

Discipleship Series
50+ Class – All Saints Presbyterian Church
Fall 2020 – November 8, 2020
Week Nine: *Evangelism & Neighboring*

Questions to get the conversation started ...

- Is evangelism only the job for Christians with the gift of evangelism, or for all Christians?
- Do you find evangelism easy or hard? Why?
- Do you know anyone for whom evangelism is easy?

Notes in sections 1-2 are from The Q Place, *The Arts of Spiritual Conversations: Beyond the Basics*—

1. Evangelism is a challenge for all, today and everyday

“Author Mark Mittelberg claims that evangelism is ‘one of the highest values in the church and one of the least practiced.’ You’ll find it talked about from the pulpit, included in church mission statements, and written about in many books. Almost every knows the Matthew 28:18-20 verses, commonly called the Great Commission, where Jesus tells his closest followers to go and make disciples of all nations. ‘The irony is that while many of us are in churches and denominations that have a rich heritage and strong reputation for evangelism, in many cases, precious little is actually happening. Let’s be honest: in most ministries very few lost people are being reached for Christ,’ Mittelberg concludes. Ouch! Could this be true? ... Evangelism in the 21st century has become an activity relegated to a small minority of Christians. Recent surveys on spiritual gifts conducted at Willow Creek Community Church and Saddleback Church revealed that only about 10% of their people identified that they possess the gift of evangelism or are passionate enough about it to participate regularly in sharing their faith. If that is representative of the Christian community, then 90% of our team is still uninvolved in sharing the good news about Jesus ... Many Christians seem to believe that their role in evangelism is to bring nonbelievers to church where a paid professional will tell them about Jesus.” (p.1)

“Evangelism has become the hobby of the few, rather than a joyful expectation of all.”
– Jerry Root & Stan Guthrie, *The Sacrament of Evangelism*; Jerry Root and Stan Guthrie

2. The Arts of Spiritual Conversations – Steps to Start

A. The Art of Noticing

– Notice those nearby and pay close attention to what God might be doing in their lives.

“A precursor of knowing someone is noticing them. As Doug Pollock writes in his book *God Space*, noticing is a prerequisite to caring about others and serving them in tangible ways that smuggle the gospel into their hearts.’ When was Jesus moved with compassion for the crowds? When he saw them. He noticed the crowds first and was consequently moved with compassion and a desire for workers who could shepherd them. The disciples might have missed the tremendous needs of the crowd had Jesus not pointed out their harassed and helpless state.” (p.5)

“How about us? Do we see the helpless and hopeless condition of people we come in contact with every day? Because people matter to God, they should matter to us. Giving people the gift of our time and

attention demonstrates their value to us as a treasure, pursued by God. ... Pastor John Ortberg writes of noticing as the spiritual discipline of seeing God at work all around you. Exercising this discipline challenges us to broaden our focus, slow down our pace of life, and witness God's grace in ordinary people, things, and events." (p.9)

B. The Art of Praying

– Pray for those I meet each day and ask God to show me how he wants me to bless them.

"We can often have an inflated view of our role in the process of someone coming to know Jesus. But the truth is that only God can do the saving. ...we are faced with the humbling reality that we cannot save anyone. We cannot convict or convince anyone... Our job is to pray, God invites us to participate with him in his redemptive activity in the world through prayer. It has been said that 'when people work, people work; when people pray, God works.' ... Prayer is like the gentle pouring of rain that loosens up the hardness of the hearts of our coworkers, neighbors, friends, classmates, and family. ...Rick Richardson states it this way: 'Before we can talk to people about God, we need to talk to God about people.' By beginning our evangelism with prayer, we lead with dependence on God and love for those we pray for." (p.21-22)

C. The Art of Listening

– Listen with care, interest, and empathy, and without editorial or unsolicited opinion.

