



## NG Study Guide: Matt. 22:37-39 “Calvary Nexus Vision” [1.6.19]

### 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. Today, we’ll discover how to build community in Christ that transforms lives and the community where we live, and beyond as we consider Calvary Nexus’ mission, values and vision.

#### 1. 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 the essence of God’s desire for man is, to love God supremely, and to prove your love for God by loving your neighbors as you love yourself [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.

#### 2. Our Core Values:

The core values of any culture or community should, and will, influence how people think and live. Thus, will you align your life with these four core values?

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

**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 grow as Jesus’ disciples. *In 2019, we plan to study: Galatians, James, and Romans.*

**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:** 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 to grow in Christ [Ac. 2:42-47].

#### 3. Our Long-term Vision and Values:

**We seek to saturate our community with Christ-centered Neighborhood Groups [NG] where people learn to love God and neighbors better.**

Small groups are a great way to develop meaningful relationships with Christ and others. We learn better in circles than in rows. Active participatory learning is better than passive. Loving God and neighbors are values, not a program. Most 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, play, and worship. 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 complete a connect card 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.

#### **4. 2019 Love Our Neighbor Community Impact:**

**a. Every 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month, we select a particular financial need from our church community, or the community around us, and share resources to love our neighbors. Each month we give \$5,000, in addition to our existing missions, outreach and benevolence budgets.**

#### **b. Adopt an elementary school: Pleasant Valley School of Engineering and Arts [PVSEA]**

71% of the students at PVSEA receive lunch subsidies, and 34% are English learners. There is a need in our community and an opportunity to show God's love to our neighbors. We hope to provide financial assistance for classroom supplies, and for families that have financial needs such as school supplies, back-to-school clothes, or perhaps a utility bill. Starting in January, 2019 we will begin to receive "request for assistance" forms from students' parents, and will make them available at the Welcome Center for Neighborhood Groups [NG] and individuals to adopt.

#### **c. Service Projects:**

**PVSEA School Service Project [Summer]:** We hope to coordinate a large-scale campus beautification project that mobilizes many volunteers to serve on the campus of the school we adopt.

**Kids Kolor Run [Fall]:** The kids will be running to raise funds for the PVSEA. Students and families at PVSEA will be invited to participate. After the run, the gospel will be presented to all in attendance, and a BBQ lunch will be served for all to enjoy.

**Christmas [Nov. – Dec.]:** We hope to identify needs for Christmas gifts, and perhaps other needs that we can support (e.g. Winter coats). During November and early December, individuals and NG will have the opportunity to adopt a need. We will design a Christmas Card to provide to those we serve (along with a Christmas Eve invite), and possibly provide a Bible as a gift too.

#### **5. Our Ministries:**

Everyone in the Nexus community shares 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, or complete a connect and we'll be happy to assist you.

#### **What's your next step(s)?**

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 love for God and love for neighbors.

**1. Belong:** commit to a local community of faith, and commit to worship and grow as part of a community of faith, and in a NG.

**2. Become:** Commit to grow as a follower of Jesus and consider preparing to lead a NG.

**3. Benefit others:** by serving in a ministry of the church.

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

Complete a connect card and one of our pastors or leaders will follow-up to assist you, or visit [calvarynexus.org](http://calvarynexus.org)

**Communion: Jesus' gospel:** Developing a meaningful relationship with God 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 and be His disciple [Rom. 10:9-13]. Our desire to love God supremely and love our neighbors is simply a reasonable response to God's love for us. Communion is a reminder of our community with Christ...

### **Study Guide Qs**

***Q1 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)**

**1. 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 declare 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:

**Talk to a neighbor about any reflections upon the last year, and any hopes for the coming year; and share your thoughts with them.**

**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.