

ADDRESS THE MESS

PART 4: Move Toward the Mess

INTRODUCTION

Jesus told us to love our neighbors as ourselves. But that's easier said than done. Which people qualify as neighbors . . . and which don't? How far does our responsibility to others extend? If we make the effort to move toward the messes in other people's lives, how inconvenient is too inconvenient? How unsafe is too unsafe? How dangerous is too dangerous? What are the limits to loving others as we love ourselves?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who are the people in your life that you would help out of a mess no matter what? What is it about those relationships that motivates you to move past any discomfort to offer help?
2. Talk about a time when someone moved toward your mess. How has that experience shaped you?
3. Read Luke 10:25–37. Which person or group of people are you tempted to disqualify from “neighbor” status? What makes you hesitant to move toward that person's or group's mess?
4. Thinking about that passage in Luke 10, talk about a time when you passed by someone else's mess. What do you wish you had done differently?
5. *“Move toward a mess, but not every mess. If you try to move toward every mess, you'll make a bigger mess.”* What are some ways you decide which messes to move toward?
6. Is there a mess in someone else's life that you need to move toward? What can you do over the next week, month, or even year to begin to treat that mess as an opportunity instead of an inconvenience? How can this group support you?

MOVING FORWARD

When Jesus told us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves, he had something radical in mind. He was challenging us to see others' messes as opportunities, not inconveniences. He was calling us to put others ahead of ourselves just as he put us ahead of himself.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 22:37–40