



Ever wondered why people around us aren't interested in God? Maybe we've never given them a reason to be. However, if we're real with people they will be real with us. We can make Jesus relevant and real in the lives of others, not by arguing

them into the kingdom, but by showing them what a Christ-follower looks like—someone who engages with the community, who thoughtfully inquires about sensitive, ultimate issues, and who encourages others by our loving presence. There is an art to loving your neighbor as yourself. This final three-part series by Pastor Tim as Lead Pastor of CrossWinds addresses his heart for reaching people with the Good News of Jesus.

Taking the Great Commandment Literally

(Matthew 22:34-40; Acts 17:26-27; Luke 10:25-37)

The Time Barrier

(Matthew 22:34-40; Luke 10:38-42)

The Fear Factor

(Luke 7:36-37; Luke 5:27-32)

In this series I asked our people to sign up for two action applications:

1. Volunteer to be a part of a team to give leadership, strategic direction, and ideas to reaching neighbors and co-workers with the Good News of Jesus.
2. Sign up to host a neighborhood block party.

I also showed and received resources from this website:

<https://www.artofneighboring.com/>

I show video clips in each of the three messages about neighboring from the above site.

Taking the Great Commandment Literally

(Matthew 22:34-40; Acts 17:26-27; Luke 10:25-37)

Nita is a mother and wife who wanted to connect with her neighbors. So, she and her husband planned a neighborhood ice cream social they would host. Nita lives on a street that has no outlet and there are about 45 homes. She made fliers and walked around the neighborhood distributing one to each home. After the social, everyone thanked her for hosting and thought it was a great idea. Several neighbors said *"Let's make it an annual event"* and some volunteered their yard. One man who came was disabled—no one in the neighborhood had ever met him. He enjoyed himself and everyone enjoyed visiting with him. Altogether Nita estimated about 40 people attended.

So, a neighborhood ice cream social—is that a big deal? Actually, in this *"I'm too busy; too distracted; too into myself"* culture we live in, it is a big deal. I'm starting a new series today called, *"The Art of Neighboring"* and I want to identify 3 "neighborhood practices" to help us represent Jesus on our neighborhood frontline; to take practical steps towards becoming great neighbors. I want to begin the series by revisiting what's called the Great Commandment and then challenging ourselves to take the Great Commandment literally. So, let's get started, I have three insights, first...

1. The Great Commandment is God's simple truth of who we're to love.

The smartest thing we can do to impact our community is to actually live out Jesus' command to love our neighbors. But before we get too far, let's read Luke 10:25-28 (READ). The religious expert was trying to trick Jesus with his question, *"How do I inherit eternal life?"* Jesus turned it back on him and said, *"how do you think—what does the law of Moses say?"* The religious expert answered the question *"...love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind." And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* BTW, we find a similar answer in Matthew 22:34-40 (READ).

That answer has become known as the Great Commandment: Love God and love your neighbor. How important was this to Jesus? Well, in Luke 10:28,

Jesus said, *“Do this and you will live!”* And in Matthew 22:40, he said, *“The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”* So, none other than eternal life and all the truth of God found in the writings of OT prophets and God’s spiritual laws are wrapped up in the Great Commandment—so, in my estimation, it’s one of the most critical teachings Jesus ever taught—so important that it should grab our attention, our passions, commitments, and enthusiasm.

But this is a real challenge for us isn’t it? It sure was for that religious expert. He knew the answer to his original question. In fact, he gave Jesus book, chapter and verse of Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. He knew what the scriptures said, but here’s the thing: he wasn’t doing it! He had a head knowledge, but no heart response—he wasn’t living out the truth. Jesus told him in v. 28, *“You have answered right: do this and you will live.”* But this religious guy’s insincerity is shown in v. 29 (READ). It’s like, *“C’mon Jesus, “who really is my neighbor?”* To answer the question, Jesus taught the parable of the Good Samaritan and who our neighbors are and how to love them—Look at vv. 30-27 (READ). Let’s summarize this:

The **thieves** saw a victim to exploit. They didn’t view the man as a fellow human being; they didn’t care about his needs. They only wanted to take from him anything of value. The **religious men** saw the injured man as a nuisance to avoid. What do I mean by *“religious?”* Religion is a person’s attempt to make himself acceptable to God by doing good works—this is often accompanied by religious rules; and instead of resulting in a closeness to God, it ends up being lifeless. Religion is centered on man, not God. It’s centered on what we can do to earn God’s love. So, these religious men avoided the injured man.

