

Building Blocks - Rediscovering the Art of Neighboring
The Call to Love Our Actual Neighbor
September 18th, 2011
Text - Luke 10:25-37
Scripture Reading - Luke 10:25-37

Video 1

Why I'm so excited about this series.

- Unity
 - o **Psalms 133:1 (ESV)**
¹ Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!
 - o **John 17:20-21 (ESV)**
²⁰ "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.
- Doable
- Flexible
- Appeal
- Potential
- God is in it

I want to do three things this morning.

- Help you to see that God has called us to this.
- Help you to see why it makes so much sense.
- Give you an action step to get you started.

God has called us to love our actual neighbors

- No good Jew was surprised by Jesus' answer to the lawyer's question in Matthew 22.
 - o **Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV)**
³⁷ Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All

the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

- He was just quoting the Old Testament Law.
 - **Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (ESV)**
⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
 - **Leviticus 19:18 (ESV)**
¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

- We see this in lawyer's answer to Jesus' question in Luke 10.
 - **Luke 10:25-28 (ESV)**
²⁵ And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" ²⁷ And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

- But what did surprise them is Jesus' answer to the Luke 10 lawyer's next question.
 - **Luke 10:29 (ESV)**
²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

- Jesus clear answer is that *our neighbor is anyone we come across who is in need.*
 - Brandon Wright, 21 year old from Richmond Utah trapped under burning car.

- Thus Jesus' definition of neighbor extends well beyond those we live next door to anyone and everyone including perfect strangers. In fact, Jesus extends the definition of neighbor *even to our enemies.*
 - **Matthew 5:43-44 (ESV)**
⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your

neighbor and hate your enemy.'⁴⁴ But I say to you, *Love your enemies* and pray for those who persecute you,

- With such a broad definition of neighbor and with so many people in need all around us, we can sometimes forget, or even *neglect*, the fact that loving our neighbor means loving our *actual neighbor* as well.
 - o Loving our neighbor means loving anyone we come across who is in need.
 - o Everyone has needs, including our actual neighbors.
 - o Thus, the question is not whether our neighbors are in need. The question is, *are we aware of what their needs are?* Are we paying attention to the needs of those who live closest to us, whose paths we cross every day, or are we, like the priest and the Levite, choosing to ignore those needs and pass by on the other side?

Why loving our actual neighbor makes so much sense

- Loving our actual neighbor makes so much sense because *they're right there*.
 - o Al (Ross) the other morning
 - o Anderson's apple tree prayer walking
 - o Kathi on the stoop
- Another reason loving our actual neighbor makes sense is because meeting significant needs requires relationship and trust, and *relationship and trust take time*.
 - o Anyone can give away a cup of sugar, shovel a sidewalk, or even pull someone out from under a burning car, but meeting the much deeper, much more significant emotional, relational, and spiritual needs of those around is far more difficult and far more time consuming. It can take people a long time to trust you enough to open up.
 - o This is why strong relationships within the church are so important.
 - MG member opens up
 - Took lots of touches

- o Who do we have more touches with than our actual neighbors?
 - Frank and Darlene
- A final reason loving our actual neighbor makes sense is that *to not do so is a bad witness.*
 - o My conviction in this area

Getting started

- Let's see where you're at relationally with your neighbors.
 - o Stranger - Acquaintance - Relationship
- Fill out block map
 - o Name (first and last?)
 - o Something you know about them? (anything)
 - o Something deeper you know about them (hopes, dreams, fears)
- Action step = Learn and retain neighbors names over next week
 - o Magnets
- Commitment Cards
 - o Website
 - <http://buildingblocks.us/>
 - Building Blocks - Rediscovering the Art of Neighboring
 - o Hand to ushers / Ushers hand to Sharon or I

Next Week

- Talk about one of the greatest barriers to being a good neighbor - TIME.