determine resources to use among those you are trying to reach. The challenge is to sow as many gospel seeds as possible in the community God has placed you in.

- [Read Luke 10:25-37](#). What emotion caused the Samaritan to help the man in need?
- How does compassion lead us to love our neighbor?
- Tell a story of a time you had compassion for someone else. Describe that feeling.
- Is there a person in your path you are not loving because you are not having compassion on them? Put another way, have you hardened your heart towards someone that needed you lately? What emotion caused you to make that decision?
- [Read Luke 9:23-25](#). What is Jesus' command to his disciples? What is Jesus' promise to his disciples?
- [Read Luke 10:1-12](#). This passage models building gospel centered relationships in a new town. Are there non-christians in your life that are peaceful with you? How can you direct those relationships towards a gospel conversation?
 - *Tip: Remember, we lead into relationships with the gospel. This is not meant to be manipulation. We are forward with our intentions to share the gospel with people.*
- In Luke 10:9, Jesus commands the disciples to meet physical needs and spiritual needs. How can you meet the physical needs of the people in your path in order to share the gospel with them? (Be specific to your particular life circumstances.)
- As a group, create a relationship building goal to meet before next week's gathering. Hold each other accountable throughout the week to meet this goal.