

Developing Intentional Growth

Great Commandment: Our Passion

1. Jesus modeled how to be a loving servant. What are some things that we can do today that would communicate the same passion?
2. According to verse 35, when someone looks at us, what should they see?
Instead, what do we often *want* them to see about our Christianity?
3. How does loving one another impact those who are not part of the church?
4. Review the eight ways that a local church can display love:
 - a. Connecting — *Principle of 70*
 - b. Contact — *Principle of 17*
 - c. Closeness — *Open and Closed*
 - d. Continuity — *Principle of Time*
 - e. Comprehension — *Principle of Sequence*
 - f. Correlation — *Principle of Segmentation*
5. Which of the principles above would be best heeded by the examples below?

Case Studies

Situation #1

Rhineland Church was built on its expository preaching ministry. Since it is close to a seminary, it decided to embellish this role by hiring seminary professors to teach adult Sunday School. As a result, this 1800-person church, with 1200 adults, developed adult classes of 80 to 150 in size collected around "super teachers." There are about 12 small groups in this church.

Situation #2

St. Judas (not Iscariot) Church was running 700 (450 adults) in two worship services and ran out of Christian education space. They decided to fix the space problem by forming 10 small groups related to each worship service (with some overlap), and disbanded the adult Sunday School classes. Each small group was to run for 13 weeks using electives and then start over with new people and a new topic.

Situation #3

Little Hope Church prides itself on its love and warmth. Its 83 attendees (61 adults) have been faithfully attending (many for over 30 years) without significant change in church attendance. One of the practices of this church in their worship service is to have everyone give those next to them a "holy hug." They also share very personal prayer requests in the worship service and end the service singing the Doxology, which (of course) everyone knows, so the words aren't even published.

Theme: The Great Commandment

Monday

Jesus gave His disciples a “new” commandment in John 13:34. According to John 15:12-13, why was this new commandment “deeper” than the Old Testament command to “love your neighbor as yourself”? How did Jesus love His friends and how does He want us to love others?

Tuesday

What is your most frequent expression of love toward others? What do you find most difficult about loving others?

Wednesday

Love is not a feeling, but an action. How might God want you to set aside your feelings today and act out love in a more obvious way toward those around you?

Thursday

Look at John 13:1-17. How did Jesus model love for His disciples? What would be a modern-day expression of what Jesus did?

Friday

1 John 3:16-19 further clarifies genuine “new commandment” love. What are some characteristics of this love? How can we tell, from these verses, when we’re not acting in love?

Saturday

“Love really does make a difference. LORD, help me to impact my world by small day-to-day demonstrations of love *and* in the more obvious life-changing decisions to love others as You love me. Thank You for this fresh revelation of love in the New Testament.”
