

(CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER continued)

Love God, Love People: In your journal, divide a full, blank page in half. On one half of the page, write the words LOVE GOD. On the other half write LOVE PEOPLE. Take five minutes to write down the ways you love God and the ways you love people. Select one or more of the questions below to discuss with your group.

- Was it easier for you to recall ways you love God or people? Why do you think that is?
- Pick one way you love God and one way you love people that surprised you and share with the group.
- Are there actions that fit into both categories?
- How would you like to grow in your love of God and people?

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE (Read the passages and review the sermon outline. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group):

- Read Mark 12:28-34
- Read the main points from the sermon outline.
- What topic in the sermon and scripture stood out to you?
- Why would the teacher of the law ask Jesus the question he did in verse 28: Of all the commandments, which is the most important?
- Why do you think Jesus answered the teacher's single question with two commandments?
- How do you interpret the command to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength...?
- In v. 31, Jesus says that, There is no commandment greater than these. What other commandments can take a higher priority in your life than these?
- Why does Jesus proclaim that this teacher is not far from the Kingdom of God?

CONNECT WITH GOD'S MISSION IN THE WORLD (select one question for discussion)

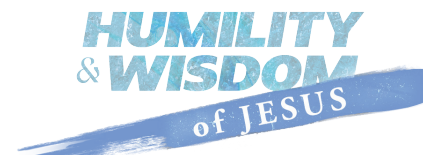
- Does loving God or loving people come most naturally to you?
- How do you limit the definition of neighbor and how can you expand your definition to make your understanding of neighbor more inclusive?
- How is God calling this small group to love people with greater frequency and/or fervency?
- How do you express your love to the One Triune God on a weekly basis and how can you grow in that expression?
- Is it hardest for you to love God with your heart, your soul, your mind, or your strength and why?

PRAYER

End your time in prayer writing down any prayer requests in your journal. Take a moment to note any prayer requests that God has answered from previous weeks and offer praise to the Lord.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

November 14, 2021
Pastor Juan-Daniel Espitia



PART 3—MARK 12:28-34 (NIV)

²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

²⁹ “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

³² “Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. ³³ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

Loving God and Our Neighbor is True Worship

1. Loving God with all your being goes against human nature.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart...

2. Loving your neighbor as yourself is the most inclusive command.

‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.
Leviticus 19:18

3. Love is our true act of worship and demonstration of the kingdom of God.

“You are not far from the kingdom of God.”

UPCOMING SBPC ADVENT EVENTS!

Christmas Concerts

Sunday, December 5, 9:00 and 11:00 am

Alternative Christmas Market

Sunday, December 5, 9:00 am–1:00 pm

Women's Christmas Brunch

Saturday, December 11, 9:00 am

Christmas Eve Services

Friday, December 24, 3:00 and 5:00 pm

More details on these events coming soon!

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS—November 14, 2021

James: Humility and Wisdom of Jesus—Part 3: Mark 12:28-34

CONNECT WITH GOD (choose one of these practices that best suits your group or use a practice from a previous week)

- **Centering Prayer:** M. Basil Pennington said, In prayer we seek God. We do not seek peace, quiet, tranquility, enlightenment; we do not seek anything for ourselves. We seek to give ourselves...to God. He is the all of our prayer.

Explain: Today we are going to begin by centering our hearts on God. Each of us should pick a sacred word. This word is to remind us of who God is and who we are to God. (EX: forgiven, grace, love, mercy, joy, Jesus, etc.) In your heart and mind, offer that word to God as an act of prayer and as an opening of your heart to your Father. Spend three minutes of silence simply being open to the Spirit's presence. When you are distracted by something, recall your sacred word to refocus on the Lord. This centering prayer is not to empty your mind, but to focus your heart, soul, and spirit on our Great God.

- **One Minute:** Set a timer for one minute. Sit in silence, letting go of the anxieties of the day, the worries of tomorrow, and the urgency of the present. Allow the anxious thoughts to drift away and focus your heart on Jesus Christ.
- **Breath Prayer:** This ancient form of prayer is a reminder of the nearness of God in everyday life and his provision- even in each breath we take. As we breathe in, we pray in our mind and heart, Lord Jesus Christ... and as we exhale, pray, have mercy on me. Do this in silence, together at your own pace, until everyone has prayed/breathed this ten times.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Journaling: Many spiritual practices this year will require a journal. If you are a small group leader be prepared with paper and pen for those who are without. Please remember that there is no right way to journal. Journals can be intermittent, upside down, written, drawn, or doodled. They are a way to capture what God is doing in you over time. Journaling with your small group will include a prompt; however, in your time alone with God, allow the Spirit to be your leader.

(CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER continued on the back panel.)