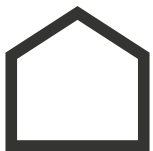


# LEADER'S GUIDE

Let's Get Started!





## About Every Home for Christ

Every Home for Christ is an international missions organization with 178 ministry offices around the world. Since 1946, Every Home for Christ has been serving the Church by equipping and mobilizing believers to participate in sharing the love of Jesus with every person on earth.

For more information, visit **EveryHome.org**

# DEAR PASTOR,

We thank God for ministries like Every Home for Christ that, in these times, have shown us how much a soul is worth to them. In the Love Your Neighbor kit, they have developed creative and dynamic materials to help pastors, leaders, and members of churches to fulfill the task and assignment that God left us in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

These tools have taught us that loving our neighbor is more than pretty and romantic words. It is more than a nice phrase to embellish our social networks. It's more than a love song. It is a demonstration of the genuine love of God that encourages us to visit, serve, accompany, and share the gospel with our neighbors, being with them in their times of need.

The members of our churches participating in the Love Your Neighbor movement have committed to set aside time each day and proclaim the gospel among their closest neighbors. As a result, we are beginning to see the fruit of this ministry as precious souls surrender at the feet of our Savior Jesus Christ, accept his lordship, and become part of our churches. Some are already preparing to be baptized.

The greatest sign of love for our neighbor is to announce the gospel of the Kingdom of God, and with the practical and appropriate tools that Every Home for Christ has sent us in the Love Your Neighbor kits, the work has been successful. If it were not for this movement, our church members would have never carried out this privilege or experienced the joy that has filled their lives. Now they have a purpose of exercising their call to testify of Christ.

I invite you, beloved pastor and leader of evangelism, to use the material in the Love Your Neighbor kit, which has already benefited thousands of churches and leaders around the world.

The psalmist David motivates us with the following words:

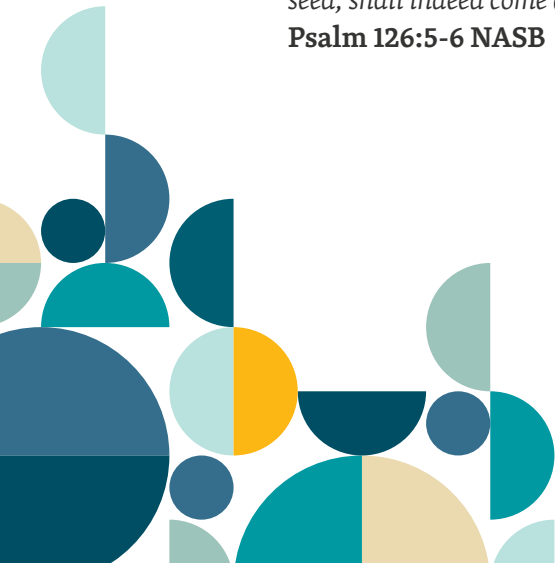
*"Those who sow in tears shall harvest with joyful shouting. One who goes here and there weeping, carrying his bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him."*

**Psalms 126:5-6 NASB**

Fraternally in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arturo Cruz Martínez', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Pastor Arturo Cruz Martínez  
General Director of the Churches International Ministries Agua Viva, A. C.  
Based in Acapulco Guerrero, Mexico





# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Love Your Neighbor kit! This kit is filled with resources to help you inspire and equip your church to love their neighbors. We believe that God has placed you and your church right where you are for this reason: to love and reach the community around you.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells the Pharisees that the greatest commandments are to love God and love your neighbor. Later, in Luke 10:25-37, an expert in the law asks Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus responds with the Parable of the Good Samaritan and shows us that we can be a neighbor to anyone who crosses our path. Go on a journey with us and learn how your church can continue to grow in practicing these two great commandments.

This Leader’s Guide will offer a breakdown of everything in the kit. It also shares the vision of the process of being a witness of Jesus and even includes a personal study guide to serve you in your faith journey and a sermon you can utilize to teach your congregation. You can also download all the kit resources digitally by visiting [lovenighbor.com](http://lovenighbor.com). We pray this guide serves you well as you adopt this vision and lead your church.

In the Love Your Neighbor kit, you’ll find **12 Individual Believer Packs** to equip 12 members of your church to express the love of Jesus to at least one person every week. These packs are designed for you to share with individuals or families in your congregation who are just starting their journey of loving their neighbors, not necessarily for the passionate evangelists who are already engaging nonbelievers regularly.

Included in each Believer Pack is:

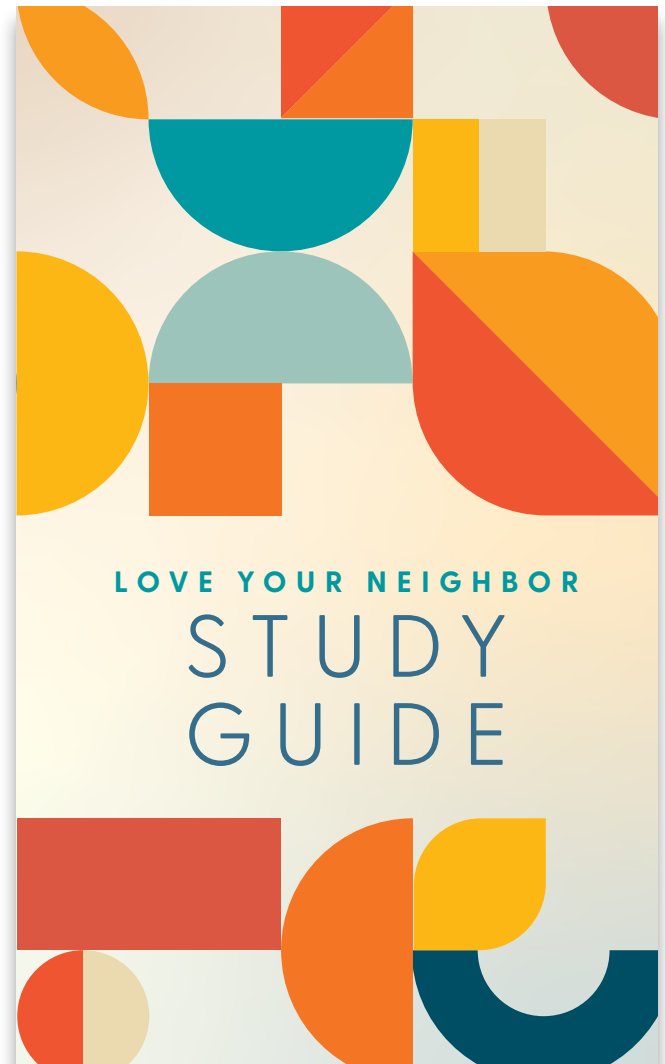
### Study Guide

The *Organic Disciples Study Guide* is eight sessions that help your church members grow in their relationship with Jesus and propels them outward to share his love with others. Our growth as disciples of Jesus should make us more like him and naturally lead us into the world with his good news. If you want to access more resources from Organic Outreach for you or your church members, visit [organicoutreach.org](http://organicoutreach.org).



