

Leader's Guide

Great Disciples: Relationship Before Reach

Matthew 22:34-40

Pastor Ian Edwards

April 19, 2026

Big Idea to Keep in Front of the Group

Discipleship is not only about what we do for Jesus, but about how we love like Jesus. Activity without love becomes empty, but love naturally produces faithful action.

Helpful Facilitation Tips

- Allow silence after questions; people often process before speaking.
 - Gently redirect if conversation becomes abstract or overly theological. Bring it back to lived experience.
 - Model vulnerability in your own answers when appropriate.
 - If conviction surfaces, guide people toward grace and next steps rather than staying in guilt.
-

Opening

When have you ever rushed into something good before you were really ready for it?

(It could be a project, relationship, job, or decision. What happened?)

Follow-up prompts:

- What made you feel ready at the time?
 - What did you learn from it in hindsight?
-

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus connects loving God and loving others as the greatest commandments. Which of those feels more natural to you right now, and which one feels more challenging? Why?

Follow-up prompts:

- Is your struggle more vertical (loving God) or horizontal (loving people)?
- Has that shifted over different seasons of your life?

Helpful Scripture:

- John 13:34–35: “Love others as I have loved you...”

2. When you think about your current faith rhythms, where do you see a tendency to prioritize doing for God over simply loving God and others? What might that reveal about your heart?

Follow-up prompts:

- What kinds of “doing” are easiest to default to?
- Where does love sometimes get replaced by activity or obligation?

Helpful Scripture:

- 1 Samuel 15:22: “To obey is better than sacrifice...”
- Micah 6:8: “Shall I come before him with burnt offerings...?”

3. Looking at the description of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7, which quality stood out to you the most and why? Where do you sense the Holy Spirit inviting you to grow?

Follow-up prompts:

- Which part feels most difficult to live out consistently?
- Which part feels most convicting right now?

Helpful Scripture:

- Galatians 5:22–23 (fruit of the Spirit)
- Romans 12:9–10

4. Think of a recent interaction with someone who was difficult, inconvenient, or different from you. How did you respond, and what might it look like to respond differently in a way that reflects Christ’s love?

Follow-up prompts:

- Was your first instinct patience, avoidance, frustration, or compassion?
- What would “love in action” have looked like in that moment?

Helpful Scripture:

- Colossians 3:12–14: “Bear with each other and forgive one another...”
- Ephesians 4:2: “Be completely humble and gentle...”

5. What is one specific, practical step you can take this week to intentionally love someone in your daily life? How can this group support or follow up with you as you step into that?

Follow-up prompts:

- Encourage specificity (name, action, timing)
- Ask: “What could make it easy to actually follow through?”
- “Who will you share this with for accountability?”

Helpful Scripture:

- James 1:22: Do what the Word says.
 - Matthew 5:16: “Let your light so shine before others...”
-

Closing Prayer Focus

- Ask God to grow love for Him and for others
- Invite the Holy Spirit to highlight one area of change
- Pray for courage to act on what was revealed this week
- Ask for relationships that reflect Christ’s love in tangible ways