

# **“Love is Contagious”**

## **Spread the Love #2**

### **INTRODUCTION**

When were we ever so divided as a nation as we are right now? If you focus on the headlines, you can become overwhelmed and discouraged. But there is Good News; Jesus provides hope in the midst of this “us vs them” world. He offers a way to make the stranger a brother or sister, to turn an enemy into a friend and break down the walls of hostility towards others. How? The answer is love. We want our love to be contagious and spread to everyone we encounter. We want it to be so contagious that it changes the world.

### **Ice Breaker**

Have you ever seen laughter spread in such a way that you just couldn't resist laughing too? Do you remember the cause of the laughter, or only the way it affected you?

### **Key Passage**

*Luke 10:27 NLT - 27 The man answered, "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind." And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

### **STUDY QUESTIONS**

#### **1. The Good Samaritan**

In the Gospel of Luke chapter 10 we find Jesus' encounter with a religious leader questioning how to inherit eternal life. Jesus' response was in two parts- first the law, then the application of that law.

*Luke 10:27-28 NLT - 27 The man answered, "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind." And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 "Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!"*

*What did Jesus say was the correct answer to the man's question "How do I inherit eternal life?"*

In our culture we typically equate love with a feeling. We love our spouse, our pet, our favorite team. But the kind of love God wants us to experience not only changes our feelings, it also changes our mind and our actions.

*Luke 10:29 NLT - 29 The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

In response to the man's question "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan. In it two highly respected Jews; a priest, and a Levite, pass by a man in desperate need. But a Samaritan, who would have been despised by the Jews, stopped, and gave his time, energy, and resources to help this stranger. At the conclusion of the parable Jesus asks, "Which of the three was a neighbor to the man in need?"

*The religious leader knew the answer and so do we – the one who showed mercy was the neighbor to this man. What does Luke 10:29 tell us is the reason for the man's question? Jesus' response addressed not only his question, but also his motive. Jesus didn't define a neighbor by geographic boundaries, or even religious affiliation. What was it that defined being a neighbor? Would the religious leader be a loving his neighbor if his motive for showing mercy to others was to earn eternal life for himself?*

## **2. Fulfilling God's Law**

Our actions should be a reflection of our hearts. But often we fall into the trap of doing the right thing for the wrong reason. Maybe we do it out of obligation, or to make ourselves look good. But loving our *What*

*Romans 13:8-10 NLT - 8 Owe nothing to anyone--except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law. 9 For the commandments say, "You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet." These--and other such commandments--are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law.*

*are some of the things listed in Romans 13 that reveal we don't really love our neighbor as ourselves? Although the first four of the Ten Commandments deal with our relationship to God, the last six speak to our relationship with others.*

*Matthew 5:28 NLT - 28 But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

*Of course, Jesus went beyond the literal definition of these commandments in Matthew 5:28. It really isn't merely a matter of doing the right thing or not doing the wrong things, what does Matthew 5:28 tell us God is looking at? Before you make that list of good deeds you are going to do, how can you position yourself to be more aligned with the heart of God?*

### **3. Loving through Hospitality**

When your heart is full of God's love and you feel compelled to spread that love to others, where do you start? We don't have to look far for our example. Immediately after sharing the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus and his disciples continued their journey toward Jerusalem, and along the way they were welcomed into the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

*Luke 10:38 NLT - 38 As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.*

*When we hear this story, we often miss the fact that Martha practiced hospitality. She is the one who met the needs of Jesus and his disciples by opening her home and inviting them in.*

*Our homes and our tables can become a place to break down barriers. It can be as simple as inviting friends in for a meal.*

*Luke 5:29-32 NLT - 29 Later, Levi held a banquet in his home with Jesus as the guest of honor. Many of Levi's fellow tax collectors and other guests also ate with them. 30 But the Pharisees and their teachers of religious law complained bitterly to Jesus' disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with such scum?" 31 Jesus answered them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor--sick people do. 32 I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent."*

*In Luke 5 we see Levi opening his home and sharing a meal. Who were his guests? How did Levi's hospitality pave the way to break down barriers and offer healing to them?*

All of us know people who need Jesus' healing touch. When we invite them to our table or into our home, we are inviting them into Jesus's presence where His love can break down barriers and bring healing.

*Ask God to put someone on your heart, and in your path, so that you can spread His love through hospitality.*

## **WRAP-UP**

After describing the selfless act of the Samaritan to the man in need Jesus invites us to "Go and do likewise." Our neighbors are not limited by their geographic proximity nor their similarity to us. We are to extend God's love to everyone. One way to do that is through opening your home and your table to those around you. When you practice hospitality, you invite others to experience God's love and healing in their lives.

## **MEMORY VERSE**

*Owe nothing to anyone--except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law.*  
- Romans 13:8 NLT

## **PRAYER (20 MIN)**

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

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*Challenge- Don't get caught in the trap of the religious leader, doing good things for the wrong reasons. Begin quietly in God's presence receiving His love and letting that change your heart. Then ask God to put someone in your path so you can spread that love to them.*