Maybe they thought that their service to God was fulfilled for that day after they attended worship and put their tithe into the offering. Maybe they saw no obligation to help the man in need, because they didn’t do anything to hurt him. Maybe they were thinking, *“I don’t have time for this; it’s none of my business. I can’t stop and help every Tom, Dick and Harry. Someone else will*

help.” Whatever they’re thinking, they avoided coming into contact with the man, and passed him by. It was **the Samaritan** who saw an opportunity to minister to the needs of the man. Even though there was great tension between Jews and Samaritans—they avoided one another like the plague.

And notice that the Samaritan made no excuses, had no ulterior motives, and simply did what he could to meet the need he saw. Now, I wonder if we don’t see ourselves somewhere in this story. Hopefully it’s not the thief—and if you’re living as a Good Samaritan, keep it up! But I wonder, if most of us are the religious guy. The point is this: the Great Commandment is God’s simple truth of who we’re to love; and as improbable as a Samaritan befriending a Jew, how much more are we to care for a neighbor. So, who is the person you see in your lane today? Who is in your path? Who are those people who live in the regular orbit of your daily life? They are your neighbors. Secondly...

2. The Great Commandment is extremely powerful when acted upon.

Let’s break it down: the actions of the good Samaritan involved four powerful movements. First, it involved *Compassion*—you do this by placing yourself in a person’s place or position and then acting the way you would want others to act if it were you. Second, it involved *Contact*: This is where you refuse to allow a person to stay in the condition he or she was in. You pull alongside to help. You see the need; you respond appropriately. Third, it involved *Care*: Once you make contact with a person in the path of your daily life, you encourage, care for, inspire, reassure.

Fourth, it involved a *Cost*: a ministry that costs you nothing accomplishes nothing. I think the expert of the religious law and the religious leaders in the Good Samaritan story were trying to define “neighbor” as someone they could pick and choose to care for. That way, it would cost them less time, less energy, less investment and involvement. They could control their own agenda of who their neighbor was. But Jesus would have none of that. He said, *“Your neighbor is the person who is in your lane; your path during the day; your neighbors are those people who live in the regular orbit of your daily life.”*

And when you represent Jesus to those people so that you are putting forth compassion, contact, and care at a personal cost, it becomes a powerful force in representing Jesus on your frontline. You know what—we know this story don't we? But I wonder how many of us actually live like the religious guys rather than the Good Samaritan. I wonder if we excuse ourselves from the call of Jesus to know and love our neighbors, co-workers, parents on our kids team, our literal neighbors because it doesn't fit into our time-table or plans. Yes, we struggle with this. However, dwell on this: Great things happen when you bring the presence of Jesus to those who live closest to you. Thirdly...

3. Take the Great Commandment literally. When Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, he wanted to capture what it would look like if a person, who had nothing to gain, would take literally what it meant to love your neighbor as yourself. The Samaritan saw an opportunity, as messy as it was, to come to the aid of the man and he did it; and in doing so, he becomes an example of how we ought to respond to others and at the same time reveal the nature of Jesus. I have a video clip for us to watch of how this might look in your own neighborhood—watch this **(VIDEO)**. What would happen if every Christ-follower in Stillwater or in your town, built relationships with the people closest to them; to become neighborhood catalysts to the love of Jesus?

What would it look like for you to move yourself from stranger to acquaintance; from acquaintance to relationship? One of the things Valessa and I have done is a neighborhood BB'Q party—We made up some invitations, asked a neighbor girl to deliver to each home in our neighborhood, turned our garage into a diner, our living room into a buffet table, and bam! We had a party. It all took place in our garage; we even built a portable fire pit and put it in our driveway so that everyone in the neighborhood could just walk over and be a part of it. It was big on relationship building and low on program; just a great way to get to know people, serve them and show hospitality.

Look, for most of us, we can only do a few things really well—let's make sure that one of them is the thing that Jesus said matters most: a good neighbor

always trumps a good program. So, here's what I would like you to do. As you leave here this morning—we have a table set up in the lobby that has magnetic *Block Maps* on it. Would you be willing to learn, retain, and use the names of your closest neighbors. Here's the application for today: *First*, grab a block map from the table as you walk out of the service. The magnets will help you to know your neighbors by name. *Second*, write down the names of the neighbors who live in the 8 houses closest to you. If you don't know, find out, and write the names in.

