

Love People Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Author Gary Chapman popularized the idea of a love language, and identified five primary languages: acts of service, gifts, quality time, words of affirmation, and physical touch. Which of these tend to be most meaningful to you?
2. What's one characteristic of your personality that was very evident in elementary school?

Read the following passage: Luke 10:25-37.

For Jewish men and women in the first-century (like this expert in the law), a major goal was being a part of God's coming kingdom. As Jesus' conversation with this lawyer shows, entrance into the kingdom was intimately connected to fidelity to the covenant God made with Israel through Moses, and the heart of the covenant was loving God and loving people. We may similarly recognize the centrality of what Jesus (and this expert in the law) identified as the greatest commandment, and yet consciously or unconsciously embrace false substitutes in our lives. Often we give lip-service to loving God and loving people but effectively prioritize achievement, status, power, appearance, or a host of other cultural idols. If we want to experience real life, both in the present and in the future, we need to love God and really love people.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. What is your reaction to Jesus' affirmation that loving God and loving people is at the heart of God's will for our lives? Does that energize you? Does that overwhelm you? Does it raise a hundred different questions? Does it feel too abstract to be helpful? Does it simplify things for you? Does it cause you to feel disillusioned with the often routine aspects of life? Do you feel equipped to engage that purpose in your life?
2. In what sense do you think the expert in the law was trying to justify himself? How do you think he would have answered the question, "Who is my neighbor?"
3. Why would Jesus' parable have been so controversial to the original hearers? Why do you think Jesus made a Samaritan the "hero" of the story?
4. Read Mark 10:17-21. To what actions did Jesus' love for the wealthy young man lead? What are some other ways Jesus put his love for people into action?
5. Why do you think God regularly makes a connection between our love for people and our love for him? (See, for example, 1 John 4:19-21.)

6. What might loving people look like in the context of school or work?
7. What do the Scriptures say about how we can become loving people? (See, for example, 1 Timothy 1:13-14 and 1 John 4:19.) Explain.
8. What is one way you can put the great commandment into practice this week?

Pray