

Back to School: Reminding Ourselves of Who We Are and Why We Are Here

Week 3: Intentional Neighbor

Introduction: One day in the temple, a lawyer challenges Jesus asking him, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”

Jesus answers him saying, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:36-39; cf. Mark 12:28-34).

The first verse Jesus quotes is from Deuteronomy 6:5:

*“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.** And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

But the second is from Leviticus. For Jesus, to love your neighbor as yourself meant Leviticus 19:9–18:

“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.

You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

*You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. 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” (ESV).*

For Jesus, to love your neighbor as you love yourself was to practice love, grace, truth and justice towards your fellow human beings

This kind of love is what it really means to belong!

The Big Picture: True belonging is found in Christ. Intentional neighboring means creating space in our lives to engage and encourage people who are in my circle-of-influence through the ways of Jesus.

Discussion:

Share:

- Describe the best neighbor, co-worker or classmate you have ever encountered. What made that person special?

Discuss:

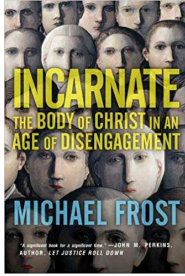
Sermon Review:

- Write down any questions or thoughts that stand out to you as you review the sermon together. Discuss them as a group.
- How have you tried to earn belonging? Did this effort satisfy your need?
- How does the practice of intentional neighboring meet the need for belonging?
- Cornerstone works to create space for intentional neighboring through these unique practices: Worship, Life Groups, Ministry Teams and Missional Teams. We define these opportunities in this way:
 - Gospel In: Gather to worship the Triune God together (The Sunday Experience)
 - Gospel With: Center our life rhythms around the Gospel with others (Life Groups)
 - Gospel To: Serve one another through love and encouragement in practical ways (Ministry Teams) and serving Christ in our community through love and good works (Missional Teams).

Which of these engagements best help you connect with other people?

Which engagement has been most difficult in connecting for you? Why do you think this?

Further Exploration on this Topic:



Incarnate: The Body of Christ in an Age of Disengagement by Michael Frost

From the Publisher: The story of Christianity is a story of incarnation—God taking on flesh and dwelling among the people he created. God appointing and sending people as his body, his hands and feet. Disciples of Jesus bearing the good news even as they bear the marks of his passion. Whatever Christianity is, it is at least a matter of flesh and blood and the ends of the earth. And yet so much of contemporary Christian culture is rooted not in incarnation but in escape—escape from the earth to heaven, escape from the suffering of this world, escape even from one another. Christianity is increasingly understood as something personal, conceptual, interior, private, neighborless. If Jesus was God incarnate, the church is in danger of being *excarnate*. Michael Frost expertly and prophetically exposes the gap between the faith we profess and the faith we practice. And he offers new hope for how the church can fulfill its vocation: to be the hands and feet of Christ to one another and to our neighbors, to the ends of the earth and to the end of the age.

Awards:

12th Annual *Outreach* Resource of the Year Recommendation (Missional Church)

2014 Best Book of Missional Theology, from Byron Berger, Hearts and Minds Bookstore

Link: <https://www.amazon.com/Incarnate-Body-Christ-Age-Disengagement/dp/0830844171>