



## Love Your Neighbor 5 Day Devotional

We have created this five day devotional to help encourage you and your loved ones to explore how you can love your neighbor. Our hope and prayer is that you would be inspired to grow in loving your neighbor, anchored in a deep love for God, who graciously allows and calls us to love others even as Christ has loved us.



Rodrigo Dinsmore  
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### DAY 1 - MONDAY, MARCH 30

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#### Mark 12:28-34

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*[28] And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" [29] Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. [30] And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' [31] The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." [32] And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. [33] And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." [34] And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions. (ESV)*

#### Love God, Love Your Neighbor

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Three days before Jesus' death, one of the Pharisees—a legal expert—tested him in Jerusalem by asking, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" (Mark 12:28). To any lesser man, the question might have been imposing. After all, the Mosaic Law—the first five books of the Old Testament—includes 613 commandments, according to Jewish tradition, not to mention the hundreds of other man-made laws that ancient rabbis added later on.

That's a lot of commandments!

Jesus didn't hesitate. Pulling from the famous *Shema* (the Hebrew word for "hear") of Deuteronomy 6:4, he replied, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:29-31).

In a beautiful economy of word and thought, Jesus boiled the essence of following him down to a simple yet profound mantra: **Love God and love your neighbors.**

Friends, as we enter our annual "Made For Mission" week, Jesus' words to the pharisaical scribe 2,000 years ago still ring true today: **We must love God and love our neighbors. These are the twin engines that should empower any mission that Christians hope to accomplish in Jesus' name.**

How do we do this? We must love God with complete devotion—heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). Any part of us not fully devoted to God always wanders elsewhere, and that’s idolatry.

How do we love our neighbors as ourselves? The supreme example, of course, comes from our Savior, *“who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”* (Philippians 2:6-8).

To love God and love our neighbors is to love with a sacrificial, Christ-like love.

*Written by Josh Cooley, Kids Minister @ Chapel Hill Bible Church*

## **Questions for Reflection**

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1. Are there areas of your life where you are not completely devoted to God?
2. How can you love your neighbors sacrificially?

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## DAY 2 - TUESDAY, MARCH 31

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### Mark 10:35-45

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*[35] And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." [36] And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" [37] And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." [38] Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" [39] And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, [40] but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." [41] And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. [42] And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. [43] But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, [44] and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. [45] For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (ESV)*

### Love Your Neighbor Through Service

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One day, James and John, the two brothers among Jesus' disciples whom he nicknamed the Sons of Thunder, came to him with an audacious request. In Mark 10:37, they told Christ, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." Their appeal was arrogant and self-serving.

It also didn't sit well with the other disciples. A big argument ensued. What makes you so special, the others basically said, to request this of Jesus? What was left unspoken was that the others probably wanted the same thing!

Jesus quieted down his quarreling friends and said, "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:43-45).

Through his life and death, Jesus forever created a radical paradigm shift in the way Christians think about loving others.

Today's "Made For Mission" focus is loving our neighbor through service. The eternal Son of God had every right to demand worship, adoration and servitude among his followers during his time on earth. Instead, he mingled with sinners, healed the sick, washed his disciples' feet, and sacrificed his own life so that his chosen people could be reconciled to a holy God.

Deep down, we all know we need to love our neighbors by serving them. But perhaps you're asking, "Where do I begin?" Here are a few questions to get you started:

- **What am I good at?** God has gifted you with unique gifts and abilities (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12). He has given you these gifts to glorify him, build up the church, and love others.
- **How can I serve others through CHBC?** The local church is a natural place to start serving. CHBC offers many ways to love your neighbor — both fellow members and those in our surrounding communities.
- **Where are the greatest areas of need around me?** This was the mindset of Christ during his three years of public ministry. He always sought out the people who needed him most, both physically and spiritually (e.g. Mark 2:17; Luke 4:43; Luke 19:1-10). May the Lord open our eyes and hearts to the physical and spiritual needs of our neighbors around us!

 **Questions & Reflection**

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1. How does Jesus' example of ultimate servanthood in Mark 10:45 motivate you to serve your neighbor?
2. What are your spiritual gifts and how can you use them to serve your neighbor?

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## DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1

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### Genesis 1:28

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*[28] And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (ESV)*

### Love Your Neighbor Through Work

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In the beginning, God...worked. This work was creative, structured, complex, beautiful, and God-glorifying. He called his work good. In this work God fashioned for his glory a place where work would be done by those who would bear his image. His image bearers were to reflect their creator and were given good and meaningful work to do.

The work was the tilling and keeping of a garden and the joy of it was in tending to the place where God chose to walk with his creation. It was the subduing of the animals and the joy was in reflecting the dominion of God over all creation.

The work was God-given and God-inspired. It was good, just as everything else God had created. It reflected God's creativity, and having created humans to fellowship with him and to worship him, he gave them work as a means through which to do that.

So we find that from the very beginning we are created to work. Work was not something that came about so that we might live. Rather, we live so we might work. That is God's beautiful design for Man. Work is a pre-Fall blessing designed to enjoy God and to reflect his rule over the world.

This Cultural Mandate, found in Genesis 1:28 and repeated in Genesis 9, shapes our work while the Great Commission shapes our witness. We are called as Christians to bless the world both through our work and through our witness. Through our work we minister to the daily needs of others as God himself works through us to provide us with our daily bread. And through our work we create God-honoring culture as we spread his glory throughout the earth, leaving his creative imprint in all we do.

