

Missional Identity_02

Script References

Introduction

Eli: Hey there! Eli and Alexis here to continue this session on missional identity.

Alexis: Today we're talking about the flip-side of the Greatest Commandment- Loving your neighbor as yourself.

Eli: Out of the hundreds of commands in the Scriptures, Jesus said they could all be summed up in two simple lines:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and Love your neighbor as yourself.

Alexis: This is what it's all about - if you can get your loves right, then living out the Great Commission will be the most natural thing in the world to you.

Eli: So today, here's what I want you to remember: You are called to love God by loving your neighbor.

Loving God by Loving Your Neighbor

Alexis: Let's get into it. If you want to dive into the Bible's teachings on love, one of the best places to start is with the writings of John.

If you've ever read his Gospel, you may have noticed he doesn't refer to himself by name - instead, he just calls himself "the disciple Jesus loved."

Eli: This is a guy who was so awestruck by Jesus' love for him that it was like his main personality trait. Now listen to what he wrote in one of his letters. He said-

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God... This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we

love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us...
(1 John 4:7, 10-12)

We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother or sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. (1 John 4:19-21)

Alexis: There are two things I want you to notice in this passage.

First, our love for others is in response to God's love for us, and second, our love for God and God's love for us is embodied and experienced through our loving relationships with other people.

Eli: Pause the video for a few moments and ask yourself-

Do you ever struggle to feel God's loving presence in your life? What do you think of John's teaching that we experience God's love by loving other people? Write down your thoughts.

Loving God and loving your neighbor are two sides of the same coin. You can't have one without the other.

Who Is My Neighbor?

Alexis: For some people, that teaching raises an obvious question: Who is my neighbor? In other words, who am I obligated to love, and - in parentheses - who am I allowed to forget about?

Eli: In Luke's Gospel we see that Jesus was asked this very question by a lawyer, and, in typical Jesus fashion, he replied with a story that turned it on its head.

In Luke 10:30-35, Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan: A Jewish traveler is mugged on the road and left for dead. Two of his fellow Jews, a priest and a Levite, find him on the street, but they pass by him on the other side. Then a Samaritan finds him.

Alexis: Something important to know here is that Samaritans and Jews were ethnic enemies - they were the exact opposite of what people would've considered neighbors.

Eli: So this Samaritan finds this wounded Jewish man, and the text says “**he saw him and took pity on him.**” The Samaritan cleaned and bandaged his wounds, put him on his own donkey, and brought him to an inn where he took care of him. Then, the next day he paid the innkeeper to keep looking after the injured man until he returned, and promised to pay for any extra expenses that came up.

Alexis: After telling this story, Jesus asked the lawyer, “**Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?**”

And the lawyer replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Then Jesus said, “Go and do likewise.” (Luke 10:36-37)

Eli: Don’t miss this. The lawyer wanted Jesus to define who counted as his neighbor, and Jesus’ response was basically: You’re supposed to be the neighbor. To everyone. So be one.

Pause the video right here and read Luke 10:25-37. Can you relate to the lawyer’s impulse to justify himself? How do you live up to Jesus’ standard of what it means to be a neighbor? Write down your thoughts.

Hospitality

Alexis: Like everything with our spiritual formation, being a good neighbor is something we need to practice.

Eli: One practice in particular will train you to become a person who loves your neighbor as yourself. I’m talking about hospitality.

Alexis: Hospitality is about creating safe, open spaces where friends and strangers alike can enter and experience the welcoming spirit of Christ in you.

Eli: Contrary to what you may think, you don’t need a home to practice hospitality. This practice is about welcoming and receiving people the way Christ welcomed and received you.

Alexis: We’ve all experienced rejection - being told, whether in words or actions, that we’re not wanted, we don’t belong.

But can you remember a time when you were so deeply received by someone, that their welcome touched you in your soul?

Eli: This is what we want to practice - this is what we want to be known for. So, here's my challenge to you: Find a way this week to practice hospitality.

Pause the video one last time and consider how might Jesus want you to use your heart and your home to welcome and receive others in his love? In what ways, big or small, is the Lord calling you to show hospitality to the people in your day-to-day life?

Loving God and loving your neighbor - that's the Greatest Commandment. And if you get that right, living on mission will come naturally.

Next time, we're wrapping up this session on missional identity by looking at the Great Commission.

See you then!