### Commitment Card

The commitment card is located on the first page of the study guide and is for everyone to keep as a reminder of their dedication to living out the two greatest commandments.

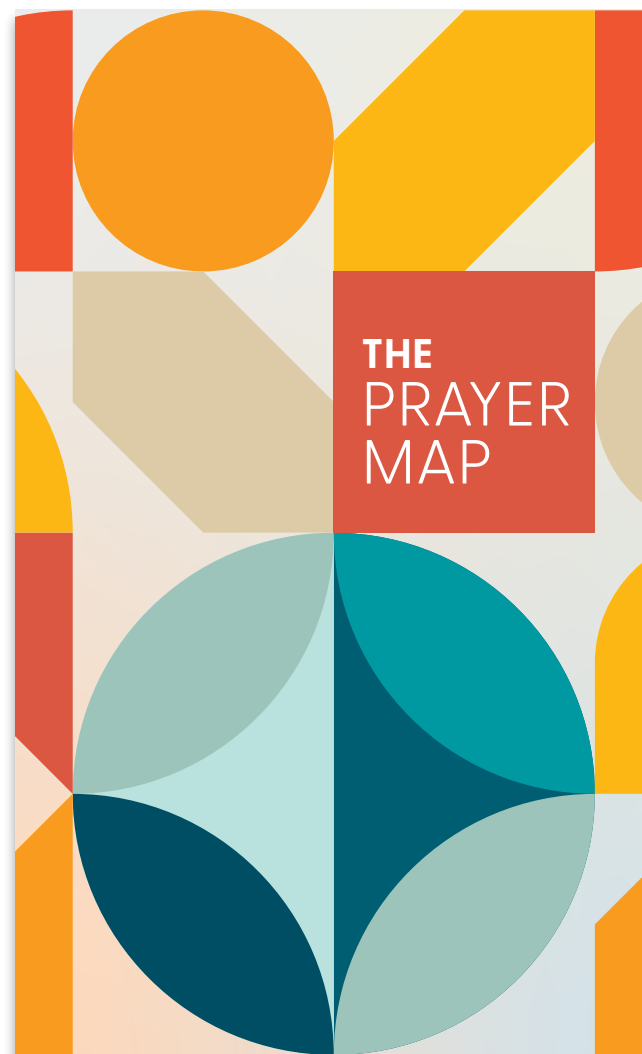


[lovenighbor.com](http://lovenighbor.com)



## Prayer Map

The Prayer Map is a tool that will help you pray daily for your nation, your neighbors, and your own needs. This resource is an excellent tool for you to teach and inspire your congregation to pray. We believe that the degree to which you adopt this tool yourself will be the degree to which you will see it impact your church.



## Engagers

Every week, as your church members pray for the opportunity to share the love of Jesus with their neighbors, they can utilize these Engagers. An Engager is a printed resource that leads to a follow-up website where neighbors can learn more about Jesus. The purpose of an Engager is not to avoid having a personal conversation with someone. Instead, it is a tool to provide your neighbor with the next step they can take in their faith journey. The Believer Pack has two Engager themes. *Who Was He* shares the truth about who Jesus is in a world where everyone has their own opinion of him. *Need a Lifeline* teaches about the power of prayer and how we can all talk to God. There are 52 Engagers in each Believer Pack, one for every week.

- 26 *Who Was He* Engagers
- 26 *Need a Lifeline* Engagers

## Bulk Quantities of Engagers

At the bottom of the Love Your Neighbor kit, you'll find four bundles of different Engagers. The large quantities (100 of each) of these materials will allow you to plan outreach events in your community. You can invite your entire congregation to participate or partner with other churches and organizations.



[lovenighbor.com](http://lovenighbor.com)



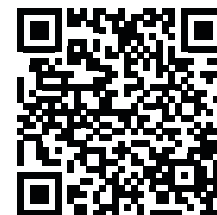
There are four different titles. The first bulk pack is an Engager created specifically for children called *Heroes Needed*. This Engager invites kids to discover their purpose and calling by asking Jesus into their lives. It could be used during a special event that reaches out to neighboring children, like a summer bible school or church camp.

You'll also find an Engager, *The Wonder of Christmas*, created uniquely for the Christmas season. Christmas is one of the most active times in the local church and a season when so many are open to hearing about Jesus. You can plan a unique Christmas outreach and invite people to a church service using the Engager.

The third bulk Engager is an Easter theme titled *The World Was Changed Forever*. This is another excellent time to use the momentum of the holiday to share the gospel and reach out to the community around you. You could mobilize your congregation for a special outreach that invites people to church or an Easter event.

The final bulk Engager is designed for Global Outreach (GO) Month, which takes place in May every year. During the entire month, millions of Christians worldwide participate in praying for the harvest, caring for people, and sharing the gospel. *The Greatest Story Ever* Engager is a basic breakdown of the gospel and is designed so you can participate in the GO Movement in your nation. Visit [gomovement.world](http://gomovement.world) for more information.

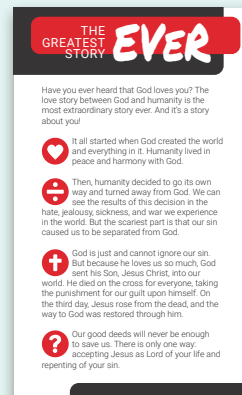
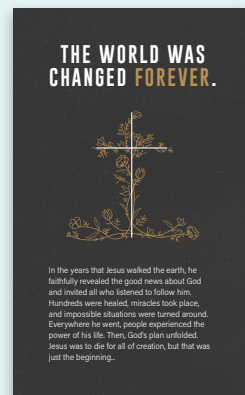
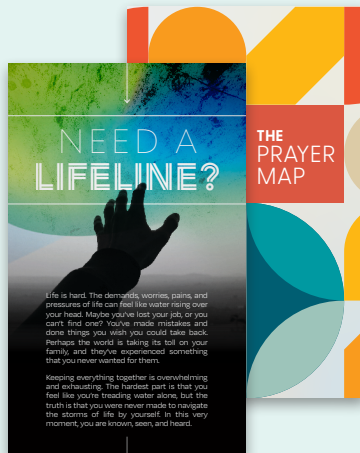
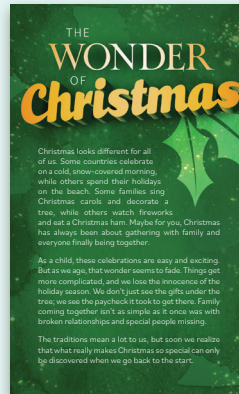
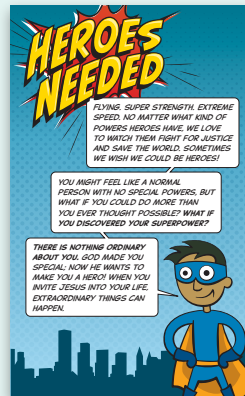
For continued encouragement and to access new digital resources, scan the QR code.