"People in our culture often interpret listening as love. Listening calls for an attitude of humility and grace. We surrender our desire to be heard and understood in the interest of understanding the other person. Author Sue Patton Thoele sums it up well: 'Deep listening is miraculous for both the listener and speaker. When someone receives us with open-hearted, no-judging, intensely interested listening, our spirits expand.' When we make an effort to move toward people who cross our path and listen to them, relationships are formed and deepened. Being known as a good listener will cause you to stand out in our self-centered, what's-in-it-for-me kind of world. When we demonstrate that we are truly seeking to understand people and not change their points of view, we create a safe environment for them to open up at a deeper level. As they feel genuinely understood, they also begin to better understand themselves.... [L]istening is a sensitive but assertive quest... to understand someone else. It requires you to probe, explore, and reflect back what you've been hearing to ensure that you've truly understood what's been revealed to you. It seeks to discover people's stories, to learn what interests them, and ultimately to discover where God is at work in their lives. Listening creates 'God space' by helping others feel safe in our presence." (p.37-38)

D. The Art of Asking Questions

– From genuine curiosity, ask questions that draw others out and seeking to understand.

"The key to asking good questions is curiosity, which opens the door to meaningful conversations.... Asking questions from genuine interest builds connection. It invites interaction, showing that you want a relationship rather than an audience. It demonstrates that you value that relationship enough to seek to understand more, to hear another opinion or perspective. Respectful, honoring questions provide people the freedom to choose whether to respond and how much to respond. Meaningful questions give people the opportunity to wrestle with the truth about life, themselves, and God. Asking insightful questions is a loving approach that allows people to discover the truth about their

situation.” (p.53-54)

“If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on it, I would use the first 55 minutes to determine the proper questions to ask.” – Albert Einstein

“Every person has a story—a lifetime of experiences that have shaped them and impacted their emotions, their spiritual lives (or lack thereof), and their relationships. All these little stories make up their big story. When people have some space to tell their stories, they feel loved and empowered. So if you want to show love to people, listen to their stories; and to unlock their stories, ask good questions.” (p.61)

E. The Art of Loving

– Love others authentically, seeing them with the eyes of God, whom I know personally.

“Because God loves us so extravagantly, we are compelled to express that love to others.... (p.69)

“As we think about how we came to know Jesus, we often describe ourselves as ‘seekers’ or ‘explorers,’ as if our spiritual journey was all about us—that we are the ones who are active, and God is out there passively waiting to be found (maybe even hiding!). We may think that God is far off and disinterested—that he only cares about us if we initiate a relationship with him. ... But the truth is that God pursues each one of us. We are less the ‘seeker’ and more the ‘sought after’ ones. (Isaiah 62:12). God’s love is an active love; ... Scripture reveals that God actively seeks us.” (p.73)

F. The Art of Welcoming

– Welcome people by valuing their presence so that they feel they belong.

“Welcoming connects people into relationship.... It is hard to overstate the impact that a genuinely warm welcome can have in a person’s life. Welcoming someone bridges them from being a vulnerable outsider to being connected in relationship. When you accept and include someone, you lay the initial groundwork for a relationship to thrive and grow. Conversely, by not welcoming someone, you shut down a person’s interest or willingness to engage relationally.” (p.85)

“To keep it simple, what if you consider welcoming as something that happens best when you are keenly aware of maximizing **three welcoming aspects**—your face, you space, and your place...

- Your **Face** – Welcoming starts with your facial expression. ...When you frequently encounter people and greet them in this way, they will begin to remember your face; you have begun to lay the groundwork for the connection to deepen.
- Your **Space** – This is the nonphysical environment around you that includes the impressions of openness you express nonverbally to others. You can offer people a safe and caring presence, free of judgment.
- Your **Place** – This is the physical environment—your home, office, or car. Yen you have a comfortable place for people to meet, it makes people more relaxed and accepted.” (p.87)

G. The Art of Serving Together

– Gather people to serve so as to know God and each other better through service.

“Serving together is a powerful way to live out our values in the presence of seekers and to close the gap, so that the impact of our message increases. Imagine if Christians’ actions shined a bright light, illuminating the beauty of the gospel, sparking curiosity, and opening up the opportunity for the exchange of life-giving words? And what if we invited people who believe differently to join us in serving, and they got the opportunity to see Jesus up close, in action through us? They would taste the salt and see the light shining, and they would probably want more.” (p.122)

“Serving together is a powerful way to engage with different people, forging strong relationships over a common cause. Taking many different forms, this art involves welcoming people to join us in purposeful, beneficial activities. Meaningful conversation flows more naturally as the task at hand is in the spotlight—not our differences. Winsome interactions about God can be a very natural part of the shared experience. In the process, Jesus is on display.” (p.125)

H. **The Art of Sharing**

– Learn others’ stories. Share my story and express God’s story of forgiveness thru Jesus.

