

PRACTICAL NEIGHBORING

WALK & PRAY FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Our motivation to love and be involved with our neighbors will grow as we see our neighbors and ourselves through the lens of the gospel. If we are going to have an impact on our neighborhood that outlasts this Sermon Series then praying for our neighbors and asking God to move in their hearts and lives needs to be a vital part of our neighborhood strategy.

This week take the time to walk through your neighborhood and pray for the homes and people you see.

As you see people, stop and get to know them. You can even let them know you are praying for the neighborhood, if you like, and ask them if there is anything they would like you to pray for.

Here are some things you can pray for as you walk through your neighborhood:

- Pray for God to give you a heart and a love for your neighbors.
- Pray for opportunities to meet the needs around you.
- Pray for the gospel to take root in your neighborhood.



WEEK TWO :: DISCUSSION GUIDE

MOTIVES MATTER

Our motives often find their way into the ebb and flow of casual conversation. “I want to avoid getting into a fight with my boss.” “I just want to be a good mom.” “I want to look good in a bathing suit.” “I want to retire by the end of the year.” “I hope I don’t embarrass myself.” “If I can only survive the next two weeks, I’ll have it made.” “I just want to have the respect of my co-workers.” “I take a lot of pride in my work.” “I live for the weekend.” “I want to have the best looking lawn on my street.” “One day I want to own a Harley.”

While some motives may be noble, some may be harmful and downright deadly.

Motives Matter, especially when it comes to the “Art of Neighboring.”

There are a lot of great reasons to take up the “Love Where You Live” challenge. It might be as simple as, “Our church is starting this neighborhood initiative; guess I will give it a shot.” Or, you may be thinking, “It might be fun to meet a few neighbors.” Or, “What a great excuse to string up a few lights and work on the landscape.” Or, “Any excuse for a party works for me.” Or “I would love to have a Bible study with the women on my street.”

While these are all good motivations, they are not sustainable. Having a few block parties won’t help the couple whose marriage is on the rocks, or the single mom whose teenage son is out of control, or the loner down the street whose addictions are drawing him further and further into isolation.

In order to be effective neighbors, our motives must run much deeper, which means we need to see ourselves and our neighbors through the lens of the gospel.

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-21

TWO HUGE MOTIVATING FACTORS

In verses 11-15, Paul is responding to his critics—especially those who claim that he is not an impressive speaker or compelling personality. Some even accused him of being out of his mind. Paul reassures his readers that he is far more concerned with what Christ thinks than he is about what his critics think.

1. In 11-13, Paul tells us that he is motivated by a healthy fear of the Lord rather than an unhealthy fear of people.
 - a. How can an unhealthy fear of people shape the way that we think and live?
 - b. How might an unhealthy fear of people negatively impact our ability to be “good neighbors”?
 - c. How can a healthy fear of the Lord shape the way that we think and live?
 - d. How might a healthy fear of the Lord positively impact our efforts to reach out to our neighbors?
2. In verses 14-15, Paul moves beyond a healthy fear of the Lord to tell us that the most compelling motivator in his life is “Christ’s love.”
 - a. What is particularly compelling about Christ’s love?
 - b. What does Christ’s love compel us to do?
 - c. How might living for Christ rather than ourselves positively impact our “neighboring”?

SEEING OURSELVES AND OUR NEIGHBORS THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPEL

In verses 16-21, Paul describes how what God is doing in the world through Christ shapes the way that he views himself and those around him.

1. What do you think it means to look at someone from a worldly perspective?
2. How might viewing our neighbors from a worldly perspective negatively impact our ability to be good neighbors?
3. According to this passage, what is God doing in the world?
4. What would it mean to view our neighbors through the lens of the gospel?
5. What would it mean to view ourselves through the lens of the gospel?

Missional living at the heart is that you live all of life for the mission of glorifying God and leading others to glorify him as well. A lot of people think that missional living is doing good deeds—no, I do good deeds to glorify God and so that we will have the opportunity to proclaim him to others.

-Jeff Vanderstelt