The point of this is to see if we know our neighbors' names because it's hard to love someone if you don't know their name. *Third*, pray for each household. For now, just pray. That's my challenge. Pick up a magnetized block map, fill in 8 households and begin to pray for each home. Now, next week, we'll begin to talk more practically about how you can act on the Great Commandment in your neighborhood. One more thing before I close. If you are interested, even passionate about helping CrossWinds to do a great ministry of neighboring, let me know.

We need a small group of people passionate about reaching out to others with the Good News of Jesus, if that's you, let me know—simply write somewhere on your Connection Card, "Neighboring Team" and we'll get back to you. Let's close here. Find your Connection Card; where it says, *My Next Step Today Is*. Make an application—I have suggestions up on the screen. As you're writing, I'll invite the ushers to receive the morning offering. Place your offering and Connection Card in the offering bag as it passes—if you're giving with push pay this morning, find it on our church app. Let's pray...

The Time Barrier

(Matthew 22:34-40; Luke 10:38-42)

Last week we started a three part Life Lesson series called *“The Art of Neighboring.”* This is a series meant to help us move our talk about representing Jesus on our Frontline to actually doing it. And so last Sunday I gave you a Block Map assignment and challenged you to write down and pray for the people who live in the 8 houses closest to you. How many of you grabbed this neighborhood map, wrote the names of your neighbors on it and started praying for them? You can still do that—as you leave here this morning pick up a neighborhood map, write in the names of your closest 8 neighbors and start praying for them. Now, in the Art of Neighboring today, I want to talk about eliminating the time barrier that keeps us from building relationships with those who live near us. I have 2 insights into how to do that, first...

1. The biggest obstacle to taking the Great Commandment seriously is TIME. To begin with, let me remind you of what the Great Commandment is. It is one of the most powerful teachings Jesus ever taught because he summarizes for us what is the most important attitude and action a follower of Jesus must be centered in. We find it predominantly in Matthew 22:34-40 (READ). We make time for those things that are important and last week I said that the Great Commandment was extremely important to Jesus.

He said that eternal life and all the truth of God found in the writings of the OT prophets and God’s spiritual laws hang in the balance of being obedient to the Great Commandment of loving God and loving people. I would call that important! If you were in here last week, I don’t doubt that you left conflicted—you may have been thinking, *“Do I really want to put myself out there to build relationships with my neighbors?”*

You may be thinking this morning, *“How in the world am I going to have the time to get to know my neighbor?”* Hey, I get it! Time may be our most precious commodity!

However, if loving God and our neighbor is that important to Jesus, it should capture our attention, seize our passions, arrest our commitments, and excite our enthusiasm. And if it doesn't, what we're really saying is *"I don't consider loving my neighbor as important as everything else that I do."* And if that's where you're at, you're going to be in conflict with the heart of Jesus Christ. So, let's go to scripture and find further proof that the Kingdom of God is as real as the life we experience around us each day and the mandate to love others as ourselves deserves to have priority in how we live our lives. Look at Luke 10:38-42 (READ). Martha is so busy that she misses out on what is most important.

Most of us struggle with busyness. Our dilemma is bigger than a shortage of time, it's a problem of priorities; the urgent crowds out the important. We invest in the minor things and miss the main thing. The story of Mary and Martha teaches us that we need to live counter-culturally in order to experience life Jesus wants us to live. We need to learn how to say "no" to good things and say "yes" to the main thing: Ray Ortland wrote a simple book years ago called *The Three Priorities of the Local Church*. Here they are in a nut shell: Love God fully, Love people intentionally, and Love people toward a relationship with Jesus. Love God, Love People, Love people to Jesus—that's the main thing.

The truth is, we live in this tension between the urgent and the important and when our priorities are determined by the urgent, our lives won't match up with our intentions. But Jesus is our perfect example. He got a lot done but he was never hurried: Mark 1:35 says, *Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray.* Luke 4:42-44: *Early the next morning Jesus went to an isolated place. The crowds searched and when they found him, they begged him not to leave...But he replied, "I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other towns..."* Luke 9:18, *Jesus left the crowds to pray; Only his disciples were with him...* Luke 9:28, *Jesus took Peter, John, and James up on a mountain to pray.* Jesus' lived his life in a specific rhythm. He regularly slowed down in order to live at a healthy pace; to get re-centered on living life within God's Kingdom as His priority. He

found himself in large groups of hundreds and thousands; and small groups of 12 and intimate groups of three. But very often, he pulled away so it was just him and his heavenly Father—that was his spiritual refueling times. Do we live at a pace that allows us to be in a rhythm of spiritual refueling as well as available to those who live around us? Do we allow for margins in life so that people can interrupt us?