“Share your faith in Jesus because you genuinely care about people and know that Jesus can meet their deepest need.... [E]vangelist Luis Palau’s research shows the 75% of all those who come to Christ do so through a relationship with a Christian friend, relative, or coworker. The Institute of American Church Growth reports an even higher percentage, with almost 90% of the 14,000 Christians polled saying they came to Christ through ‘a friend or relative who invested in a relationship with them. ... As you develop intentional relationships with people who are different from you—people who may not yet know Christ—you begin to see them differently. You want the best for them, and you’re convinced that knowing Jesus would give not just assurance for eternity, but the most fulfilling life right here and now. You care deeply for them, and you don’t want to spend eternity without them. ... The first reason to share your faith in Jesus should be genuine love and concern for the other person, not your own agenda or a sense of obligation. If we share our faith because we think we’re ‘supposed’ to or because we think, perhaps subconsciously, that we’ll earn God’s favor or some sort of divine ‘credit,’ people quickly detect our tainted motives and we will alienate them. Sharing our faith is not like closing a sales deal. Out of love, we are sharing our experience and understanding of who Jesus is and how someone can relate to him. We are not ‘selling’ Jesus to them.” (p.133-134)

3. **Strategies for Community Impact—to earn a right to speak**

From The Navigators Church Ministries, *Growing Intentional Disciplemaking Cultures* (???)—

“It comes more natural to us to shout the gospel at people from a distance than to involve ourselves deeply in their lives, to think ourselves into their culture and their problems, and to feel with them in their pains.”

– John Stott

A. **Go-To Strategy**

“God’s strategy for the Great Commission is more than better programs, larger buildings, or the latest media resource. His strategy is always built around people, people who are inside relational networks of family, friends, neighborhoods, and workplaces. The Bible is a story of these “insiders,” people making a difference where they live, work, or worship. Nehemiah, Daniel, Ruth, a Samaritan woman, or a demon-exorcised man are all examples of God using insiders. All of us are insiders to work, family, or

social settings. An insider shares a common space, purpose, or interest with those they relate to. We're all insiders to somewhere and to someone. This means that each of us is planted by God in places designed by Him to advance the Gospel. If we, as insiders, are next to others, then with enough insiders, we can be next to everyone! ... Insiders embrace a "go-to" strategy. A go-to strategy believes that God has sent us to go to our families, friends, workplaces, and neighborhoods to bear witness to Christ. In fact, this was the strategy of the early church. In this Bible study, you will discover from the Scriptures and the history of the early church how a go-to strategy is at the heart of God's desire to advance the Gospel to the world. Take up a pen, turn to your Bible, and begin the adventure of becoming an insider... Like a virus, the Gospel infects people through the ministry of insiders."

B. Come-To Strategy

"Nearly every church leader asks the question, "Why aren't people coming to church?" The answers for "why" have filled Christian bookstores for decades. Answers can include, the service is not contemporary, the preaching is not relevant, or the building isn't child friendly. The list could go on. ... Recent research, though, indicates that people will "come to church" if asked and if they trust the relationship. Studies reveal that 63 percent of Americans are willing to receive information about a local church from a family member, friend, or neighbor. "If I knew there were people like me there," seems a prerequisite for many to come to a Christian event or worship. A come-to approach is still relevant, but it starts with a go-to attitude... Come-to starts when we become involved with people's lives. With that foundation established, a come-to strategy can be employed when we apply some basic biblical principles.

Jesus' Invitation to His disciples – 1. Come and see. 2. Come and be. 3. Follow me.

John 1:35-43 (NIV)—The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" ³⁹"Come, he replied, and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. ⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). ⁴²And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter). ⁴³The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."

C. Do Good Strategy – a thousand acts of kindness

"God has a simple strategy for the church when it comes to evangelism. We think evangelism is about attractive buildings and meetings, specialized staff, contemporary media, or training in new skills. Author Steve Sjogren presents a whole different perspective. He calls for a conspiracy of kindness. Sjogren writes, '*God is seeking to enter the heart of every person on this planet, but He faces a significant obstacle to His conspiracy. The problem has never been the message; we have that straight, for the most part . . . His problem is the reluctant army He calls the Church. God is looking for people who are willing to participate in acts of love and kindness to those outside their present circle.*' ... This conspiracy is based on a simple principle found in Romans 2:4: "God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance" (RSV). The human heart, when awakened by the Holy Spirit, finds kindness to be irresistible. This kindness is demonstrated when we do good to others. We set people up to embrace Jesus' good news by doing good to them. What a simple strategy for evangelism! ...Doing good mirrors our Lord's strategy. After all, He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). It also reflects the nature of God. We follow the example of a Lord who is rich in goodness. In this study, you will soak in kindness and goodness.

