



Love God,  
Love Neighbor

## A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Text for the Week: Matthew 22:34-40

Message for the Week: “Love God; Love Neighbor”

Sunday, March 5

### Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week? Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

Who is your favorite neighbor? Who is your least favorite neighbor? Why?

### Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

### Read:

Read / Have two people in your group read [Matthew 22:34-40](#) out loud.

(Clicking this link will bring you to multiple translations.)

As you read and/or listen to the text being read, circle, take note of, highlight, or underline what words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them with those who are with you.

## Respond / Reflect:

How do you go about demonstrating your love for your family and friends?

What are three ways that Covenant Church could go about loving each other AND our neighbors in the next three months?

Give an example of when someone (a parent, teacher, friend, colleague, teammate, etc.) has loved you just the way you are...but too much to let you stay that way.

How do you know that God loves you?

How do you know that you love God?

What does your checkbook and calendar tell you about what you love and care about?

1 John 4:20-22 says... <sup>20</sup>Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup>And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.” What does this mean for us regarding those we cannot stand?

## Try It:

Still thinking about that person you can't stand...who is that neighbor whom you don't love but need to love? Ask God by His love and grace to transform you in how you should love this person well moving forward.

## Prayer:

Spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you. Pray this prayer together:

Let us pray that our love of God may become real and tangible in our love of our neighbor. (*pause*)

God, you display your almighty power in loving us without regret. In the human heart of Jesus your Son you have shown us how far love can go.

Give us a love that is forgiving, generous and gentle like his, that we may recognize and welcome him in our family members, friends, classmates, and those we encounter each day. Enable our hearts to reach out to the poorest and the least lovable, with the gratuitous love you have given us in Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

—based upon a liturgy from [Liturgies Alive, Models of Celebration](#).

## Missional/Spiritual Practice for March: Holy Curiosity for the Other

During the month of March, you are invited and encouraged to engage in the missional practice of [Holy Curiosity for the Other](#). By engaging in this practice, we seek to create safe and inviting space in meaningful conversation with others. This involves us risking new and deeper relationships with the people we meet in the context of their lives, developing a holy curiosity that transcends your own needs for affirmation or expression and calls you into full attentiveness and discovery of another person's life and story. When we provide safe, inviting, and prayerful space for another to share, transformative encounters with God and one another occur over time.

## Matthew 22:34-40

New International Version

<sup>34</sup> Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. <sup>35</sup> One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

[Read full chapter](#)

Footnotes

[Matthew 22:37](#) Deut. 6:5

[Matthew 22:39](#) Lev. 19:18

The Message

<sup>34-36</sup> When the Pharisees heard how he had bested the Sadducees, they gathered their forces for an assault. One of their religion scholars spoke for them, posing a question they hoped would show him up: "Teacher, which command in God's Law is the most important?"

<sup>37-40</sup> Jesus said, "'Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.' This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: 'Love others as well as you love yourself.' These two commands are pegs; everything in God's Law and the Prophets hangs from them."

[Read full chapter](#)