

# ADDRESS THE MESS

## ADDRESS THE MESS, PART 5: MOVE TOWARDS THE MESS

Jesus told us to love our neighbors as ourselves. But that's easier said than done. Which people qualify as neighbors, and which don't? How far does our responsibility to others extend? If we make the effort to move toward the messes in other people's lives, how inconvenient is too inconvenient? How unsafe is too unsafe? How dangerous is too dangerous? What are the limits to loving others as we love ourselves?

**BIG IDEA:** If we insist on "comfortable," boredom is inevitable.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who are the people in your life that you would help out of a mess no matter what? What is it about those relationships that motivates you to move past any discomfort to offer help?
2. Talk about a time when someone moved toward your mess. How has that experience shaped you?
3. Has spiritual boredom been a struggle for you? If not, how have you avoided it? If so, why do you think that's the case?
4. Why do you think boredom was not a problem for the Christians we read about in the New Testament?
5. Boredom is a choice we make. If that's true, why do people choose to be bored?"
6. *With your Bible or the Bible App, read Luke 10:25–37.*

*On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."*

*Luke 10:25–37*

7. Which person or group of people are you tempted to disqualify from "neighbor" status? What makes you hesitant to move toward that person's or group's mess?
8. Thinking about that passage in Luke 10, talk about a time when you passed by someone else's mess. What do you wish you had done differently?
9. Do you think it's possible to follow Jesus without moving toward the mess? Why or why not?
10. Chris said that many times we don't *move toward a mess* because we're too busy. "You'll know you are too busy when messy people are **inconveniences** rather than **opportunities**." Are you too busy to help someone else right now? Do you think God wants you that busy? If not, what can you say, "No" to free up some time?
11. Another reason why we get bored in our Christian life and we don't *move toward a mess* is because we want to be comfortable. Chris said, "We will meet the best version of ourselves until we exit our comfort zone and we are moving toward the mess—where God is using that chaos—those uncomfortable circumstances—to mold and shape us. That's where we're really going to grow." Do you agree or disagree? Why?

12. During the message, Chris said, “*Move toward a mess, but not every mess. If you try to move toward every mess, you’ll make a bigger mess.*” What are some ways you decide which messes to move toward?
13. Is there a mess in someone else’s life that you need to move toward? What can you do over the next week, month, or even year to begin to treat that mess as an opportunity instead of an inconvenience? How can this group support you?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Have you ever served at a soup kitchen? What was it like?
2. Have you ever gotten to know a homeless person? If so, how did that happen? If not, how does the idea of reaching out to someone in need strike you?
3. Have you ever developed an “unlikely friendship”—a relationship between you and someone very different from yourself? How did the experience change you?
4. *With your Bible or the Bible App, read Luke 7:36-50.*

*One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them.*

*When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She’s a sinner!” Then Jesus answered his thoughts. “Simon,” he said to the Pharisee, “I have something to say to you.” “Go ahead, Teacher,” Simon replied.*

*Then Jesus told him this story: “A man loaned money to two people—500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?” Simon answered, “I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt.” “That’s right,” Jesus said.*

*Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn’t offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You didn’t greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume. “I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.” Then Jesus said to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven.”*

*The men at the table said among themselves, “Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?” And Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”*

*Luke 7:36-50*

5. Have you ever met someone like Simon? Without mentioning names, what were the circumstances through which you met?
6. Why was Simon so arrogant?
7. Do you think Simon the Pharisee was aware of the social custom to greet guests with a kiss and wash their feet? Why do you think Simon chose not to greet Jesus that way?
8. Why do you think the sinful woman came to the Pharisee’s house?
9. Does oneChurch.tv encourage meeting messy people? Why or why not?
10. Is there a messy person in your life? How did you meet? How are things going? If there isn’t a someone messy in your life right now, how do you feel about finding one or letting him or her find you?
11. Messy people will find you and seek you out if you love and lead from the posture of grace. Is it easy or hard for you to lead with grace? Explain your answer.
12. How do you know when it’s time to talk about life-change with someone?

## WHAT WILL YOU DO?

When Jesus told us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves, he had something radical in mind. He was challenging us to see others’ messes as opportunities, not inconveniences. He was calling us to put others ahead of ourselves just as he put us ahead of himself.

## CHANGING YOUR MIND

*Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all 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.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:37–40*