

# “Love God + Neighbors”

## Matthew 22:37-39

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**Thesis:** What would your life look like if you simply rediscovered the Great Commandments and did them? We are called to love God supremely and love your neighbors as we love self. If we do it our lives and community will be transformed ...

**I. A Revolutionary Idea:** Jesus’ life, ministry, and teaching are profound and marvelous. They are full of life, and intended to inspire a revolution. Revolutions are always sparked by an idea. An idea that is so clear, compelling, and catalytic that people are inspired to overcome the status quo. His death, resurrection, and Spirit are what give life to the revolution. The essence of the revolution is, **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind ... And ... You shall love your neighbor as yourself”** [Matt. 22:37-40] [the Great Commandments]. Yet many of us would confess that we have often neglected our neighbors.

**II. A Reasonable Response:** The command to love God with all of your heart, soul, and mind is a reasonable response to God’s perfect love for you. It is not until we understand and appreciate the bad news that we have all sinned against God and deserve His judgment that we can begin to appreciate the good news – the gospel. God demonstrates His love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Through faith in Christ, and a desire to submit our will to His, we are saved from God’s judgment and brought into relationship with God. In light of what God had done, as foretold by the prophets and proven by the resurrection, it is only reasonable to love God supremely [See, Rom. 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 10:10, 12:1-2].

**III. A Relational Response:** Calvary Nexus’ ten-year vision is to saturate our community with Christ-centered Neighborhood Groups [NG] where we learn to love God and neighbors better. A Neighborhood Group is established by connecting people in relationship where they live, work, study, and play. The groups generally meet weekly, and are the primary place where we learn how to be Christ’s disciples. Groups will discover God’s love and learn to: love God and neighbors better (within and beyond the group where they live, work, study, and play).

**How Neighborhood Groups differ from other small groups:**

**Scripture-based study guides help us love God and neighbors together:** Each week we make available a study-guide that includes commentary and discussion questions from the portion of Scripture that we studied on Sunday. It allows the group participants to dig deeper into the text and engage in active learning. It helps to align all of our groups, and thus the

majority of our church, to a common focus and growth trajectory. We discovered that the study guides are very easy for leaders to use. This helps to give opportunities for additional people to help lead the group. Thus more people are developed to be future group leaders.

**Encourages the values of loving God and neighbors better:** We learn to be mature disciples who love God and others better. The study-guide provides a weekly framework where group participants reinforce the values of loving their neighbors inside and outside the group better. You can use this portion of the study guide with your group even if your group does not adopt a Scripture-based model following the Sunday sermon text.

**Encourages margin to befriend and build relationships:** Most of us feel that we are too busy to develop relationships. Sometimes we are so busy supporting ministry and programs at the church campus that we have no time to get to know neighbors. NGs encourage us to create margin and intentionally invest time to get to know our neighbors – the people where we live, work, study, and play. Building relationships with those who don't yet know Christ will be one of the most effective ways to advance God's kingdom. We want to love neighbors, because it is a value that Christ commanded us to live. These relationships are not a program or a project.

**Geographic proximity and affinity:** Many of our groups are currently based on affinity. This includes common life-stage and/or common interests. We want to also encourage groups to form based on geographic proximity or a hybrid of geographic proximity and affinity. Geographic proximity can encourage a greater connection with neighbors where you live.

#### **IV. A Radical Result:**

Our desire is for every person who is part of the Calvary Nexus community to participate in a neighborhood group. At the end of ten years (2026), we see over 200 Christ-centered Neighborhood Groups [NG] saturating every neighborhood of our community. These groups will magnify Jesus and experience God's presence during the week, and as we gather to worship as a large community of faith on the weekends. We will demonstrate the love of God as we befriend and build relationships with our neighbors where we live, work, study, and play. Not as a project or program, but a value Christ commanded.

When we connect with Christ and others, and develop authentic Christian community, we will make disciples who will transform. People will experience: personal restoration, thriving marriages, families strengthened to pass their faith to the next generation. There will be a workplace and school witness for Christ. People will discover and experience their calling to advance God's kingdom. Neighborhoods will be transformed communities for Christ! We believe that God has given us a large enough church community that we can saturate the community around us and beyond with Jesus in the next ten years.