# 2023-2024 OUTREACH CALENDAR

Having an annual outreach calendar for your church is a great way to bring believers together around a focused mission. Your congregation, or even multiple congregations and denominations, can plan and participate in events and outreaches together. Below is a sample you can use, or you can even create your own!



**July 2023**  
Reaching Children

**December 2023**  
Christmas Outreaches

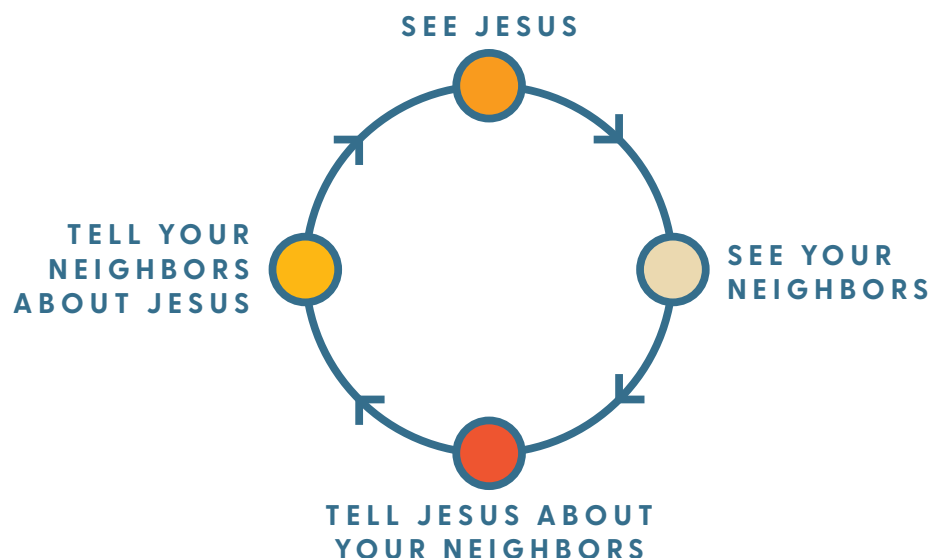
**January 2024**  
Prayer Focus

**March 2024**  
Easter Outreaches

**May 2024**  
GO Month

# WITNESS

Our lives are changed when we walk with Jesus. The early disciples knew this very well. Day after day, their lives were transformed as they saw the sick healed and the dead raised. After all they'd seen, nobody had to coerce them into telling others about it. Evangelism for them wasn't forced; it was natural. It started with seeing Jesus and telling others about what they had seen. They were witnesses. Being a witness is a process that begins with seeing Jesus and the work he has done in our lives. Then we get the opportunity to see our neighbors. This process then turns into us talking to Jesus and telling him about our neighbors in the place of prayer. Over time, there comes a moment when we are given the opportunity to tell our neighbors about Jesus and who he is in our lives. This isn't just one conversation but numerous interactions over time. We call this process See and Tell.



There are enough believers in the world that we would reach the entire world if every Christian shared Jesus with three people. Of course, it's not that simple. But it does mean it's not out of reach. Sharing the love of Jesus with our neighbors begins with knowing their name, understanding their circumstances, praying for them, meeting their needs, and offering hope. This is our calling as followers of Jesus — sharing a message of love that meets our neighbors right where they are. It starts with us. Let's be a witness to our world.

## See Jesus

Being a witness begins with our encounters with Jesus. Before we can see ourselves, those around us, or our world, we must have our eyes opened by the love of Jesus. We cannot carry a love we are not deeply, consistently, and intentionally experiencing for ourselves. Seeing Christ's love draws us into wholeness, fills us with hope, and opens our eyes to the people around us.

## See Your Neighbors

Loving our neighbors starts with seeing our neighbors. We can't love someone without first having a genuine interest and care for their life. We should enter every conversation knowing that everyone has broken and hurting parts of their lives. Loving our neighbors is about seeing how they may experience pain and how we can be a comfort to them.

## Tell Jesus about Your Neighbors

Tell Jesus that you want to see your neighbors through his eyes. Pray for them and the things they are going through. Tell Jesus that you want to carry his heart for your neighbors.

## Tell Your Neighbors about Jesus

When the time is right, tell your neighbors about Jesus in a personal way. It should not be confrontational, nor should it lead to conflict. Our role is to bring peace into people's lives and situations. We are not sharing Jesus with our neighbors to win an argument or to have them say a prayer of salvation. Our primary task is to help people see Jesus. A simple glimpse will often leave people wanting to pursue him more. Only God can move the heart of people. Our role is to sow the seed. God's role is to bring the harvest.

To watch a video about how one person's dedication to Jesus and life of love can impact thousands, scan the QR code.





# ORGANIC DISCIPLES STUDY GUIDE

by Kevin and Sherry Harney

## Introduction

Imagine a world where every person who follows Jesus grows in spiritual maturity with each passing day. Picture neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and homes influenced by Christians who love, pray for, and serve those who have not yet encountered the Savior. What could happen if every Christian became a passionate missionary right where God has placed them?

The dream of God is shockingly simple yet rarely realized. Sadly, sometimes the more Christians learn, grow, and engage in church activities, the less they move out into the world with the love of Jesus. For some, the more they learn about Jesus, the less they talk about him with their friends and family members who are not yet his followers.

The goal of the Love Your Neighbor kit by Every Home for Christ is to help Christians recognize that the more we walk with Jesus and grow in faith, the more we should shine his light in the world. Each of God's children, whatever our age or place of spiritual development, can carry his grace, truth, and good news to the world.

This eight-session study was written by Kevin and Sherry Harney and edited in partnership with Every Home for Christ to help you and your church grow deeper in love with Jesus and then share your faith with people in your life that God loves and wants to draw to his heart.

If you want to go deeper into any biblical themes in this study, you can find many free resources on the Organic Outreach International website at [organicoutreach.org](http://organicoutreach.org).

May God richly bless you and your church as you grow in Jesus and go with Jesus into the world he loves!

# SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS



## ***Pastor to Pastor***

Hello Pastor,

Good foundations are essential! Jesus made this clear in Matthew 7:24-27. Imagine every person in your congregation being equipped to walk with Jesus and standing firm in their faith. What could God do through a church like that?

This section of the study guide aims to build a solid biblical foundation for discipleship that leads to **growing in Jesus** and **going with Jesus** into your community with his saving love. Every believer in your church should be taking meaningful steps forward in spiritual growth, and you can help them on this journey. They should also be increasing in their desire and practice of sharing the good news of Jesus. God wants to use you to help new believers and long-time Christians grow up in faith. This study can be a great tool to use as you seek to accomplish this goal.

Remember, God has called you as a leader, so be sure you are growing in each of the seven areas of faith discussed in this study. As you seek to lead your congregation upward toward the heart of God and outward with the gospel, the Savior will lead you each step of the way. May God empower you to help each person in your congregation have a solid foundation as a disciple that will impact many generations and transform the people around them with God's grace.

