

Love Your Neighbor: Week 5

Life Questions:

1. What lessons did you learn from your time in the Word this week?
2. Who did you share the gospel with?
3. What has God done in your life that's encouraging over the past 2 weeks?

Serving Your Neighbor

Read *1 Peter 4:7-11*

Have you ever gotten someone a gift but forgot to give it to them? You can find the perfect gift for a friend or family member, but if you leave it in your closet year after year it doesn't do them any good. This is exactly what happens if we don't use our gifts to serve others. God has given us many gifts that we take for granted. It's important to steward these gifts appropriately for His glory to demonstrate His grace to others. Whether it's encouraging words, being there during a time of suffering, providing a warm meal, or helping care for someone's children these acts of service and hospitality offer us an opportunity to share the love of God with others. When we serve the physical needs of others and develop lasting relationships it creates opportunities to care for their spiritual needs. Focusing on the gospel and using our lives to live out the life-changing grace God has extended to us will cause others to ask what the gospel is and why it drives us to serve others.

Discussion Questions

1. In verse 8 we see that love covers a multitude of sins. More importantly God's perfect love covers our sins. What progress have you made in making loving God with all of your heart, soul, and mind the most important commandment? How are you doing with loving others?
2. Verse 9 instructs us to be hospitable to one another without complaining. If we aren't careful we can find ourselves making offhand remarks about "how we *have* to help this person" or "do this other task that *no one else* wants to do." Think about and discuss the implication your words can have on how others perceive your actions. What keeps us from focusing on the grace of God when we serve others?
3. As Christians we can get stuck in the mindset where using our gifts for God only applies to the church setting. While serving in the local church is important, stewarding and serving with our gifts also applies to our families, our work environment, and our daily day to day interactions. How are you using your gifts everyday to glorify Christ?
4. What is the greatest gift God has given you to advance His kingdom? Are you being hospitable with this gift?
5. This week did you speak and serve from the strength that God provided or did you lean on your own strength instead?

Application Step

One of the benefits of our church being spread out of the Atlanta/Marietta area is we can impact multiple communities. Discuss with your community group how you can serve the local community and use the gifts that your group has. Are there any people in your group already serving in the community? Make a plan to start or continue serving your community in the next two weeks.