

Small Group Questions | Love Others | Mark 12:28-34



Love is a complicated word, so often we think of love as an emotion, or maybe even a choice, and while that is all true, love is more than that love is also an action, it's a command. Last week we kicked off our new February series called "I Love You" by looking at Jesus' response to the question, "What is the greatest commandment?" Jesus' response is to Love God (Deut. 6:4-5) but to the amazement of all listening, Jesus doesn't stop there, Jesus goes on to say that we ought to "love your neighbor as yourself." This week we are looking at what it means to love others and how we can put that into action.

1. Spend a moment in prayer together and then Read Mark 12:28-34. Discuss anything that initially stands out if anything.
2. Does it surprise you that love is commanded? What does that tell you about how God thinks of love?
3. Re-read Mark 12:31 Why do you think that Jesus says there is no "commandment" (singular) greater than these (plural). Jesus ties together two Old Testament commands into one (Deut. 6:4-6 and Leviticus 19:18) What do you think is the relationship between these "two" commandments.
4. Jesus taught on the understanding of neighbor, the most obvious way of being a neighbor is those that live in close proximity to you, the people you live next to, people you work with, people you sit in Sunday service with. Have you ever found it hard to get to know your "neighbors"? Why do you think that is so challenging in our world?
5. Read Luke 10:25-37. Jesus shares a story about another way of understanding our neighbor. Samaritans were looked at as the enemy of Israel, they were the worst of the worst. So often our friend groups consist of people who think, act, even dress like us. What does this teach us about loving those different from us, or even living contrary to us.
6. There are 613 laws in the Torah (first five books of the Old Testament), several of them having to do with the Old Testament sacrificial system. In Mark 12, Jesus is in the temple answering questions before the chief priest, the Pharisees, the Herodians, the Sadducees. Why might the statement in v. 33 have been upsetting to the religious leaders? What was more important to them, loving people or religious activity?
7. One of Jesus' favorite ways to show love to others was by having a meal with people. (Matthew 9:10-17 for example). A meal signified that you had a place not just at the table but in his life. What are ways we can show love to our "neighbors"?
8. Close in a time of prayer. Pray for strength to put into practice these things this week.