Standing strong in Jesus,  
Pastor Kevin Harney

Writers, storytellers, and moviemakers through the ages have tried to capture the glory of the perfect couple. In almost every case, there is drama, tension, intrigue, and conflict. Relationships are complex and never seem to go as smoothly as we would hope. Every generation and culture has examples of these.

What is true in stories told through the centuries is also true of the story God is writing in the lives of his children today. Our Creator wants to marry two powerful and world-changing ideas in our souls.

1. Discipleship: This is the journey of becoming more like Jesus, growing in spiritual maturity, and helping others to do the same. We travel this road on our own and in community with other believers.
2. Outreach: This is the adventure of sharing the grace and love of Jesus Christ and the message of salvation found in him alone. We go on this evangelism adventure in our personal lives and in partnership with God's family.

When leaders of the religious establishment asked Jesus, "Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" he said, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matt. 22:36–39).

Grow in love with God (discipleship) and love your neighbor with God's heart (outreach). For some reason, Christians can miss this beautiful and essential pairing established by God from the beginning. Every part of our spiritual journey should draw us closer to the heart of Jesus. As this happens, the Holy Spirit propels us outward with God's grace to those who are broken, hurting, rebellious, and wandering.

**Reflect:**

1. Read Galatians 5:22–23. Why is the fruit of the Spirit essential as we grow in maturity? What dangers might we encounter if we grow in spiritual maturity but do not exhibit the fruit of the Spirit?
2. Read Ephesians 4:14–16. What are some results of seeking to grow up in faith and become a mature disciple of Jesus?
3. Read 2 Timothy 2:2. Think about a person you desire to help draw closer to Jesus and walk in a richer and more dynamic relationship with the Savior. What are you doing to help this person grow? How is it going?

**Pray:** Ask the Holy Spirit to help you grow deeper in faith and increase in love for those still wandering far from Jesus, like sheep without a shepherd.

# BIBLE ENGAGEMENT



## ***Pastor to Pastor***

Dear Pastor,

Jesus loves the Scriptures, and you do too! We know that strong churches and believers are built on the truth of God's Holy Word. In this session, you have the honor of helping believers in your church love and follow the teaching of God's Word. You will connect the message of the Bible with the mission of Jesus.

This begins with you feeding on God's Word daily, not just when preparing a sermon or Bible lesson. As pastors, we need to sit at the feet of Jesus, feed on his Holy Word, and ask the Spirit of God to teach us. Are you feasting on the Scriptures? Do you love God's Holy Word? Are you teaching the Bible to your board members and helping your church leaders increase in knowing, loving, and following the teachings of the Bible?

In a world filled with compromise and questions, one of the best things pastors can do is help every church member see the value of opening the Bible each day and reading it with an open heart. As they become "doers of the Word" (James 1:22), homes, lives, and churches change. And that transforms the world around us! May you go deep in God's Word and be an example of loving and living the truth of the Bible.

With you as we grow in the Scriptures and teach God's Word with joyful boldness,  
Pastor Kevin Harney

The Bible is the Holy Spirit-breathed truth of heaven. Jesus is the living Word of God, and while he walked this earth, he loved the written Word. He knew it, quoted it, and let the Scriptures speak to and through him. As his followers, we need to know the Scriptures, love them, and follow what they teach. As we do this, the world will see an unchanging message of truth in a world of radical uncertainty. God's Word will send us out on Jesus' mission and teach us how to live in the world so that Jesus' light shines brightly.

The Bible is without rival the top-selling book in the history of the world. Many modern lists of bestselling books exclude the Bible because it would top the lists every month of every year. The Bible has been translated into more than 700

languages, and the New Testament exists in another 1,550 languages. No other book comes close to that! Even free apps offer the Bible in an electronic format that can be read in multiple translations on a phone, tablet, or computer. The Bible has never been more readily available than it is today.

We should ask, “Are people growing in Bible engagement and knowledge? Are Christians reading or listening to the Scriptures? Are we growing to love this holy book breathed by the Spirit of God? Are we meditating on biblical truth and letting it shape our lives?”

Most of us own a Bible. The question is, “Does the truth of the Bible guide our heart and life?”

**Reflect:**

1. Read Matthew 27:45–50 and Psalm 22:1. In his moment of deepest pain and anguish, Jesus cried the words of Scripture from the depths of his soul. What do you learn from the Savior’s example in this account? How can you internalize Scripture so that it is in your heart and on your lips when you face challenging times?
2. Read Psalm 119:97–100. What does it look like when a follower of Jesus loves the Bible? What can help us love God’s written truth at a deeper level?
3. Read James 1:22–25. What dangers might we face if we increase our understanding of Scripture but fail to follow what it says and share the message of Scripture with others? If we don’t let the truth of the Bible shape how we live, what damage can this do to nonbelievers who are watching Christians with a critical eye?

**Pray:** Ask God to bring his Holy Word alive in your heart so that you naturally share his truth with people who are still wandering far from Jesus.



# PASSIONATE PRAYER



## *Pastor to Pastor*

Church Leader,

The God of glory has opened the way for us to come into his presence in prayer — any time and any place! This is truly amazing. The curtain in the ancient temple in Jerusalem was torn from top to bottom and opened the way into the presence of God through the sacrifice of Jesus (Matt. 27:51). We can come to God in prayer, and his arms are wide open.

Revival begins in prayer — always! Power is unleashed by the prayers of God's people. God longs for his children to talk with him, their heavenly Father. Are you talking to God throughout the day? When church members come to you for wisdom and counsel, do you stop and pray for and with them? Your model of prayer makes a huge difference in the church and the lives of those you are called to pastor.

The wisest thing we can do is learn from the prayer life of Jesus. Then we can grow our communication with God. An active and passionate prayer life leads to a bold witness to the grace of Jesus. May your prayer life deepen as you lead your church members into greater intimacy with Jesus.

Seeking the Savior with you,  
Pastor Kevin Harney

Jesus constantly communicated with his Father and prayed for his followers and those wandering far from fellowship with God. As disciples, praying should be like breathing. We can live in intimate communication with the God who made us and loves us. As we grow in the spiritual marker of passionate prayer, we will find ourselves praying for and with those who still need to discover and embrace the amazing grace of Jesus.

God actually hears your prayers. What a staggering idea! The King of Kings, the Creator of heaven and earth, the almighty God, is aware of every whisper of your soul and cry of your heart. Among the voices of the 8 billion people living on the planet, God recognizes yours!

God cares about your joys, needs, hurts, and dreams. What a thought! God's heart breaks over your sadness, and he delights when you tell him about your joy.

God answers your prayers and acts on your requests. This is a mind-bending idea — a God who hears us, cares about us, has the power to act, and then actually shows up. When you pray for things that honor God and align with his loving will, you can see world-changing prayers answered.

When we believe in the power of prayer, we not only pray for our needs, but we begin praying for those who are far from Jesus and need to encounter the Savior who loves them and died on a cross to offer them forgiveness.

