

Lenten Small
Group Study Guide
Midtown

The Questions Jesus Asked

IF YOU LOVE ONLY THOSE WHO LOVE YOU,
WHAT REWARD IS THAT?



CONNECT

WEEK 2: MAR 5 - MAR 12

WELCOME (10 MIN)

- Spend the first few minutes visiting and catching up.
- Take attendance. Who's missing?

PRAY (10 MIN)

Prayer of Loving Kindness

This Spiritual discipline moves us from thoughts of self, to those we love, to those we don't love, to all of creation. Sit comfortably with your feet flat on the floor and hands relaxed in your laps. Close your eyes or focus on something.

I'll pause after each line. Allow images and feelings to arise as you listen to each phrase. Notice places that need healing, hope, comfort. Or where you feel joy, or feel a pinch or a challenge. Start by taking two deep breaths.

Dear God, Lord God, Holy God, Loving God:

May I be happy. May I be healthy.
May I be safe. May I live with ease.
(Breathe)

May those I love be happy. May those I love be healthy.
May those I love be safe. May those I love live with ease.
(Breathe)

May those I don't love be happy.
May those I don't love be healthy.
May those I don't love be safe.
May those I don't love live with ease.
(Breathe)

May all creation be happy. May all creation be healthy.
May all creation be safe. May all creation live with ease. Amen.

CULTIVATE

READ THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:46-47

Matthew 5:43-48

You have heard that it was said, You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who harass you, so that you will be acting as children of your Father who is in heaven. He makes the sun rise on both the evil and the good and sends rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous.

If you love only those who love you, what reward do you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing? Don't even the Gentiles do the same?

Therefore, just as your heavenly Father is complete in showing love to everyone, so also you must be complete.

GROUP VALUES: It's important that you agree on the values you want to have in your group, such as openness, authenticity, and confidentiality. Honoring these values together creates a safe and healthy group environment.

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DISCUSS (30 MINUTES)

- Why is this an important question for our world today? Can you think of any people or groups who are living this out well?
- This passage of scripture is challenging, both to hear and live. What questions does it bring up for you? What part of Jesus' words would you like to know more about?
- What are the challenges of moving from the idea of loving your enemies to the lived practices of doing so?
- What habits, patterns, or reactions need to shift in you in order to love those who don't love you?
- Pastor Mindie talked about "creating boundaries, not bad blood." What does that mean to you as you live out this idea of loving others? How might that create space for healing that is different than our typical understanding of reconciliation?

CHANGE THE WORLD

Vacation Bible School (Impact = Kids!)

Learn more and sign up at <https://stlukesumc.com/vbs>

READY, SET, MOVE! Follow Jesus here, there, and everywhere! June 12-16, 2023.

Be a part of the difference-making by joining our VBS Team this year! When you join the team your family gets to attend VBS for free! If you aren't able to help every day, that's perfectly fine! We'll be in touch and can discuss what schedule works best for you.

CLOSE

PRAY (5 MIN)

- Ask for any prayer requests
- Prayer idea: Dear God, Thank you for this group of friends as we share Lent together. May we draw close to each other and close to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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