



Introduction

We're starting a new series called "Love Thy (Socially-Distanced) Neighbor." In this series we're going to think through what it would look like to really love our neighbors during this pandemic season, and take steps that will help introduce them to Jesus. In this first lesson, we learn that we can have a missional impact even during a stay at home season.

To watch this week's sermon before your group discussion, go to www.journeyoffaith.com/messages

Share Your Story

1. What's the craziest neighbor you've ever had?
2. What's the best thing a neighbor ever did for you, and how did it impact you?

Hear God's Story

1. Read Jesus' parable in Matthew 25:14-30 straight through. In your own words, what's going on in this parable?
(Note: 1 "talent" = about 20 years of a day laborer's wages in ancient times.)
2. If the owner of the property represents God, and the servants and talents represent us and what God has entrusted to us, what can we learn about God from this parable? Next, what can we learn about what He wants from us?
3. Which of the servants do you personally identify with, and why?
4. Thinking creatively, how can you live this lesson out in the context of the neighbors who live around you?
(Note: For a step-by-step guide, see the *Further Studies* section below.)

Create a New Story

1. What are some potential fears that you have that you can pray about this next week when it comes to reaching out with God's love to the neighbors around you?
2. Pray for the courage and wisdom to join God in His mission to make His love known to the community He's placed us in.

Further Studies: A Practical Start for Getting to Know Your Neighbors

Below are some foundational actions that we can take that will help us get energized and ready to have a missional impact during this stay at home season. Read through them, then move onto the questions below.

1. Decide to hear God's call to action

It's so easy to think of our lives as "me time" and just focus on ourselves. We want to feel loved, valued, and have purpose and belonging. Yet, God reminds us that the desires of our hearts are ultimately found in joining God in what He's doing in the world for the sake of others. An important first step is realizing this, and then turning our attention to God's call on our lives.

2. Recognize the hurdles

Once we've heard God's call to action, let's be real, it's hard to begin to implement especially if we're not used to talking with our neighbors. We face hurdles like fear, doubt, and a lack of comfort, among many others. But, recognizing these hurdles and bringing them to God in prayerful surrender can equip us to overcome them.

3. Get to know your neighbors' names

A great first step to take is just to get to know our neighbors names. This could be as easy as saying, "Hey I know we've lived next to each other for some time now, but I just realized I don't know your name. I'm _____, what's yours?" Drawing out a diagram of your neighbors' houses with their names can be a helpful tool. (See an example below.)

DISCUSS

1. Regarding step 2, what are some of the hurdles you personally struggle with in getting to know your neighbors?
2. How does this action plan relate to what we've previously discussed from Matthew 25:14-30?
3. What about what we've been discussing gives you hope?

For Parents: Repackaging for Youth

1. For those who have young children in the home, what are some ways you could teach this lesson to them that takes into account their age and learning level?

For questions about this curriculum, contact Pastor Matthew Jensen at matthew.jensen@journeyoffaith.com

This is one example of a block map that you can print off or create on your own. Basically, create a diagram with “blocks” representing the houses/apartments/condos/etc. of your immediate neighborhood, and see how many names you can fill in!