**Reflect:**

1. Read Mark 1:35; Matthew 14:15–19; Mark 7:33–35; and Mark 14:32–36. Jesus prayed all through the day in a variety of situations. What are ways you can incorporate prayer into the flow of a typical day?
2. Read Luke 6:12–16; John 11:38–44; and Luke 22:39–46. These are just a few examples of Jesus praying before big decisions and in the big moments in his life. What do you learn from Jesus' habit of calling out to the Father in the big moments?
3. Read Matthew 6:5–8. Jesus gave specific and powerful direction for us to prayerfully reach out to the world with his message of grace. What did Jesus call us to pray? How can we increase our prayers for people who need to encounter Jesus?

**Pray:** Pray for people in your life that are not following Jesus. Ask God to give you opportunities to love them and share the great news of Jesus in natural ways.

# WHOLEHEARTED WORSHIP



## ***Pastor to Pastor***

Dear Co-Laborer in the gospel,

The God of all creation invites us to praise, adore, and worship him! This is a staggering truth. As pastors, we don't just lead worship services; we are called to be worshippers! The more we glorify, exalt, and lift up our God, the more effective we will be as we lead worship in our congregations. Our life should be an act and example of worship all day long.

Years ago, a wise mentor-pastor told me, "You can't take people where you don't go!" I have never forgotten that insight. It is locked in my soul. If I go deep in worship, I can lead people there. If I don't, it is hard for me to lead the congregation I serve (Shoreline Church) closer to the heart of God. Let's commit to being passionate people of worship and draw near to God often!

Take time this week to help your church members explore the beauty and wonder of worship. Jesus calls us to a lifestyle of worship. When we grow in this aspect of our spiritual journey, we shine the light of Jesus everywhere we go. May you fall more in love with the Savior and grow as his worshipper as you lead your congregation into the presence of our glorious Savior.

Bowing our knees and lives together before the throne of grace,  
Pastor Kevin Harney

Our God is worthy of worship! Disciples delight in giving praise, glory, and honor to the only one who deserves it. When we grow in faith, worship flows from our hearts and lips. Every experience can be a time for worshiping in Spirit and in truth.

When God's people gather, the Holy Spirit is present in life-changing ways. And some of the greatest longings of the human heart, including the hearts of nonbelievers, are satisfied when people worship God.

We all hunger for community and community happens in worship. We long for a sense of the transcendent and an awareness that there is something bigger than us. Worship satisfies this longing because God is powerfully present when

his people worship. Human beings are made for worship, and when they find the source of this longing and encounter the one true God who deserves their praise, something happens in their souls.

Worship is for believers in Jesus, no doubt. But worship is also for those who are seeking after God but have not found him. Inviting an unbeliever to be among God's people as they worship their Lord in Spirit and in truth might be just the thing that draws a lost person home and into the arms of Jesus.

**Reflect:**

1. Read Mark 11:9–10; Mark 15:39; Luke 24:52; and John 1:49. When Jesus walked on this earth, people commonly responded to him by worshiping him. What are some of the ways people expressed worship toward Jesus? How did he react to these offerings of praise and devotion?
2. Read Mark 11:15–17; Luke 4:5–8; and John 4:19–25. Jesus taught his followers to be people committed to worship. What lessons did Jesus share with those who wanted to grow as worshipers?
3. Sometimes we limit our understanding of worship to a set time and place: in a church building for an hour on Sunday. Worship is bigger and far more beautiful. In what ways can we worship God in the normal flow of a week? How can this be a witness to people who are not yet Christians?

**Pray:** Invite the Holy Spirit to draw you to deeper places of worship when you gather in church, in your home, and everywhere you go.

# HUMBLE SERVICE



## ***Pastor to Pastor***

Dear Servant of Jesus,

Our Savior left the glory of heaven for you and me. Jesus washed feet, cared for the broken, allowed his body to be pierced, and bore our sins. No one served like Jesus! Then, he called us to follow his example. When we do this, the Church is strengthened, and the world notices!

As pastors, we are called to reflect the lifestyle of Jesus. No matter our church tradition or the length of years we have been a pastor, we are still called to serve the people of God, our community, and our family. When we do this, others clearly see what it looks like to be a disciple.

Take a moment of quiet reflection and prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart. Pray for deep and growing humility. Ask God to remind you of how Jesus has served you and how he continues to lead and provide for you. With a heart filled with gratefulness, pray that you can grow more consistent and bolder in serving others.

May our servant-Savior grow your heart to humbly care for your congregation and the people who live in your community.

Washing feet in partnership with you,  
Pastor Kevin Harney

Jesus left the glory of heaven and came to serve us. His disciples joyfully serve their Savior, his church, and the world he loves. When we care as Jesus does, the world sees a vision of the servant Savior and is willing to hear our stories of who Jesus is and how he loves.

Bob was an ordinary guy. From the late 1940s until the end of the Chinese Civil War, he worked with Youth for Christ and was part of several evangelistic rallies in China. While there, Bob was deeply moved by the devastation of homes, schools, infrastructure, and lives. Before he left for the United States of America, he began a monthly practice of sending five dollars to a needy child back in China.

Bob decided to start an organization to help children in some of the neediest places in the world. He wanted to connect caring sponsors with struggling kids and facilitate their monthly support to provide food, medical care, basic physical needs, and access to the gospel. In 1950, Bob launched a ministry called World Vision.

If you ever wonder whether humble service can open the door for sharing the good news of Jesus, remember the story of Robert (Bob) Pierce's life. Because he served in the name of Jesus, more than 124 million children have heard the gospel. Between 3 and 4 million children are sponsored annually and receive care for their physical and spiritual needs. More lives have been touched than Bob dreamed of when he started serving a needy child in China.

Humble service is not the end of evangelism. It is the door that opens the way to speak words of life, tell Jesus' story, and share the good news of the hope that is found in him alone.

**Reflect:**

1. Jesus made it clear that his service is an example for us to follow. In what ways are you seeking to serve others with a humble heart? What seems to get in the way of you living self-sacrificially?
2. Read Matthew 5:13–16. Why is it important for churches and Christians to find ways to share Jesus while they are serving people in their communities? What might people miss if we offer kind deeds but never point to Jesus or share his story?
3. What practical ways can we serve where we work, go to school, live, play, and shop?

**Pray:** Ask God to inspire you and the people in your church to greater acts of service offered in the name of Jesus. Pray that nonbelievers in your community will see these acts of service and open their hearts to Jesus.

# JOYFUL GENEROSITY



## ***Pastor to Pastor***

Hello Pastor,

Our heavenly Father has given us his best — Jesus! We have heavenly provision poured out on us every single day. We have been given “every spiritual blessing in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). We are called to be generous with a cheerful heart, like Jesus. Rest in this confident assurance — God has given his best for you.

When we recognize God’s provision and generosity, we are moved to give back. Imagine a church where every person feels honored to give and takes joy in sharing what they have with the family of God. In the church I serve, we pause every worship service for a few minutes to celebrate joyful generosity. We thank people for their giving. We share stories of lives that have changed because of the congregation’s generosity. We teach on Scriptures that call us to give toward the work of Jesus. These moments of giving back equip and inspire church members to take the next step in this marker of spiritual growth.