Jesus had time for people interruptions, do we? In Matthew 14, Jesus had just heard about the death of his cousin, John the Baptist. He wanted time alone to grieve. However, listen to Matthew 14:13-14 (READ). The rest of Matthew 14 is revealing: After healing and teaching all day, it was getting late, the disciples told Jesus that the crowd was getting hungry and to send them away so they could go to the villages and buy food—but Jesus said, *“Nope, you feed them.”* Jesus was all about priorities, right?...*Love your neighbor as yourself.* Well, the disciples said, *“yeah, but all we have is few fish and chips.”* Jesus prayed, food multiplied, people were fed

After the needs of people were met, Jesus wanted to get back to his original plan: get alone with his Father and pray. Jesus said to his disciples...*“Get in your boat and go—I need some alone time.”* This is Jesus loving God with his heart, soul, strength and mind. So, the disciples take off. Jesus finally got his alone time. At 3:00 AM, Jesus, with Godly intuition, realizes his disciples are in trouble. Out in the Sea of Galilee, a storm was tossing them around like a bobber. Jesus says, *“Really?”* He didn’t have a boat, so he takes off walking on water, reaches the boat, calms the storm, and saves his buddies. Jesus had room for people interruptions. Can we say that? What would it take to change the pace of your life so you could be available to those around you? Secondly...

2. Love and hurrying are not compatible. Let’s go back to Luke 10 and that occasion where Jesus visited his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus—vv. 39-40 say, *Mary, sat at the Lord’s feet, listening to what he taught. But Martha was distracted...* Jesus ended up saying this in v. 42 (READ). Mary’s lack of hurry allowed her to choose what Jesus considered the better thing. Now, is

preparing a meal important? Sure it is! No food means no dinner! However a fussed-over meal is not as important as allowing Jesus to feed the soul. After Michelangelo had sculpted the famous statue of David, supposedly someone asked him: How did you manage to create such a beautiful sculpture from a block of marble? Michelangelo responded...

*"It was easy, I just chipped away everything that didn't look like David." You could call that the art of elimination and we need to learn how to do that. We have so many choices; so much stuff going on that we need to learn to chip away activities that keeps us from giving time to the things that don't look like Jesus. But it's not just a multitude of activity, it's also the hurry it creates. In John Ortberg's book, *"The Life You Have Always Wanted,"* he writes that *"Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day."* He coins the phrase *"Hurry Sickness."* He says that *"the reason hurrying is so dangerous is because, Love and hurry are not compatible; Love always takes time, and time is the one thing that hurried people don't have."**

I have a video clip that talks about this, take a look at this... **(VIDEO)**. I confess I haven't always done neighboring right.

Several years ago I was doing yard work and I had my handy electric hedge trimmer out. Now, hedge trimming is a bit addictive for me. I like trimming—alot! We happen to share a clump of bushes with our neighbors and I was trimming on our side of the property line, but I was on such a trimming high, I just kept going...to the neighbor's side of the property.

I had a picture in my mind of forming those bushes into a piece of art. I finished, stepped back and took it all in.

I saw immediately that the picture in my mind didn't match what I was looking at. It was a hack job. About that time, I hear a voice behind me: *"Are you enjoying cutting down my bushes?"* The inflection and mood of those words were not cheery; this was no, *"Gee, thank you for thinking of us."* It sounded more like Darth Vader! The neighbor's wife wasn't happy with my

piece of art. Now, if I had been thinking—which is hard to do when you have hedge trimmers! But if I hadn't been in such a hurry, I would have been more thoughtful about representing Jesus; that what I do reflects who I am and who I am is a follower of Jesus called to love my neighbor. So, I apologized and suggested it might be better if she would tend to the bushes in the future.

BTW, we actually have a great relationship with those neighbors. I just don't trim the shrubbery anymore! The point is, I want to be more mindful of this art of neighboring. So, here's what I want to encourage us to do today. Take out your Connection Card; find where it says, *My Next Step Today Is...* Look at the screen—write down an action point or two. First, if you haven't yet, as you leave, pick up a Neighborhood Map from the table in the Lobby. Write in 8 neighbors you can pray for this week. Second, would you be willing to spend at least a total of one hour this week out in your front yard or in a common area where your neighbors can be seen?

