



NG Study Guide: “Welcome to Calvary Nexus” Vision Sunday 2018 [Matt. 22:37-39] [1.7.18]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. **Leader note:** *Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

The Study

Thesis:

I appreciate when people come up to me and say, “I love your church.” What I enjoy even more is when someone says, “I love *our* church.” That shift of pronoun from “your” to “our” often reflects that someone feels that they are part of the community. Community is all about relationships. And we understand that it can be challenging to forge meaningful relationships in a new community of faith. Our pastors and leaders are available to encourage, equip, and lead you to navigate the challenges to help you become part of our community. We want you to understand what the Calvary Nexus Community is all about, and ideally align our church community on a common mission and vision.

Jesus’ gospel:

Developing a meaningful relationship with Jesus begins by responding to the gospel or good news. First, the bad news, we have all sinned against God and fallen short of His standard of perfect holiness and righteousness [Rom.3:23]. We deserve God’s judgment [Rom. 6:23]. The good news is that God loves you so much that even while we were in rebellion against God, Christ came and gave Himself as a perfect sacrifice for our sins [Rom. 5:8-10]. You can be forgiven of your sin and receive spiritual life by choosing to follow Jesus [Rom. 10:9-13].

Once you begin a relationship with Jesus you want to create a meaningful relationship with a community of faith to help you grow in your relationship with Christ [Ac.2:42-47].

Our Mission: We are a movement of Jesus’ followers devoted to loving God and our neighbors.

We respond to the gospel, and God’s incredible love for us, by loving Him in return. God created us for relationship with Him and others. Jesus declared that this is the essence of all of God’s desire for man, to

love God supremely, and to prove our love for God by loving our neighbors as we love ourselves [Matt. 22:37-39]. Therefore, we feel that this mission is consistent with God's heart, and God's desire for our local church. We want this to be the essential DNA of Calvary Nexus for years and decades to come, should the Lord delay His return. We want to be known as followers of Jesus devoted to loving God and our neighbors.

Our Core Values:

We are followers of Jesus: He is our King. We desire to submit every realm of our life: personal, marriage, family, career, calling and community to His authority.

We love the Bible: We are committed to learning and living God's word. We teach the Bible, not merely from the Bible, so that we are encouraged to learn the Bible in context. We study verse by verse, chapter by chapter through books of the Bible. We encourage personal Bible reading as a spiritual discipline, and small-group Bible learning to become Jesus' disciples.

We create margin for what matter most: Life is too complicated. We purposefully make space in our lives so that we can be with God, our families, and our neighbors.

We come together and go together: Every weekend we gather to glorify God and then scatter to saturate our community through Christ-centered Neighborhood Groups [NG]. Large gatherings to worship God and small groups are a biblical prescription for Christ's disciples [Ac.2:42-47].

Our Vision: God has called us to saturate our community with Christ-centered Neighborhood Groups where we learn to fulfill the Great Commandments to love God and love our neighbors.

Small groups are a great way to develop meaningful relationships with Christ and others. Loving God and neighbors are values, not a program. Many of our groups use a sermon-based study guide that encourage the group to dig deeper and engage in active learning about the portion of Scripture that we studied on Sunday morning. This helps to align the whole church.

There are sections in the study guide that help remind and encourage us to love neighbors within our group, and those outside the group where we live, work, study, and play. There are currently about 50 groups. Some are based on affinity, or common life stage or interests, and some gather based on geographic proximity, and many are a hybrid of affinity and geographic proximity. It is easy to join a group or lead a group. You can find information on the Neighborhood Group tab on our Calvary Nexus site or contact the church office and we'll be happy to assist. We love to see new groups start and provide training and support to assist leaders and their groups to grow in love for God and neighbors.

Our Ministries:

Everyone in our community shares in the blessings and responsibility to serve God by serving others. This is a great way to grow in your relationship with God and develop relationships with others. We hope that each of us would serve one or more Sundays a month. It is easy to get involved. On the ministries page on our site there is a list of various ministries at the church and contact information.

What's your next step?

The first and most important step is to respond to the gospel, and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. If you have received Jesus, and have decided that Calvary Nexus is your church community, then we'd like to encourage you to take your next step to grow in your relationships with Jesus and others:

Belong: participate in a Neighborhood Group [NG]

Become: prepare to lead a NG

Benefit others: by serving in a ministry of the church

Befriend: build relationships, and share Christ's love with neighbors where you live work study, play, and worship.

Discussion Qs

Q1 How does Calvary Nexus' mission resonate with you? What do you like about it?

Q2 Do the Calvary Nexus' core values resonate with you? What do you agree or disagree with as a value? Where do these values align with your life in practice?

Q3 What are some of the blessings that you've discovered through participating in an NG?

Q4 What are some of the ways that you've been transformed through serving in a ministry of Calvary Nexus? How would you like to serve in the coming year?

“Digging Deeper” (optional or alternative study)

In Matt. 22:35-40, Jesus was asked to identify the greatest commandment. Jesus responds by quoting Deut. 6:5, and the call to love God with all that we are is the supreme commandment. Jesus then quoted Lev.19:18 and declared this was the second greatest commandment and it was like the first. Why do you think that Jesus declared that loving our neighbors like ourselves was so vital? Why do these two commandments reflect the essence of all God spoke through the law of Moses and the prophets? How do these two commands compare with the summary of the law described in the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17?

Love your neighbor *outside* the group better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors where they live, work, study, or play this past week?
2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor outside the group?
3. Here is a neighboring idea(s) for us to consider for the week(s) ahead:

Many are starting a new school semester, or returning to work following the holidays. Purpose to share a meal, a cup, and/or conversation with neighbors where you study or work this week or next.

Love your neighbor *inside* the group better:

1. Are there some needs in our group that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor within the group?
2. What might we do about that need to help?

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

- 1. Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
- 2. Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.
- 3. The "Digging Deeper" section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities.** As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the "Digging Deeper" section, include part of that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.
- 4. Every time you meet consider asking:**
 - a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.