

Calvary Chapel  of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY BASKETBALL DEVOTIONS

4-9 year olds

Week 7

Love Your Neighbor

Love Your Neighbor

The objective is the goal or main teaching point of this week's study. If you convey one thing to your players, make it this.

Read this passage aloud to the kids, as it will be the focus of this week's study. Each week's memory verse will be in bold.

Here is where we will discuss today's passage with the players. This can be read off the page or summarized and explained in the coach's own words.

Objective To show the players that if we want to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, we need to love others as we love ourselves.

Scripture Passage:

"Jesus answered, "The most important is, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." **The second is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.**"

Mark 12:29-31 (Memory Verse, Mark 12:31, in **bold**)

In the Word

All season, we have been looking at what Jesus said was the most important thing a person can do. Do you remember what that is? As we see in Mark 12:29-31, after telling us that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, Jesus moves on to the next-most important thing, and that is loving your neighbor as yourself. If we want to love God the way we should, that means we must treat others with love.

First of all, it is important to know what the Bible means when it says "neighbor." Jesus isn't just talking about the people who live on your street. Your neighbor refers to the people around you, the people you see and talk to every day. Your friends, classmates, teammates, and even family members can be your neighbors. When Jesus says to love our neighbors, He really means that we should love everybody.

The Bible tells us many times to love others. What makes Mark 12:31 different is that Jesus said to love our neighbor the way we love ourselves. That's a high standard! Think about the things you are willing to do for yourself. If you are hungry or thirsty, you will go to the kitchen to get a snack or drink. If you have money, you spend it on things that you like. When there is a line for something, you make sure that you are first. We are always looking out for the things we want. When Jesus asks us to love others as we love ourselves, He is telling us to put that same amount of effort into loving the people around us.

In the Word (Continued)

We all can love others when it's easy. When there are two snacks or two toys, you are probably more than willing to share. But if there is only one, will you let someone else have it? Are you willing to give up the things you want or need for the sake of others? That's what loving your neighbor as yourself is all about. When it's difficult to love others, that's when our love is really put to the test. Will we be able to show people the love that Jesus showed us?

While Jesus said that the two greatest commandments are to love God and love others, the truth is that the two are connected. We can't love our neighbor unless we first love the Lord, and we aren't truly loving the Lord unless we are loving our neighbor as ourselves. If we want to live lives that please the Lord, we need to obey these commands by loving God and loving the people around us.

"On the Court" gives some in-game situations where today's lesson can be applied, while "Off the Court" gives examples from everyday life. Encourage them to do the things you listed during the game today.

On the Court

- Don't play selfishly and hog the ball. Put the wants and needs of your teammates above your own, and give everyone a chance to compete.
- Speak to the refs the way you want them to speak to you: with kindness and respect.
- Your opponents are your brothers and sisters in Christ. Even though you are competing against one another, you still need to show love and kindness.

Off the Court

- Put others before yourself. If you and someone else want the same thing, let them have it.
- Help someone who needs it, such as helping an elderly neighbor with their yard.
- You may have a friend or family member who is going through a tough time right now. Pray for them and look for ways to show them love or do something kind for them.

These are some final notes/goals to accomplish this week. These are not meant to be read, but are instructions for the coach.

The Game Plan

1. Review last week's memory verse, Colossians 3:23, "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men." Give a ticket to anyone who can recite it.
2. Learn and memorize Mark 12:31 with your team. Encourage them to practice the verse over the week.
3. Put an emphasis today on the way you treat other people. Note how your team acts towards one another, their coaches, their opponents, the referees, and the spectators.