In fact, take a walk in your neighborhood. Bust down the time barrier; talk to neighbors. Pray, see what happens as you relate to your neighbors. Third, if you're interested in helping CrossWinds do a great ministry of neighboring, let me know. We're looking for a few people passionate about reaching others with the Good News of Jesus, if that's you, simply write somewhere on your Connection Card, "Neighboring Team" and I'll get back to you. Thanks to those of you who signed up last week. Let's close here—I'll invite ushers to come and receive the offering. As the offering bag passes you, please put both your Connection Card and offering in—Let's pray...

The Fear Factor

(Luke 7:36-37; Luke 5:27-32)

Good morning everyone! We're going to conclude the series, "The Art of Neighboring." I want you to know that I haven't always done this art of neighboring right. Several years ago I was doing yard work and I had my handy electric hedge trimmer out. Now, hedge trimming for me is a bit addictive. I like trimming—alot! We happen to share a clump of bushes with our neighbors and I was trimming on our side of the property line, but I was so into it that I just kept going...to the neighbor's side of the property. I had this picture in my mind of forming those bushes into a piece of art. I finished, stepped back and took it all in. I saw immediately that the picture in my mind didn't match what I was looking at.

It was a hack job. About that time, I hear a voice behind me: *"Are you enjoying cutting down my bushes?"* The inflection and mood of those words were scary! This was no, *"Gee, thank you for helping of us."* It was more like Darth Vader—*"If you only knew the power of the dark side."* The neighbor's wife wasn't happy with my piece of art. It's hard to represent Jesus when you're fearful of your neighbor! So, I apologized and suggested it might be better if she would tend to the bushes in the future. BTW, we actually have a great relationship with those neighbors. I just don't trim the shrubbery anymore! The point is, I want to be more mindful of this art of neighboring. So, today and I want to talk about overcoming our fear of representing Jesus to our neighbors. I have two thoughts on that, first...

1. The brokenness of the world causes us to be suspicious and fearful of those we don't know. When we turn on the TV and see and hear about all of the brokenness in our world, it shapes our world view; it shapes our view of others. We start thinking that *"Good Fences make Good Neighbors"* and we move toward safe and clean and controlled environments.

And when this is lived out, it leads to isolation. Listen, I get that—it's probably my first tendency and I need to fight that to a certain degree because

followers of Jesus are not called to isolation and fear. Jesus called us to engage the messiness of relationships and real relationships are always messy and that makes us fearful. But Jesus was often accused by the Jewish religious leaders of spending time with people we would consider scary: prostitutes, financial con artists, the demon possessed, lepers, the unlovely, the diseased, political extremists, sinners—he spent enough time with them that the holier than thou folks accused him of being. Look Luke 7:34-39 (READ). Holy cow! What was going on here?

Jesus was hanging around with some very sketchy people! Yes he was, because Jesus was and is the friend of sinners—those irreligious and overtly immoral Jews of his day. BTW, the enemies of Jesus were the Jewish religious leaders—mostly the Pharisees; and they had concluded that because Jesus was a friend of sinners that he too was a sinner. But look again at v. 35 (READ). Jesus shows that friendship with sinners expresses God’s wisdom, and we see it over and over to be proven true by what happened to those who responded to his friendship: Lives were changed; people transformed from being irreligious to being lovers of God.

So, in v. 40 we read that the name of the Pharisee who asked Jesus to have dinner with him was Simon. We aren’t told why Simon invited Jesus to dinner—most likely it was just one more attempt to trap Jesus under the sham of hospitality. And it didn’t take long for Simon to find the dirt he was looking for. So, this was an ancient dinner party—they ate dinner lying down, leaning on their left elbows; feet outward from a low table. This explains why the prostitute had access to anoint and wash and kiss the feet of Jesus without being under a table. So, yes, this woman had pursued a lifestyle of sexual immorality—probably a village prostitute. The perfume cost about one year’s wages.

She pours the perfume over the feet of Jesus, her tears of brokenness mingle with the perfume; she dries his feet with her hair and while all this was going on, Jesus made no effort to stop her. But Simon’s head was about to explode; he was appalled; he makes a silent interpretation that says: *‘Jesus is letting a*

sinner touch him! He can't be a prophet from God; a Godly person would never allow a slimy sinner to touch and defile him.' Simon was probably was on his way to concluding something far worse—that Jesus was not only not a prophet, but had been her lover and she was trying to woo him back. And while Simon is silently judging, Jesus speaks. Look at vv. 40-48 (READ).

