



# HARD LOVE

## LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.

It's a simple phrase. We say it a lot. We've even given it a fancy name: *The Golden Rule*. But what does "loving your neighbor as yourself" actually mean?

Loving your neighbor the way Jesus intended means actually, genuinely caring. It means showing up in uncomfortable places. It means taking extra time and effort for people (even difficult people.) It means loving even if we disagree with political views or life choices. It means *enjoying people*.

But loving your neighbor as yourself also means taking time to care for yourself. It means taking time to Sabbath and restore. It means taking care of your body, heart, and finances now so you have the capacity to support, care, and give generously when the time comes.

It's not okay to neglect ourselves for the sake of others. But it's also not okay to neglect others for the sake of ourselves.

Ultimately, we can love ourselves because we know Christ loves us! And in the confidence and strength found in His love, we can love others because we know He loves them too.

# IN THE BIBLE.

## **Mark 12:28-31**

And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" 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: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

## **Hebrews 13:-3**

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

## **Romans 5:6-8**

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

## **John 13:35**

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

# QUESTIONS.

*Feel free to discuss any or all of these questions.*

- 1.) Do you more often tend to neglect others for the sake of yourself or vice versa?
- 2.) How can you begin to be a Hebrews 13 person?
- 3.) What are some ways you can begin loving yourself?
- 4.) What sticks out to you in Romans 5?
- 5.) In what ways can we pray for each other to start living out the Golden Rule more authentically?

## TAKE TEN:

- How did you see God work in your life this week?
- What has God been teaching you in His Word?
- What kind of conversations are you having with your pre-Christian friends?
- What good can you do around here? (in your life/circumstance)
- How can we help you in prayer and what do you want us to ask you about next week?

## **Whenever you read the Bible, ask yourself these three questions:**

1. What does this tell you about God?
2. What does this tell you about yourself and the world?
3. How is this going to change who you are and how you live?