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COMMUNITY **DISCUSSION**  
**gr:ups** **GUIDE**

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**SERMON**  
**PASSAGE:**

Mark 12:28-34

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**REVIEW THE**  
**SERMON**

1. Read the prep verse (1 Corinthians 13:1-3) and the sermon's Bible passage to recall the content
2. Briefly review the sermon outline
  - a. Introduction
    - i. Walk in the Spirit
      1. Living it out – the fruit of the Spirit
      2. Galatians 5:16-26
    - ii. We are to be a people marked by love
    - iii. Familiarity breeds contempt
      1. Losing reference and awe of God
      2. Missing out on the weight and wonder of God and His purpose and expectations for us
      3. Losing the true meaning and impact of "love"
        - a. Love Him
        - b. Love others
  - b. Context
    - i. LHB membership statement: "We are a Christian fellowship striving to Love God and Love People"
    - ii. Love is an internal devotion, a conscious decision, a tangible transaction, an external expression of the amazing grace and greatness of God in our lives
  - c. The root of our love (v. 29-30)
    - i. God is commanding total allegiance and devotion to Him
  - d. The fruit of love (v. 31)
    - i. 1 John 4:20-21

- ii. What might this look like for us to love our neighbor?
  1. Give an intentional effort with people
  2. Give time to people
  3. Give room for people



## **DIGGING DEEPER**

### 1. Shema – the Jewish Confession of Faith

Jesus quotes a portion of the Shema, namely Deuteronomy 6:4, in verse 29. The full Shema is a set of three passages in the Torah (i.e., first five books of the Old Testament):

- a. Deuteronomy 6:4-9
- b. Deuteronomy 11:13-29
- c. Numbers 15:37-41

The Shema is recited at least twice a day in Judaism as part of the morning and evening prayers. Parents pray the verses over the children at night and teach their children to memorize the verses. At the time Jesus and the scribe are having their conversation in Mark 12, Jesus' ears would have heard the Shema approximately 22,000 times!

The word "shema" is the transliteration of the Hebrew word for "hear." You see this word in the opening of Deuteronomy 6:4 – "Hear, O Israel." Shema means to hear, listen, heed, or hear and do. In the Hebrew mindset, hearing is not just sound waves vibrating your eardrum and bones in your middle ear. Rather, hearing and doing were the same thing. There is action involved.

Parents practice this same nuance today. Parents expect children to do more than just hear their voice. They expect children to do what was said. That is, shema/hearing is obedience – hear and do. Our Heavenly Father wants us to do the same.

Look at the three components of the Shema below. As you review them, reflect and pay attention to how the Shema points to the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-21).

- a. Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Doctrinally, these six verses teach fidelity to God, the responsibility of parents to transfer wisdom to children, and the admonition to bring teaching and training

into everyday life.<sup>1</sup> Every moment is a teaching moment. We must be intentional in teaching God's truths to the next generation.

Did God mean for man to literally bind His commandments to our foreheads and forearms/hands (i.e., Jewish phylacteries), or did He mean that our thoughts (head) and actions (hands) should be governed by His commandments?

b. Deuteronomy 11:13-29

These verses repeat some of the content of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 but also introduce the important concept of obedience/blessing and disobedience/curse or discipline. If we obey God, it will go well with us. If we disobey God, we will be disciplined. The goal of discipline is reconciliation back to obedience/blessing.

c. Numbers 15:37-41

The blue cord on prayer shawl tassels was intended to be a reminder of the covenant with God. It was a memory device. The tassels would swirl around the edge of the prayer shawl, being a constant reminder with every step that they took, that they were a people set apart for God, and that they were to follow Him and His commands. This is not so odd sounding. Wedding rings, purity rings, WWJD bracelets, cross necklaces, etc. are contemporary memory devices intended to help us remember our biblical covenants.

2. Who is my neighbor?

If you are like me, when pastor Eric began talking about loving our neighbor, Mr. Roger's theme song "Won't You Be My Neighbor"<sup>2</sup> started playing in your head:

It's a beautiful day in this neighborhood,  
A beautiful day for a neighbor.  
Would you be mine?  
Could you be mine?  
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Please won't you be my neighbor?

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<sup>1</sup> C Patrick Jr and M Patrick, in Everyday Parenting, A. Sibley (ed), Seminary Hill Press, 2017.  
<https://seminaryhillpress.com/product/everyday-parenting/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.neighborhoodarchive.com/music/songs/wont\\_you\\_be\\_my\\_neighbor.html](http://www.neighborhoodarchive.com/music/songs/wont_you_be_my_neighbor.html)

The original command to love one's neighbor as oneself is found in Leviticus 19:18. Turn to it and read it.

The Jews of Jesus' day would largely have understood their "neighbor" to be their fellow Israelites. But God has a broader definition in mind. Loving one's neighbor is more than simply loving those who are like us and who can love us in return. We see this in Luke 10.

Luke 10 is a passage where another scribe tests Jesus. Turn to and read Luke 10:25-29.

In the dialogue, the scribe asks Jesus "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus replies with what we know as the parable of the good Samaritan. Turn to and read Luke 10:30-37.

Who was the neighbor? "The one who showed him mercy" (vs. 37).

Hence, our neighbor is anyone in our proximity with whom we can share God's love. "Neighbor" is not tied to where we live, it is tied to wherever we have human interaction – whether that be at work, school, grocery store, church, online, International space station, etc.

Moreover, the parable teaches that we are called not only to love those who are perceived to be similar to us or with whom we are most comfortable, but all whom God places in our path. If we remember that every human is made in the image of God, then we realize that everyone is in fact similar – a sinner in need of a Savior.

It is important to understand what truly loving your neighbor is. We love others by genuinely seeking what is best for them, defined by God's Word. Loving others does not mean I have to agree with everything they say or do, nor does it mean I act in a way to gain their approval.

Loving our neighbors means attending to others' physical and spiritual needs. We love our neighbors when, like the Samaritan, we have compassion for them and help meet their needs as we are able. We love our neighbors best when we share God's truth with them.

Loving our neighbors means we have to be intentional in seeing the world the way God does. May our lives reflect the chorus of Brandon Heath's song "Give Me Your Eyes"<sup>3</sup>:

Give me Your eyes for just one second  
Give me Your eyes so I can see  
Everything that I keep missin'  
Give Your love for humanity

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<sup>3</sup> <https://g.co/kgs/iubjJ>

Give me Your arms for the broken-hearted  
The ones that are far beyond my reach  
Give me Your heart for the ones forgotten  
Give me Your eyes so I can see

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## **PRAYER**

1. Praise God for the report we heard about Beason St. – for provisions and plans.
  2. Pray that God continues to superintend all the construction activities, decisions, meetings with vendors and the City, etc.
  3. Pray that God uses the Beason St. property to help Living Hope Bryan reach our neighbors for Christ.
  4. Pray about how God wants to use you in Beason St. – prayers, sweat equity, financial gifts, in-kind gifts, etc.
  5. Begin to pray for the Good Neighbor evangelism initiative (see your community group leaders about this).
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