You will explore how God specifically created us for a lifestyle of doing good, and how our lives can reflect goodness to others. Ask the Holy Spirit to change your heart as you dig into His word. May this conspiracy of kindness recruit you to its cause.”

D. Build Relationships

“What do you think is the church’s most productive evangelism strategy? Is it a contemporary worship service, an aggressive visitation plan, or creative church programming? Research by The Church Growth Institute shows that our carefully planned events account for only ten percent of the church’s conversions. In contrast, fully eighty-five percent of all conversions to Christ is through a relationship with family or friends. This powerful statistic reveals the impact that everyday relationships have in bringing people to faith in Christ.

“The need of the hour is not more evangelistic methods but relational skills that build authentic bridges for the good news.

“Evangelism can be pictured as a cycle of building relationships, starting faith conversations, telling my story, and explaining His story. We call this “living a go-to life.” Most evangelism training focuses on telling my story and explaining His story. In a Go-To strategy, we will not only provide this training, but we will fill in the other two neglected parts of this cycle, how to build relationships and start faith conversations.

A Natural Progression

“There is a natural progression for building relationships. These relationships move from being *next-to* people (we share a space together), *casual* (we share information together), *social* (we have a chemistry together), *personal* (we share our lives together), and *spiritual* (we share our faith together).

Jesus set the example

“We all want to be like Christ. There is something magnetic yet challenging about His life. When we think of becoming more Christ-like, our thoughts move to his character qualities -- His love, grace, truthfulness, etc. But one essential quality of Jesus’ life is easy to overlook, He liked and loved lost people. Jesus easily moved in and out of a variety of social circles. He associated with prostitutes, tax collectors, fishermen, roman soldiers, religious leaders, and an assortment of “sinners.” He loved and liked lost people and referred to Himself as a “friend of sinners” (Matthew 11:19). ... How do we build meaningful social relationships that become bridges of trust for the gospel? It starts where we live, work, or play. In our current social networks, we experience a natural progression from being next to people, we form casual relationships with many, social relationship with some, and with a few, we move from the personal to the spiritual. Some evangelism training assumes that we can jump from the next-to or casual relationship to a highly personal spiritual conversation. However, in most relationships, we follow a natural progression from the casual to the more intimate.”

Key principles

1. “This process of moving from an acquaintance to a personal and spiritual friendship is a dynamic one. Sometimes friendships start on a highly personal level and by-pass the usual progression These stages are general guidelines, not hard and fast rules.
2. “Sharing the gospel can occur in any of these stages. There’s no set prescription for when to bring Jesus into a relationship or conversation. We must trust the Holy Spirit to alert us to the “green lights” indicating a person’s readiness to hear. However, experience shows that a relationship of trust and closeness precedes the opportunity for often the most personal of all conversations, the faith part of a person’s life.
3. “Building a relationship is more than a “means to an end.” God created us to enjoy, to enrich, and be enriched by friends (Proverbs 17:17) -- sometimes these friends may not share our faith. If our agenda

in a relationship is primarily to share the gospel, people will detect our mixed motives. No one likes to be a project.

4. "Bringing Jesus into a conversation or relationship often moves us out of our comfort zone. Sometimes we can emphasize the importance of building a friendship and starting faith conversations never occur. Introducing our friends to an eternity with God should be a natural extension of our affection and friendship for them."

E. Start Faith Conversations

"For many of us, moving from a friendship to a faith conversation is a nail-biting experience. We've enjoyed people socially and have shared some of our personal lives but now we're initiating a conversation about our faith. Talking about Jesus is a huge hurdle for us. How do we make the transition from Sunday's game, my child's school experience, and our recent doctor's visit to faith in Christ? How do we have these conversations in ways that are sensitive, relevant, and Christ-centered? In this workshop, you will learn some principles of faith conversations from the example of Jesus. You will explore how to ask good questions and engage in some everyday scenarios to put these principles into action. Our goal is to experience Colossians 1:28, "*So naturally, we proclaim Christ!*"

	Rich Young Ruler Mt 19:16-22	Nicodemus Jn 3:3-21	Woman at the Well Jn 4:1-30
What did Jesus do to engage conversation?			
What is the setting for the conversation?			
What was the topic of conversation?			
What communication skills did Jesus use?			
What was the message Jesus communicated?			
What was the outcome ?			

