



# FOR

## God Is for My Neighbor

#npfor

Week 2

2 of 4

February 10, 2019

**Bottom Line:** We are to love as Jesus loved us.

**Icebreaker:** Check out family living histories. Who has lived in their house the longest? The shortest? Who has lived in the most different places? Anyone lived out of state? Out of the country? What was your favorite neighborhood? Why?

**Key Verse:** But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And *who is my neighbor?*” Luke 10:29 NIV

Since God is FOR us, we are called to be FOR all people. But when we are honest, we must admit that we have a hard time being FOR all people. It has always been that way. Way back in the first family, Cain didn’t feel he needed to love his brother. Surely there was a loophole. An expert in the law tried to finagle his way around loving others by getting Jesus to specify who exactly fell within the required circle of neighbor love. He started by asking what it takes to please God. He wanted to trap Jesus into saying that the thing that pleased God was loving Him with all you are and have. It’s a private matter between you and God. Luke, the story writer, tells us the motive behind it all: The expert was trying to justify himself and his own lack of love. As long as he loved God, he was good to go, right?

Jesus agreed that the first thing was vertical—love God with all you have and are. But it didn’t stop there. Jesus said, “It is horizontal too. The second is like it in importance and value. Love your neighbor as yourself.” Yikes. That’s not what he wanted to hear. Then he asked the famous question, “Who is my neighbor?” He wanted to know what we all want to know. Just how much of this do I have to do?? That’s the question that flipped everything on its head. Jesus refused to make a list. He told the story that still echoes in our world and resonates with everyone who hears it; the story we call “The Good Samaritan.” Jesus redefined neighbor. He demonstrated that we are to be neighbors to anyone who needs mercy. That strips away all prejudices, biases, religious systems, and hang-ups. There are no boundaries, no restrictions, no escape clauses, no loopholes. Jesus became the Good Samaritan to us as He showed us undeserved, unmerited mercy, and He calls us to follow in His footsteps, loving the whole world for whom He came.

### THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

Jesus was a master teacher and communicator. Instead of answering the man’s question, he told a story and then asked another question. Can you think of any possible different way the man could have answered this question? “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

What’s your first response when Jesus asks you, “Are you a neighbor?” Who are the people for whom you can answer an automatic “yes”? Who are the people you never even think about or want to reject? Why?

This was a startling idea in Jesus’ day. Consider how our world has expanded. We now have social media, television, news from every corner of the world updated and in our faces many times a day. How does that impact the “who is my neighbor question?”

### LOOK IT OVER <<<

The story Jesus told urges us to consider our love for the **undeserving**; those who seem to bring trouble on their own heads, the **overlooked**; those who have already been found unworthy, your **enemies**; the ones you already know are opposed to you, the **unattractive**; the messy and unattractive people, the **inconvenient**; those we might help if the timing was better. Who of these “neighbors” is it hardest for you to love, and which is easiest? Why?

Showing mercy and love to our neighbors is opening our whole lives to them: our eyes, our heart, our hands, our purse, our schedule. What comes most naturally to you? What is most difficult for? Why? Do you ever give away money or material goods to avoid having to give your time or interrupt your schedule? What loopholes do you tend to seek to excuse a lack of practical and effective love to the people around you? What would it mean for you to be FOR someone this week?

# NEXT STEPS

This week consider taking some next steps together as a group:

- 1) Whom do you need to love?
- 2) What can you do to demonstrate kindness?

## EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

**Bottom Line:** We are to love as Jesus loved us.

| Rate yourself from 1 to 10<br>1 (never), 10 (always)  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Why did you give yourself this rating?  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
| What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
| Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
| What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
| At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week? |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |

## PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

## DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at [newpointe.org/daily](http://newpointe.org/daily):

Monday: John 13:33-34

Tuesday: James 2:14-17

Wednesday: Matthew 22:27-29

Thursday: Romans 5:8

Friday: Galatians 5:14

***Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.***

*(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)*