

## Why should I care?

Lesson 05 in the series, "Why?"

### A. We love and care for others because God first loved us.

"We love each other because he loved us first." 1 John 4:19 (NLT)

"When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners." Romans 5:6-8 (NLT)

### B. Jesus commands us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

"Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?" The man answered, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" "Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!" The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling on a trip from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. "By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. "Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.' "Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked. The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same." Luke 10:25-37 (NLT)

#### 1. Our neighbors include people of all races, languages, nationalities and even people we don't like.

"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Matthew 5:43-48 (NLT)

#### 2. Loving my neighbor means seeing what needs to be done and doing what needs to be done.

"But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.' "Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?' "And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'" Matthew 25:31-40 (NLT)

#### 3. We are only kidding ourselves if we say we love God without loving others.

"If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother." 1 John 4:20-21 (NIV)

### C. Four things we can do to love and care for our neighbors:

#### 1. We can become aware.

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Philippians 2:4 (NIV)

2. We can commit to prayer.

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.” Ephesians 6:18 (NLT)

3. We can show we care.

“Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good... Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you. Don’t curse them; pray that God will bless them. Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.”

Romans 12:9-15 (NLT)

4. We can be ready to share.

“...you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. But you must do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak evil against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.” 1 Peter 3:15-16 (NLT)

**D. Two important notes about loving and caring for others.**

1. Our love for others grows as our love for Christ grows.

“...may the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow and overflow, just as our love for you overflows.” 1 Thessalonians 3:12 (NLT)

2. We are commanded to love our neighbors all of the time, NOT just following disasters.

“Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.” 1 Corinthians 15:58 (NLT)

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**Connect Group Discussion Questions**

1. What do the following verses say about loving our neighbors?

- Matthew 22:36-40
- Romans 13:8-9
- Galatians 5:14
- 1 John 4:20-21

2. Discuss the following steps on how to be a good neighbor.

- Become aware. (Philippians 2:4)
- Commit to prayer. (Ephesians 6:18)
- Show we care. (Romans 12:9-15)
- Be ready to share. (1 Peter 3:15-16)

How are you doing at being a good neighbor? What do you need to work on?

3. Spend time in your connect group praying for each other.

- Ask God to open your eyes and ears to the needs of people around you.
- Ask God to show you how to pray for your neighbors, coworkers and friends.
- Ask God to show you how to serve your neighbors in meaningful ways.
- Ask God to give you opportunities to share your faith with your neighbors.

4. Spend some time in your connect group praying for the people in Texas following Hurricane Harvey using the prayer guide in your bulletin or download from the home page at centeringlives.com.

**Resources:**

Link to [www.samaritanspurse.org](http://www.samaritanspurse.org)