How to initiate a conversation

- Connect** Relationally: Find common ground. Initiate conversation. Plan questions or stories.
- Listen** Intently: Be flexible. Be focused. Aim for internal. Be curious.
- Engage** Conversationally: Dialogue, not a monologue. Ask spiritual/faith questions.
- Ask permission to **share** your faith story.

Some possible questions

Why do you think people are not interested in the church today?

How do you make sense of the world? Do you have any spiritual beliefs? Do you believe there is life after this life? What's God like? How would you find out? My faith has been crucial in giving me hope and strength. How about your faith journey? Do you mind if I share my faith experience with you? Would you be interested in hearing my faith story?

F. Tell My Story – we're called to be witnesses

You're now prepared to tell your story.

“You may never be called to be a witness in a courtroom, but you are called to give witness to your faith in Christ. ... The message of the gospel was never to be kept a secret (Matthew 5:14-15) or to be the possession of a few (1 John 1:1-4). The wonderful news of Jesus' resurrection and promise of new life was an act that was to be witnessed to by the church gathered (Ephesians 3:10) and through individuals scattered (1 Peter 3:15). In one of the “Great Commission” passages, we are instructed to be “witnesses” of His resurrection and promised forgive-ness (Luke 24:47-48). A witness is never meant to be silent but a verbal testimony to the Lord's work (Acts 1:8). ... This witness is found in the testimony of the quality of the church's corporate life and in the personal life of the individual (Matthew 5:14-16). A godly life gives credibility to the message (Titus 2:10) since a witness is called to give testimony of what she or he has seen or heard. This witness is found in the personal testimony of how God, through Jesus Christ, has worked in transforming our lives and given us an eternal hope and home. Like the healed blind man, we should be able to give testimony that ‘One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see’ (John 10:25). Like the healed demoniac, we should give witness to ‘our friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you (Mark 5:19).”

What makes a credible witness?

“Attorneys will tell you that a credible testimony lies in the credibility of the eyewitness account. His or her believability is enhanced by the consistency of their story and the perceived veracity of their character. If consistency of character is in doubt, the verbal testimony may be discredited. As witnesses giving testimony to the Lord Jesus, we speak not only from first-hand experience but from the credibility of a proven life. We are living the life we are bearing witness to.

The Power of a Good Story

“We all know the power of a good story. Stories catch our attention and personalize learning in real and tangible ways. The Bible is a book full of stories, particularly stories about people. We know the story of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, or Jonah. Just as God recorded those stories to teach us lessons (Romans 15:4, Hebrews 11) so He is writing a story in your life. This faith story can be used to connect with people dealing with similar life situations, struggles, or challenges. His story becomes wrapped up in your story. Your faith story becomes a ‘testimony’ to God's work.

What is a personal testimony?

“Your faith story reveals the redemptive work of Christ in your life over time. This story can be a compelling and credible witness to the power of the gospel. Your faith story puts into words what God has done in your life, creating a door-opener for extended faith conversations with others. Your faith story builds bridges to the souls of people who have had similar questions, deep hurts, or desired hopes. While your story, or testimony, may not be a “convincing” tool that leads others to faith, it can be a “cultivating” tool, verbally sowing the word of God into another's life. Your witness by life and word allows the Holy Spirit to take this seed of testimony and water it over time.

What are some practical qualities of a good testimony?

- A good testimony is **short**. People don't want to hear a sermon. A quality testimony can be expressed in about three minutes.
- A good testimony **bears witness to Christ**, not to yourself or to a church.

- A good testimony is **relevant** to one being “witnessed” to. Many of our neighbors, co-workers or friends do not share our “church” language and expressions. We must communicate in relevant and sensitive ways with our unchurched friends.
- A good testimony **puts into words** what God has done in your life through the power of the resurrected Christ.

Are you a Paul, Thomas, or Timothy?

How God works in our lives can be compared to the experience of Paul, Thomas, or Timothy.