When we look closely at the heart of Jesus and grow in our commitment to give with fresh passion and commitment, amazing things happen in our life, the Church, and the world around us. May the Spirit of God grow your love for generosity and use you to help all of God’s people give with fresh passion and joy.

Walking with you in the overflowing goodness of our God,  
Pastor Kevin Harney

Jesus gave all he had and all he was for us. With divine generosity, he left glory, came to earth, took our sins, and died in our place. Now he calls his disciples to walk in his footsteps. As we give with generous and joy-filled hearts, the world can see a picture of God’s love.

Kata was living on the streets and barely surviving. She was open to religious ideas, but she did not have faith in Jesus. One day Kata wandered into a church. She was hurting, broken, and it would have been easy for people to reject her. She did not know how to act in church, and her language was as dirty as her body.

Thankfully, the people in this church reached out with generous love. They offered her help and friendship and welcomed her into the church family (long before she had faith in Jesus). One Sunday morning, the pastor shared the simple and beautiful story of Jesus, and Kata placed her faith in him. She was truly changed.

Kata got a job. She rented a small room so she could get off the streets. Then, because she had received so much, she grew in joyful generosity. In the rainy season, Kata went out and bought some simple blue tarps and made tents to help some of her friends who were still homeless stay out of the rain. She found joy in giving to others as Jesus had given to her!

**Reflect:**

1. How have you experienced Jesus' generosity toward you?
2. Read Malachi 3:8-12 and Luke 6:38. When God promises a blessing in response to our generosity, it means far more than just dollars and cents. What are some of the different blessings a person might receive when they grow in joyful generosity?
3. Why does the life of a joyfully generous Christian catch the attention of nonbelievers who are spiritually curious?

**Pray:** Thank God for how he has been generous to you, and pray that your heart will increase in generosity so people will see Jesus in you.



# CONSISTENT COMMUNITY



## ***Pastor to Pastor***

Dear Partner in the gospel,

God designed us for community. When we are growing in faith, we find ourselves loving our brothers and sisters in Christ. We look forward to fellowship and hunger to be with the family of God. This is the heart of Jesus growing in us.

As pastors, we can challenge our church members to engage, in growing measure, in the life of the Church. We can begin small groups for fellowship. We can plan gatherings where the family of God can find delight in being together. In a world that is growing fragmented and lonely, the Church is a place of sweet community.

Jesus modeled living in community and calls us to increase our connection with the members of his family. How we live in community and love one another reveals the character and presence of Jesus to the world (John 13:35). Our consistent community is a witness that draws wandering sheep into the fold of the Good Shepherd.

May God provide wonderful brothers and sisters in faith for you to walk within consistent community. And, may you build a church where each person is loved, valued, called to service, and increasing in love for Jesus and each member of his family.

Honored to call you family as we serve Jesus together,  
Pastor Kevin Harney

God exists in an eternal, perfect trinitarian community. Jesus prioritized relationships when he walked this earth and called his disciples to live in a consistent, loving community. When we walk in fellowship with God and each other, people will see that we have what their hearts long for. This kind of community draws people toward the only one who can heal their hearts, bind their wounds, and satisfy their hunger to belong.

Jesus was and is the King of Kings, the Lord of Glory, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Son of God, and the Savior of the world. Yet he calls us friends. Jesus shared meals with both the powerful and the outcast. He conversed with his closest friends and strangers on the street. He touched the sick, and they reached out and touched him too. Our King left a heavenly throne and lived among the people he loved. Community was his passion and intimacy his practice.

In a world where so many people feel left out or ostracized, the call to consistent community is a source of hope and healing. The God who exists in the eternal community of trinitarian harmony not only models the beauty of relational intimacy, he invites us to come near. When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom to show us that we are invited into the holiest place — his presence — anytime! What a timely message for our broken world. Jesus, the King of Glory, invites you to come near. He loves community! His door, arms, and heart are always open.

**Reflect:**

1. Read Matthew 4:18–22. What did the call to follow Jesus mean for his first disciples? The focal point of Jesus' call was to follow him and be with him. What should following Jesus and being with him look like in our lives today?
2. Read Genesis 1:26–28 and Romans 12:3–8. In his creation of humanity and the Church, God made it clear that we are made for connection with each other and with him. Why do you think God hardwired us for community? Why do so many people resist his call to live in community?
3. Read Mark 12:29–31. What did Jesus say are the two most important things his followers should do with their time and their lives? Think of one practical way you need to grow in loving community with God and one way you feel the Lord wants you to grow in community with your neighbors.

**Pray:** Thank God for the gift of community you experience in your local church, and pray that visitors who don't believe in Jesus will be drawn to the warmth and goodness of the community you experience.

# ORGANIC OUTREACH



## ***Pastor to Pastor***

Hello Partner in the gospel,

The mission of Jesus was to “seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10). Before Jesus left this world and ascended back to heaven, he called us to share with him in the world-changing task of “making disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19-20). In the final week of your *Organic Disciples Study Guide*, you will look at the life of Jesus and how he reached out to lost and wandering sheep. His example of love, sacrifice, grace, and sharing the truth should be on our hearts and before our eyes at all times.

As I have trained pastors worldwide, it has been heartbreaking to talk with many local church pastors and leaders who do not engage in faith-sharing. Many are so busy serving the Church that they don’t have friendships with nonbelievers. Some do not even pray regularly for lost people in their community. If we are going to lead our church outward with the gospel, we must first engage in the Great Commission — not just in our church work but in daily life.

May the God of our salvation connect your heart to lost people in your community and help you equip your church members for the life-transforming joy of helping others meet Jesus, the Savior whose arms are always open. May you make time to pray for family members, friends, and neighbors who are still wandering like sheep who are far from their Good Shepherd.

With you in the good news of the Savior,  
Pastor Kevin Harney

God is always the first to reach out. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son as a sacrifice for our sins. When Jesus walked this earth, he extended grace to every person he met. We who follow Jesus are to love people as he does. We carry the best news in human history. Our calling is to share the love and gospel of Jesus freely.

Nearly every business, company, or organization has a simple statement of why they exist. They want to crystalize their mission so everyone understands why they do what they do. Often, these brief and poignant declarations can keep an organization focused.

Many churches have mission statements. Here are examples:

1. Inspiring people to follow Jesus and fearlessly change the world.
2. Loving God and loving people.
3. To help as many people as possible become totally committed to Jesus Christ.

You get the idea. Mission statements are a way to declare in one phrase or brief sentence who we are and what we do. This concept is nothing new. More than 2,000 years ago, Jesus did the same thing. Listen closely to Jesus' single-sentence summary of why he came into the world: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

As his followers, we should find out what Jesus focused on and make it our passion. Jesus loves lost sheep. His heart breaks for them. He came not to offer a vague idea of salvation. He left glory to save lost people and bring them home to his love and grace.