Jesus is telling Simon that he is dead wrong; that this woman is not human trash; that it is the wisdom of God that those who love God should befriend those who don't! And when this prostitute responded to Jesus' friendship and was offered God's forgiveness, it filled her heart with love. This wasn't a relationship to be fearful of or angry about. This was a miracle to be rejoiced in! Jesus made this point to Simon: The brokenness of the world causes us to be suspicious and fearful of those we don't know—but those are the very people who need God. So, when was the last time you were accused of being friends with sketchy people and that was a good thing in the eyes of Jesus?

Let's take this to where we live and apply it to the art of neighboring. I think, much like the Jewish religious leaders 2000 years ago, Jesus can make church people uncomfortable at times—and I'll tell you why: Because Jesus is willing to receive a foot washing from a prostitute. Are we willing to be around people who live extremely differently than we do? Are you willing to build relationships where unbelieving people begin to interact with you as a Christ-follower and something is created that brings depth to the relationship? Jesus says to Simon, *"Do you really see this woman—her hurt and pain and desire to be healed?"*

For you and me, Jesus says, *"Do you have eyes to see what is really happening in your neighborhoods?* Yes, there might be a fear factor involved with stepping out of the safety of our own lives, to relate to people and share Jesus at a deeper level—that might be fearful for us. But listen to what the Apostle Paul wrote to a timid Timothy, his protégé, his disciple in 2 Tim 1:7 (READ). Fear in relating to our neighbor reveals we're controlled by our human flesh. A Holy Spirit controlled life produces power, love, and self-discipline. So, if you have a fear factor in your life when it comes to

representing Jesus to your neighbor, admit it and begin praying for the power, love and self-discipline God produces in a surrendered life. Second...

2. In order to take the Great Commandment seriously, we must be with people God has placed around us. I want to take us to another occasion where Jesus related to those he was with and invited them to consider the Kingdom of God. Let's look at a day in the life of Jesus from Luke 5. Listen to vv. 1-3 (READ). Jesus was out and about on one of his typical days. He starts off teaching a large group because that's who was around him. We must be with people God has placed around us. Look at v. 4 (READ). Jesus goes from large crowd to a few of Simon Peter's workmates in a boat. We must be with the people God has placed around us.

Look at v. 12 (READ). Jesus was walking through a village and he meets a man with advanced leprosy. We must be with people God has placed around us. And at the end of the day? Look at v. 16 (READ). Jesus refuels and spends time with his Father. The next day, Jesus was doing what he normally did. Look at v. 18-20 (READ). We must be with people God has placed around us. This was an everyday occurrence for Jesus. Large crowds, 1 on 1, sick people, meeting in homes—all of these is where Jesus lived his life each day and as he met with these people—some of which were pretty messy situations, Jesus brought the Kingdom of God into each setting.

Let me give you one more—look at vv. 27-32 (READ). Levi gathers his friends by throwing a party. Jesus comes to the party and is accused of hanging out with messy people. The Pharisees thought their accusation was a bad thing, but to Jesus, it was the very purpose of his life—and so it is for you and me. In Acts 1:8, Jesus said, *"You will be my witnesses."* In Matthew 28:19 Jesus says, *"Go and make disciples."* In John 14:12, Jesus said, *anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works."* As we wrap up this series on the Art of Neighboring, I want to give you another challenge: How about putting on your own block party—get messy and throw a Levi party—Love your neighbor as you want to be loved.

In order to take the Great Commandment seriously, you must be with those who God has placed around you. And it's not always going to be pretty, but it is going to be significant. Host your own block party or simply be part of a neighborhood gathering within the next 3 months. Take a look at this Video Clip **(VIDEO)**. The last two Sunday's we've made available neighborhood map cards—I want to ask you one more time to commit to partnering with others to pray for neighbors. But take this to the next level and throw a great party.

If you're willing to hold your own block party, we want to know about it because we have a "Neighborhood Block Party Kit" to give you. So, indicated on the Connection Card this morning if you're interested in hosting a block party in your neighborhood and we'll pray for you and give you some resources to make it happen this summer. Throw a block party to kick off the summer, or on the 4th of July, or on Labor Day. So, locate your Connection Card, and make an application this morning—I have the suggestions up on the screen. As you're writing, I'll invite the ushers to come and receive your offering. Place your offering and Connection Card in the offering bag. If your giving with push pay this morning you can do that now on our church app. Let's pray...