“The Apostle Paul typifies **The Dramatic Conversion**. This is the “Damascus Road” experience where there is a clear pattern of sin before placing one’s faith in Christ. The example of Paul in Acts 22 illustrates how the dramatic conversion falls into three stages: my life before Christ, how God draws me to place my faith in Christ, and how He has changed my life. Are you a Paul in your experience with God?

“The Apostle Thomas typifies **The Adult Commitment**. Thomas was a Christ-follower with some significant doubts. At a point in his adult life, the Lord overcame those doubts and Thomas dedicated himself to following His Lord. Many Christians experience an early birth of faith in Christ through a Sunday School experience, a Vacation Bible School, or a confirmation class. However, something stalled their growth and they placed God “on hold.” They never lost their faith, but they lost their heart. The Adult Commitment affirms his or her original faith as a child but emphasizes how God drew them back as an adult into a renewed commitment to follow Christ. Are you a Thomas in your experience with God?

“Timothy was a **Faithful Follower**. Timothy typifies many adults who have possessed a faith since childhood (2 Timothy 3:15). Like his grandmother and mother, Timothy always had a sincere faith (2 Timothy 1:5). Unlike the other stories, the Faithful Follower’s testimony is marked by steady growth and a consistent faith in Christ. These believers have deep convictions and life experiences that affirm the reality of their faith. The challenge of this person’s story is to focus on the adult realities of his or her steady faith. Unchurched people aren’t interested in what took place in childhood but how a faith in Christ makes a difference as an adult. Are you like a Timothy in your faith story?

G. Tell His Story – Evangelism 101

Evangelism or being an “evangelist” comes from the Greek word for “gospel.” The noun (*euangelion*) means “good news.” It pictures a herald announcing the victory of a triumphant king. The verb form (*euangelizo*) is to bring or announce glad tidings or good news. Evangelism, then, is announcing the joyful message of the victory of Jesus Christ.

The following expressions are used in connection with the Gospel: to preach as a herald (Galatians 2:2); to speak (2 Thessalonians 2:2); to testify (Acts 20:24) ; to proclaim (1 Corinthians 9:14); to give notice (Acts 21:26); to report (2 Corinthians 7:7)

The New Testament presents a two-fold process to evangelism. One side of the evangelism “coin” is the affirmation of the gospel by the quality of our lives (Philippians 1:27) and the witness of the church. The other side of the coin is proclamation, the verbal presentation of the good news (Matthew 24:14). This proclamation ranges from a verbal witness to what God has done (John 9:25) to a full explanation of Jesus’ message (Acts 8:35).

Two Simple Principles

1. Evangelism is a process: Relationship > Interest > Insight > Conviction
2. Evangelism is an event: "He [evangelized] told him the good news about Jesus." Acts 8:35

One way to explain the good news

Bible-centered / Simple / Interactive / Dialogue not a monologue

4. The Art of Neighboring

"I am convinced that living in close community with our neighbors is the best way to live. The command to love our neighbors lies at the core of God's plan for our lives, and when we follow this mandate, it changes everything. The journey begins when we choose a lifestyle of conversation and community over a lifestyle of busyness and accumulation. It's about making room for life and choosing to befriend those God has placed around us. ...I am more convinced than ever that we need practical ways to reach into the lives of those who are all around us. Large gatherings and great programs won't necessarily engage the people in our communities who don't know God. But neighboring will." – Randy Frazee (p.11-12)

Galatians 5:14—The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

"We want to be clear about something when it comes to the art of neighboring. This is not an evangelism strategy. And if evangelism is your only motive, then you won't be a very good neighbor. However, if neighboring is done with the right posture, then people who don't know God will most certainly come to know him." (p.99)

Who is my neighbor? Taking the Great Commandment literally.

"When Jesus was asked to reduce everything in the Bible into one command he said: Love God with everything you have and love your neighbor as yourself. What if he meant that we should love our actual neighbors? You know, the people that live right next door. ... The problem is that we have turned this simple idea into a nice saying. We put it on bumper stickers and T-shirts and go on with our lives without actually putting it into practice. But the fact is, Jesus has given us a practical plan that we can actually put into practice, a plan that has the potential to change the world. The reality is, though, that the majority of Christians don't even know the names of most of their neighbors." (p.15)

Taking the Great Commandment Seriously

"I believed then, and I still do today, that Jesus has something good to offer people. And when they follow him, not only do they have eternal security, but the priorities in their lives are also rearranged for the better." (p.27)

What happens when people DON'T love people well...