### **Reflect:**

1. Read 1 Corinthians 15:50–57. What did Jesus accomplish through his life, death, and resurrection? Since this is true, what message do we have for a broken, fearful, anxious, and conflicted world?
2. Read Matthew 28:19–20 and Acts 1:8. Jesus called his followers to tell lost people about his love, grace, and truth. Why do so many Christians struggle to fulfill this clear call of their Savior? What gets in the way of us sharing our faith with joyful frequency?
3. Incredible power is unleashed when a Christian tells the story of how they became a follower of Jesus. Within our story is always the story of Jesus. Who is one person you want to share your story with?

**Pray:** Ask God for a courageous heart and opportunities to share your story of faith with someone you love that is not yet a follower of Jesus.

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If you want to go deeper into the topics found in this study and learn more about how to grow as an Organic Disciple, you will find many free resources on the Organic Outreach International website at [\*\*organicoutreach.org\*\*](http://organicoutreach.org).

# LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR IN A WORLD OF HATE

Sermon by Stephen Venable

*The following material aims to inspire leaders to craft their own sermon from it. It is written as a framework, where leaders can pick and choose what elements of the article fit their specific audience and context. Leaders can elaborate and share from their hearts the areas that burden them. Please feel free to utilize this outline as you see fit.*

## Philippians 1:9–10

Leaders in the Church across the earth today face unprecedented challenges. At this threshold of history, we all deeply desire that love within the Body of Christ would abound still more and more. What quality of love, exactly, does Paul have in mind? As much as he yearned for love for God to grow, it is almost certain the apostle is laboring in intercession for their love to abound toward *one another*. How can we join in the apostolic labor for love to be formed in this way in our generation? What can we know and discern to create an environment where love flourishes in the Church?

No matter what nation we call home or its specific dynamics, Christians today follow Jesus in a world that is reeling from division and hatred. Loving with discernment means being honest and humble enough to acknowledge that, at times, the Church – the whole Church, not any one denomination or congregation – has not represented the character and the teaching of Christ as we ought. Instead of demonstrating love, we have fallen prey to tribalism and antagonism toward those with whom we disagree and respond to the agony of strife with ideology rather than compassion.

We serve the God of hope. As overwhelming as the threats to the gospel may seem, he does indeed have a remedy that we can come to know. It may just be that the cultural discord that is so prevalent today serves as an opportunity for the truth of Jesus to shine more brightly through his people. To discover this, we must realize that something far more potent is needed than simply being nice to people (although that would be a wonderful start!) and that the underlying problems are far graver than we are willing to admit. We need to ask deep, thoughtful questions about what the scriptures reveal concerning the issue of human hostility and the astonishing solution that Jesus offers. To begin, we must go back to the beginning.

## The Inception and the Fallout

Genesis 4:3–10

Cain did not start the disease. He was not there when that initial calamity occurred. He inherited it, a virus of sin passed down to him from the rebellion of his parents. It lurked in him, crouching at the door, waiting for the opportunity to burst

forth. “*What have you done?*” Cain had no idea what he had started by striking down his brother. God did. The fallout had begun.

In many ways, Cain’s conditions were pristine compared to ours. The first family was removed from the Garden of Eden. Still, they continued to have direct access to the Lord in a way that we cannot imagine, and Cain had only one person to get along with, aside from unmentioned sisters, perhaps. Where did he even get the idea to kill someone? It certainly wasn’t modeled for him. *No one had ever died yet.* And yet when anger arose in Cain’s heart, the direct warning of his Creator was not enough. Cain could not master it, and he killed Abel.

It didn’t take a few generations of moral degeneration to reach the abyss of murder. This happened in the very first family that ever existed! This isn’t just their story. It is the human story.

We know that the first stroke of strife was just the beginning. The earth became so thoroughly corrupted by violent conflict between the sons of men that our gracious Creator was moved to extinguish everything that had breath apart from Noah and his family (Gen. 6:11, 13). The flood purged and cleansed the face of the earth, but it could not erase the disease of hatred from inside the heart of man. Once more, humanity was narrowed to one family, and yet again, they were torn apart through mistreatment. It is quite revealing that the repopulated earth could find a moment of unity in building the Tower of Babel only because it was fueled by a collective agreement on evil (Gen. 11:4-9).

The Lord saw and scattered them in judgment. He then called a man named Abram with the prophetic purpose of one day reuniting the fragmented families of the nations in a divine blessing (Gen. 12:1-3). After decades of conflict with all the surrounding inhabitants, Abraham, at last, had children in the land that he was promised to inherit.

Inheriting the land of promise did little to quell the inclination toward strife. Judges 21:25 summarizes the condition of Israel by saying, “In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.” Eventually, a king and a champion would arise, but only after overcoming his brothers’ resentment (1 Sam. 17:28-30) and the enraged jealousy of the previous king from a different tribe. The unity of Israel that David had achieved fell apart in just one generation (1 Kings 11:30-12:15). From that point on, the tribes meant to form one nation unto the Lord would be bitterly divided and perpetually adversarial toward one another.

When they weren’t fighting each other, both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were in continual hostility with surrounding nations. Eventually, the sins of Israel overtook them first, and they were carried away to live amongst the nations. Several hundred years later, everything came full circle, and the Chaldeans carried away Abraham’s descendants from the land he had been promised to receive (2 Chron. 36:15-17).

By the time of Jesus, the Judeans despised the Galileans (John 1:46), but both could agree that the Samaritans were to be hated (Luke 9:51-56). The Pharisees and Sadducees loathed one another apart from their mutual contempt for Jesus

(Acts 23:6-7). And absolutely everyone hated the Gentiles. Even Jesus' disciples couldn't get along with one another (Matt. 20:24, Luke 9:46)! This contentiousness continued up until the night before his death (Luke 22:24) when this winding and tumultuous story of sin and strife that began outside the Garden leads us to a room above the streets of Jerusalem where a feast was held.

## A New Commandment

John 13:33-35

Jesus did not utter these precious, holy words in a vacuum. They were said in the wake of a bitter betrayal. Judas had just departed from the company to hand over their beloved Master for a bit of silver. Yet even beyond the immediate context, the words of Jesus spoken on the eve of the moment when his own kin would put him to death stand against the backdrop of the entire Old Testament. The story of his people, stretching back to Adam, was one of violent discord and strife.

The brief survey of the biblical story might have felt surprising. It should most certainly have felt uncomfortable. Yet we cannot gloss over these details because God did not gloss over them in inspiring his Word. The hatred of humanity toward one another and all its horrible repercussions that are contrary to love — division, jealousy, bitterness, murder, wars, theft — is not merely a series of footnotes to the biblical story. It is not an occasional problem that rears its ugly head on the path to redemption. It is front and center. It is on nearly every page.

The depth of our propensity toward discord is not talked about or taken seriously enough; thus, we do not fully appreciate the weight of what Jesus is commanding us to do and why it is so potent. If we do not understand the gravity of our problem, we will not seek the solution with sufficient earnestness and sobriety.

Although we all know that we ought to love, the point is that there is simply no sense that a peaceful community is our default condition. An honest reading of the Old Testament should cause us to mount a protest when we hear the words of Jesus. How can he ask us to love one another when the law and the prophets make it abundantly clear that such a feat is beyond our reach? This was precisely his point.

