

LOVING YOUR GAY NEIGHBOR

The command to love our neighbor is rooted in God's love for us. We take our cues from God when it comes to our demonstrations of love for others. Therefore, when it comes to loving those with whom we disagree or with those whose lifestyles we cannot condone, we must look to God for our example.

Read Mark 12:30-31

Discuss: What do you think it means to love God supremely while loving others as you love yourself?

Love your gay neighbor fearlessly

Read 2 Timothy 1:7

Timothy was a timid minister who needed encouragement from Paul. He, like we, had to be reminded that God has given us a spirit of power, love, and self-control. When we love our gay neighbor, we do so in the strength of God's power, which drives out fear and increases our faith.

Discuss: Read the passage again and discuss how the call to love your gay neighbor might make you fearful.

How does the Holy Spirit help us overcome our fear and show love to others?

Love your gay neighbor compassionately

Read Colossians 3:12-13

God's compassion serves as the paradigm of the Christian's compassion. When we seek to show compassion to others, we begin by considering how God showed compassion to us. When it comes to our gay neighbor, we show compassion and offer forgiveness on the basis of what God has done in Christ to redeem us and demonstrate His love to us.

Discuss: Read the passage again and discuss how God's demonstration of compassion toward us should shape and inform our compassion toward others.

Think deeply about what it means for God to show us compassion.

In this passage, Christ's forgiveness of us becomes the paradigm for our forgiveness of others. How has Christ forgiven us?

What does that mean for loving our gay neighbors with compassion?

Love your gay neighbor truthfully

Read Ephesians 4:11-16

Biblical love is inextricably related to the truth. If the source of love is God Himself, then our expressions of love must not neglect the truth of God. Love and truth are the two sides of the gospel we share with others. People will never see how loved they truly are until they understand that they are apart from God's love and redemption.

Discuss: Read the passage again and discuss what it means to "speak the truth in love."

Why is it important for love to be accompanied with truth?

What happens if the truth of God is compromised in our attempts to demonstrate love?

What happens if the love of God is distorted in our attempts to argue for truth?

Can you think of a time when you have spoken the truth in a manner that was not loving?

How was that truth received in that moment?

Love your gay neighbor redemptively

Read Titus 3:4-8

God's love has a salvific purpose. The end goal of His love is the redemption of the sinner. He does not love for love's sake, but for the sake of His glory in our salvation. Our love for our gay neighbor is incomplete if its end goal is not their redemption. We are called to adorn the gospel with our good works, but we must be careful that we do not neglect the gospel on account of our business.

Discuss: Read the passage again and discuss how God's love for us moved him to save us.

What are the implications of God's redemptive love for us in terms of how we love others?

Is it loving to demonstrate kindness toward someone without the intention of that person coming to know God as their Savior?

Love your gay neighbor patiently

Read Ephesians 4:1-3, 2 Timothy 2:24-25

Very few people respond to the gospel the first time that they hear it. As those who have been saved by a patient God, we need to be patient with our gay neighbor. Often, repentance will be messy and we must be willing to walk alongside of them, disciplining them to follow Jesus. Do not give up on the gospel. In due season, God's message will bear fruit if we do not grow weary in doing good.

Discuss: Read the passage again and discuss why patience is a vital aspect of our love for others.

Can you recall a time when someone loved you patiently?

How did their patient love impact you?

What allows us to practice patience in our love toward our gay neighbors?

Main Point

God's word is clear that we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves. This includes even those with whom we disagree and whose lifestyles conflict with God's Word. God's intention is to use Christians to demonstrate a love for their gay neighbor that is marked by a fearless hope in the transforming truth of the gospel, which declares the compassion of God toward all sinners with the aim of bringing about their full redemption. This love is a patient love that rests in the sovereign kindness of a loving God.

We, therefore, as Christians, are enabled by God's love to love fearlessly by trusting the Holy Spirit, love truthfully by believing God's word, love compassionately by imitating Jesus, love redemptively by sharing the gospel, and love patiently by remembering God's sovereignty.

Personal Application

Of the five practices in this study, which is the hardest for you to practice? Why?

Do you have a gay friend, co-worker, or neighbor?

If so, how are you intentionally working to obey the biblical command to love them?

If not, what intentional steps can you take this week to demonstrate love to someone who is gay?