- Isolation. We will live lonely lives.
- Fear. We will be wary of our neighbors, and they will be wary of us.
- Misunderstanding. It will be easy to get the wrong idea about each other. (p.29-30)

Obstacles to neighboring well

"The number-one obstacle to neighboring well is time. If you're taking the Great Commandment seriously, undoubtedly you will start to feel conflicted. You have relationships in your life already. And most of us of us aren't walking around with extra time, wondering what to do with it. We feel overwhelmed by the amount of stuff that is jammed into our schedules. Our lives are packed already. We

already have enough relationships—how are we ever going to find time and energy for one more relationship, let alone six or seven or eight?” (p.43)

Three lies we all tell ourselves... that keep us from speaking today

- Lie # 1: Things will settle down someday.
- Lie # 2: More will be enough.
- Lie # 3: Everybody lives like this. (p.45-46)

“The healthiest person who ever lived was Jesus. He got a lot done, but when we read about his life, the word hurried never comes to mind. Jesus came to offer us a different way of living. **John 10:10 (NIV)**—The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (p.46)

“Basically the decision boiled down to the need for us to figure out what was more important and then actually to live by that decision.” (p.49)

Getting started. Moving down the line. “First Contact.” Ask people what their name is, and then write it down so you can remember it.

“Have you ever started into your garage and thought, I know that I need to spend a day cleaning this place, but I just don’t know where to begin? Neighboring can be like that for many of us. Knowing where to start is sometimes the hardest step.” (p.74)

Struggling with getting started. “In the beginning it can sometimes feel awkward or strange. After all, we are talking about interacting with strangers. But if you are willing to lean into the process and make an effort, you will be surprised at the results. We developed a simple framework that has proven to be a helpful tool for people who are trying to figure out where to start and then how to continue being a better neighbor: Stranger > Acquaintance > Relationship. ...The people you don’t know by name are strangers. You might occasionally see them, and they have hopefully seen you, but the level of your interaction with them is minimal... The first step in taking the Great Commandment literally is to move from stranger to acquaintance in your relationships with those who live nearest you. Learning a person’s name is the first and easiest step you can take to become a better neighbor.” (p.75)

The simple idea of creating a block directory for yourself or for everyone: name, address, cell, email. (p.76)

Baby steps. Give what you have. Just do something but get started and don’t give up.

“Anyone can be a good neighbor.” (p.85)

“But 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. ...When it comes to neighboring, it’s important to figure out how we can make a difference in the lives of our neighbors. It may not seem that we have much, but when we give from what we have, something sacred happens. God uses the small things that we bring to him and multiplies them into a miracle in someone else’s life.” (Just like the feeding of the 5,000 from a boy who offered up 5 small loaves and 3 fish) (p.87)

Motive Matters. We are not in the business of “selling” Jesus. Our neighbor is not a “deal” to close. It is a bad deal when or if our motives are the same as the sales industry and our goal is to “always be closing (ABC)”

“We want to be clear about something when it comes to the art of neighboring. This is not an evangelism strategy. And if evangelism is your only motive, then you won’t be a very good neighbor. However, if neighboring is done with the right posture, then people who don’t know God will most certainly come to know him.” (p.99)

The Art of Receiving. Allowing the relationships with our neighbors to be two-way. Living in reciprocal relationships, so you can give and receive. Allowing yourself to not always be in control, to not always being the one to give. Be “with” your neighbor not just “for” your neighbor.

What does it take... Humility; Imposing on others (allowing yourself to be in someone else’s debt); Vulnerability; Don’t force it- Take natural opportunities to engage with your neighbor (i.e. if you really need a cup of sugar, then go next door and borrow it but don’t go borrow a cup of sugar if you don’t need it); In Luke 7 Jesus accepts a gift from a prostitute (p.122-127)

“The art of receiving is not complicated. It comes down to being aware of our own needs. It’s about opening our eyes, then being vulnerable enough to ask and receive. After all, you couldn’t possibly possess all the skills, resources, or tools you need, right? So acknowledge your needs and start noticing the people in your neighborhood who might be willing to help.” (p.128)

--Focusing on relationships. Friends & Friendship. The Secrets of Drawing Closer. Not a student-teacher relationship, but a partnership that journeys together.—