The Son of God promised that if we were to be successful in loving one another, all men would know that we were his followers. Love is the singular proof that Jesus leaves for his people! He could have said that men will know us by our grasp of objective truth and correct doctrine or that mighty signs and wonders would distinguish his people. As important and valuable as all these things are, Jesus left us with love to convince the nations that we belong to him. Yet how can this be? How can love abound in us?

This leads to the second detail that we should find remarkable from the words of Jesus. What exactly is “new” about his commandment? Just days earlier, Jesus quoted Leviticus 19:18 and set it alongside the charge to love the Lord our God with

all our heart, soul, and mind (Matt. 22:37-39). Thus, the children of Israel were explicitly commanded to love one another with the same care they had for their own lives since the days of Moses. So, the command to love was actually quite old. And, as we have seen, they failed miserably.

*“As I have loved you.”* It is these words that change everything. It is these words that make his command so breathtakingly “new,” and it is these words that inject hope into the ashes of thousands of years of the human experience. What was formerly impossible and unattainable becomes achievable through Christ. Jesus humbled himself to become a bondservant for our sake and then displayed the magnitude of his love for humanity by submitting to the shameful death on the cross (Phil. 2:6-11). *This* is how he loved us and how we are to love one another. What would it look like if the sacrificial, selfless heartbeat of the cross shaped our love within the Church and our outreach to the world around us?

## Imitators of God

Ephesians 5:1-2

In a stunning scene in Mark 3:34-35, Jesus revealed that those who did the will of God were not just his followers, they were *his family*. The Church is called to be a family with a bond of unity and love that cannot be broken (Col. 3:14). Maintaining the body of love and unity is essential because it directly impacts our witness.

The selflessness and sacrifice of the cross of Christ are to stand as the centerpiece of how the family of God relates to one another. We are to love just as he loved us (John 15:12-17). Although walking in love consists of many qualities, three traits are commended so often in the New Testament that they hold a special place of prominence in our understanding of this Christ-like love: unending forgiveness, radical preference, and humble equality.

Peter once asked Jesus how many times he should forgive his brother when he sins against him (Matt. 18:21). Jesus answered by saying not seven times, but 70 times seven. Clearly, the point was that there was to be no limit to the forgiveness we are to extend to our family in Christ. How often is this obeyed in our midst? How frequently do we break fellowship when we are wronged or perhaps hold bitterness in our hearts toward our brethren when we have been mistreated?

Paul commands us to give preference to one another in honor (Rom. 12:10). Philippians 2:3 says, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.” We are to bear one another’s burdens, rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep (Gal. 6:2, Rom 12:15). If one member suffers, the whole body should feel it (1 Cor. 12:26). We are to be zealous in engaging in good deeds to build one another up (Gal. 6:10, Eph. 2:9, Tit. 3:1-2). The Church is to be a family where a single mother should never have to think about finding childcare. It is to be a community where elderly widows have groceries on their doorstep before they have to ask. It is to be a body where those with disabilities are cared for with dignity and inclusivity rather than excluded from



our fellowship because of stigma or inconvenience. What if, instead of insulating ourselves from the needs of others, we poured ourselves out on their behalf?

Finally, the Church is to be a place where the rich and the poor dwell together without favoritism, where those who are highly esteemed and those who are lowly share a bond of love (Jas. 2:1-6, Rom. 12:16). It is to be a family of generosity and economic equality where no one has unmet needs (Jas. 2:15-16). The Church is to be a family free from *all* bias and distinction in the way we love. There is no longer Jew or Greek, male or female, slave or free (Gal. 3:28). We are all one in Christ! We must celebrate the diversity of backgrounds, roles, and gifts just as we esteem the functioning of the parts of our own bodies with all their complexity and uniqueness (1 Cor. 12:19-26). This is not an idealized, utopian vision of community. Referring to the ancient strife between Jew and Gentile, Paul said that through his sacrifice, Christ put to death the enmity and made the two into one new man (Eph. 2:15). It will entail broken, struggling people fighting to understand one another and overcoming differences. Yet can we imagine the implications of a family of safe, vulnerable love where prejudice of all kinds is absent? The only way this is possible is through the power of our crucified Savior! Yet if misogyny, racism, and socioeconomic stratification are still present within the Church, what credibility does our witness have to a world being torn apart along these same lines?

## Light in the Darkness

Jesus foretold that sin would increase before his return (Matt. 24:12). Perhaps every generation since his ascension has felt these words to be true in their time. Yet it is not hyperbole to assert that the earth is reeling from unprecedented challenges. This is not simply because more people are alive than at any other time. Technology – from weapons to travel to the information revolution – has made the propensity toward hatred in our hearts easier to express and far more lethal to act upon.

Nations separated by thousands of miles can find themselves in mounting hostilities with grave consequences for their citizens. Armed conflicts rage on nearly every continent. A staggering number of refugees flee wars with no foreseeable end. Individuals from all over the world who would have never interacted in previous generations can now exchange vitriol words on social media. We are increasingly defined by animosity over our differences rather than being unified by our common humanity and shared values.

The power of Christian love as an effectual, compelling witness to the world around us has been true for every generation since Jesus uttered those words in the upper room. Against such a dark, bleak landscape, the prospect of a miraculous love uniting people from all backgrounds in a deep bond of fellowship can burn more brightly. What if a world that is fractured and fraying beheld a people — a broken but redeemed and transformed people — who were unified with a love that overcame division and hatred?

Forming communities where love abounds will undoubtedly require much labor in the grace of God, but fortunately, the Scriptures can place us on the right path. To move toward this destination, we must consider, behold, and act.

First, we must *consider*. Not only do we need to examine our hearts for envy or selfishness, but the starting point for a reformation of love is to soberly think about what is at stake and the dire consequences for our witness if we do not walk in love as we are commanded. Paul says in Romans 13:13, “Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.” Strife and jealousy are set alongside drunkenness and sexual immorality. If the Body of Christ in our city were rife with alcoholism and adultery, every respectable leader would be in a state of crisis. Yet somehow, we do not view envy and division in our midst with the same alarm. This must change.

Secondly, we need to *behold*. Jesus said nothing is noteworthy about loving people like us (Matt. 5:46). Everyone does that. We are invited to love in a way that defies all logic and begs for an explanation. Our love for others will never surpass the degree to which our hearts have received the revelation of the love of Jesus for us. We must return again and again to the foot of the cross to prayerfully behold the love that Christ has lavished upon us.

Finally, we must *act*. Love most certainly begins in our hearts, but it cannot stay there. “Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth” (1 John. 3:18). Just as faith without works is dead, love without action is incomplete. Biblical love is tangible and observable, and we do not need to await mature sanctification to begin performing small acts of sacrificial kindness right now. It must begin with concrete actions of setting aside our time and comfort to serve others.

As we lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters, we can then go forth and share the good news — inviting every person not only to receive the love of Christ but also to join a family that has been transformed by it.