**We love our neighbor when we do good work. So work unto the glory of God and for the good of your neighbor.**

Written by Rodrigo Dinsmore, Mission Pastor @ Chapel Hill Bible Church

### Questions for Reflection

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1. Do you approach your work as a mean to fellowship with and serve God?
2. How does your work serve to love your neighbor?

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## DAY 4 - THURSDAY, APRIL 2

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### 2 Corinthians 8-9

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#### **2 Corinthians 8**

[1] We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, [2] for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. [3] For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, [4] begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— [5] and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. [6] Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. [7] But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.

[8] I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. [9] For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. [10] And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. [11] So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. [12] For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. [13] For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness [14] your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. [15] As it is written, “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.”

[16] But thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same earnest care I have for you. [17] For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest he is going to you of his own accord. [18] With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel. [19] And not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this act of grace that is being ministered by us, for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our good will. [20] We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, [21] for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man. [22] And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you. [23] As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. [24] So give proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you to these men.

#### **2 Corinthians 9**

[1] Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, [2] for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year. And your zeal has stirred up most of them. [3] But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. [4] Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident. [5] So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction.

[6] The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. [7] Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. [8] And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. [9] As it is written,

*"He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;  
his righteousness endures forever."*

*[10] He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. [11] You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. [12] For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. [13] By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, [14] while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. [15] Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift! (ESV)*

## Love Your Neighbor Through Generosity

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In 2 Corinthians chapters 8-9, the apostle Paul addressed the first-century Corinthian church about a financial collection he was about to take for the believers in Jerusalem, who were suffering extreme hardships for their faith. The churches in Macedonia – Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, etc. – had been generous with a previous gift to the Jerusalem church, and Paul encouraged the Corinthians to likewise overflow in their charity.

In a masterfully pastoral way, Paul wrote, *"Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work"* (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

As our "Made For Mission" focus turns today toward loving our neighbor through generosity, there is perhaps no greater passage in Scripture to guide our thoughts. God doesn't give us money and resources to hoard or store up wealth (Luke 12:13-21). Our resources are heaven-sent gifts so that we can take care of our physical needs and the needs of others. A person with a generous heart takes his/her God-given resources and joyfully seeks to bless others with them.

Loving your neighbor through generosity certainly can involve money, but it can include time or other resources, too. It can mean helping an elderly neighbor with yard work. Or making a shopping run for a single mom. Or visiting a widow or widower in their time of grief. Those are just a few examples.

All this, of course, should not be the outflow of compulsion (2 Corinthians 9:7) or a begrudging heart. That's not Great Commission work. That's a 1st grader choking down lima beans through gritted teeth. Rather, **our service toward others should flow out of exceeding gratitude for what God has done for us in Christ**, who *"though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich"* (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Written by Josh Cooley, Kids Minister @ Chapel Hill Bible Church

## Questions for Reflection

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1. With what kinds of resources has God blessed you with for you to be "a cheerful giver"?
2. Who can you show generosity to this week with your time, talents, or money?

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**FOR FURTHER STUDY:** James 2:14-17; 1 Timothy 6:6-10

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## DAY 5 - FRIDAY, APRIL 3

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### 1 Timothy 2:1, 3-4

[1] *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people,*

[3] *This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, [4] who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (ESV)*

### Love Your Neighbor Through Prayer

We are a people who excel at getting things done. We love to-do lists. Checking off boxes feels so good! We revel in self-sufficiency.

But God's Word calls us to a different way of living. Not to be a lazy people, of course. There's nothing wrong with being productive. But Scripture constantly calls us to prayer.

As we finish our "Made For Mission" week, today's focus turns toward loving our neighbor through prayer. It sounds so simple, yet prayer is often difficult for us because it forces us to slow down our busy, self-sufficient lives and rely solely on God's providence and provision. It compels us to lay our to-do lists aside and say, "God, you are in control. What would you have me do?"

When was the last time you prayed for the wellbeing and salvation of your neighbors? Maybe it's been awhile. Yet Scripture says God is pleased when we do this. Look at 1 Timothy 2:1, 3-4: *"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people. ... This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."*

"All people" certainly includes those living on our street!

In 2 Thessalonians 3:1, the apostle Paul encouraged the believers in Thessalonica to *"pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you."* The NIV renders that verse as *"pray for us that the message of the Lord may **spread rapidly**"* (bold added).

We are quite aware of things spreading rapidly right now, aren't we?! But as we pray for God to stop the coronavirus, let's also pray for the following:

1. That God's Spirit would move in the hearts of our unbelieving neighbors unto salvation.
2. That God would give us specific opportunities to serve them and share the gospel with them.
3. That God would give us the wisdom and courage to see gospel opportunities that he provides and take advantage of them!

As you pray, watch and rejoice as our faithful, all-powerful God opens doors for the saving message of Christ to go forward into our neighborhoods!

Written by Josh Cooley, Kids Minister @ Chapel Hill Bible Church

### Questions for Reflection

1. How can you start incorporating prayer for your neighbors into your daily devotions?
2. Are you aware of specific needs that your neighbors have? If so, pray for them!

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**FOR FURTHER STUDY:** Acts 16:11-15; Colossians 4:2-4; James 5:16

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