



## Session 1: The Call to Neighboring

### Introduction

In your small groups, (1) brainstorm a list of societal problems impacting neighborhoods and communities across our nation (special bonus points if those issues are especially apparent in our area). Then (2) identify common solutions our society/government creates for those problems. Finally, (3) discuss why such solutions aren't always as effective as they could be.

<i>Societal Problems</i>	<i>Societal Solutions</i>

### The Great Command of Love

*Matthew 22:34-40*

List a number of biblical commands off the top of your head. How do they fit under either "love God" or "love your neighbor"?

Contrast the reasons why you bought the house you did with the reasons why God placed you in the house you did.

## Application for Our Lives

Do this activity.<sup>1</sup> In the space below, the house stands for where you live. Fill in the eight homes surrounding your house. (If you live in the country or in an apartment, just think of the eight homes nearest you.) For each home, fill in the following information:

- A. Write down the name of the person(s) who live here.
- B. Write down some surface-level information about these people, which you would not know by simply looking at their house but by actually talking to them (not: “He drives a truck,” but: “He works at U of M,” “Her family is from the East Coast,” “Their kids play in a summer baseball league,” etc.).
- C. Write down some deeper information about these people, which you would have after connecting with these people (e.g., “This is what motivates them in life ...” “Her mother is in assisted living, and they’re worried how long she’ll last,” “They have conflicts/struggles with their children,” “They go to this church,” etc.).

Then reflect in your small groups. How much of this can you fill out? What does that mean?

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<sup>1</sup> Jay Pathak & Dave Runyon, *The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 36–38.

When Jesus says, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” whom do you think of most of the time?

## **Conclusion**

A group of pastors once asked a mayor in the Denver area what they could do to help the community. The mayor said, “The majority of the issues that our community is facing would be eliminated or drastically reduced if *we could just figure out a way to become a community of great neighbors.*” To which one of the pastors admitted, “Am I the only one here who is a little embarrassed? I mean, here we were asking the mayor how we can best serve the city, and he basically tells us that it would be great if we could just get our people to obey the second half of the Great Commandment.”<sup>2</sup>

Return to the introduction. How/why would it be way more effective to address the societal problems you listed by more Christians practicing, “Love your neighbor as yourself”?

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<sup>2</sup> Pathak & Dave Runyon, *The Art of Neighboring*, 19.