

# “Won’t YOU be my Neighbor?”

## Won’t You Be My Neighbor? - Week Two

Nobody likes to admit it, but we all have opinions or even arbitrary prejudices that keep us from fully loving the people around us. And yet, Jesus calls his followers to throw off *anything* that hinders us from pouring out our lives in service of the people around us. This forces every follower of Christ to eventually confront an uncomfortable question: What is causing me to leave people around me who were created to be loved? And how do I get rid of that, ‘what?’

### Start Talking

1. What was the best vacation you ever took? The worst?
2. If you could choose, which would you pick: getting to add an extra three hours to every day, or getting to magically remove three items from your list of responsibilities? Why?
3. When was the last time you stopped to help someone who seemed to be struggling or in trouble? How did it go?

### Looking Back

1. What did you do to this past week to get involved even with people society says you shouldn’t care about– even at potentially great cost to yourself?
2. Did you leave reminders for yourself to be actively on the lookout for people stuck in painful situations as you walked through your daily life this week? How did they work?
3. Last week we performed a thought exercise to determine the people in our lives who we are most and least willing to treat as our “neighbors.” Did you make progress when it came to serving those people you tend to be least inclined to get involved with?

### What About You?

1. Have you ever found yourself in need of somebody to stop and help? What happened?
2. In the most recent message, Jason referred to what social scientists call, “the bystander effect.” Why do you think it’s especially easy for most of us to ignore hurting people when there are many other people around?



3. What do you find to be the hardest obstacle to overcome when it's time to put love into action: The bystander effect, the sheer inconvenience of getting involved, or the difficulty and discomfort of helping those who are different?
4. Okay, so it's time for some unfiltered honesty. What's your "go-to" excuse when seeking to write off an opportunity to dive into somebody else's messy pain?
5. What is at stake in our decision to reach out to someone experiencing pain?

### **Look It Up**

*Read the Following Passages: Luke 10:36 – 37, John 13: 34 - 35*

6. Who do you most relate to as they confront the hurting man on the side of the road: the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan? Why?
7. Jesus asks a very pointed follow-up question of the legal experts in the "Good Samaritan" passage: "who was a 'neighbor' to the man who needed help, here?" How do you think Jesus is defining the term, "neighbor?"
8. Why is it so tempting to have power over someone, rather than to sacrifice something in order to alleviate their pain? Why is love ultimately a better path than power?
9. How do you think the religious and legal experts felt about Jesus casting a 'heretical,' 'immoral' Samaritan as the hero of the parable? Why do you think Jesus did this?
10. Jesus summarizes his command by asking his followers to love each other as *he* has loved them. So, as simple as it may sound, how has he loved us? What does this require of us?
11. Why is it significant that Jesus says that our love will be the primary factor that people use to identify his followers?

### **Putting It All Together**

1. What is keeping you from loving people who were created to be loved?
2. What can you do this week to discard whatever it is that convinces you to move to the other side of the road when you see someone who could use your help? How will you keep yourself accountable?
3. Do you think that people who are not aware of your religious beliefs would be able to guess that you are a follower of Christ based upon the way you treat people? What would have to change in order to close the gap between intention and reality?
4. Jason categorized the three factors that keep us from getting involved with the pain of others as 1.) the bystander effect, 2.) the inconvenience of helping, and 3.) the discomfort of helping those who are different. What rebuttals can you come up with for each of these three broad classes of excuses not to get involved?

