

WEEK 5 - Generosity: Neighborhood Economics

Canopy Guide // Fall Focus 2026

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Use the questions below to kickstart a community building, all-play conversation that connects to our weekly topic. If your group meets for dinner, these might be great questions to share around a table.

- What's your favorite place you ever lived, and what made that so special?
- Share a story about a next-door neighbor.

STUDY GUIDE

Perhaps the most famous of Jesus' parables, among Christians and non-Christians alike, is the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus tells the story in the context of a conversation about loving God and loving our neighbor as ourselves. The story itself is sparked by a question: "And who is my neighbor?"

We often talk about the Good Samaritan as a story about showing unconditional love to strangers. But there is something deeper happening. The Samaritan doesn't simply notice a stranger in need and offer a moment of kindness. He crosses a social boundary, moves toward someone vulnerable, sacrifices his own time and resources, and takes responsibility for his care. His love doesn't remain distant or anonymous. His love creates a relationship where none existed before. He makes a neighbor out of a stranger.

This kind of love is what we see in the character of Jesus. The love we see here is an overflow of God's love, and it should come as no surprise that this deeper, truer love builds bridges and forms community. The parable is not watering down the meaning of "neighbor" – it calls us to expand who we are in community with. We don't simply love our neighbors because they are already part of our community. We love in ways that create and expand community.

As you read the parable of the Good Samaritan, keep this in mind and consider the type of love shown by the Samaritan. Is it simply unconditional compassion toward a stranger, or is something deeper happening? Perhaps the point is not only to show compassion to those in need but also to let love turn a stranger into a neighbor.

You'll also read the story of Peter raising Tabitha, also called Dorcas. We don't know much about her, but what we do know is significant: she was a disciple, "devoted to good works and acts of charity," she made clothing for people in need, and she was deeply loved by the community around her. When she died, the people she had served gathered around her and sent for Peter. Tabitha's generosity had done more than meet practical needs. It had woven people together. Her acts of love had helped form a community that felt her absence deeply.

This raises an important question for us: What kind of community is our generosity creating?

What if our neighborhoods actually became communities rather than simply collections of houses? What if the people living around us knew one another well enough to notice needs, share resources, ask for help, and offer what they have?

It might look surprisingly ordinary. One person rakes the leaves for everyone on the cul-de-sac. Someone bakes too many cookies and shares them with the neighbors. One family watches another family's kids for a date night, while that family later returns the favor. Someone who knows how to fix a car helps a neighbor who doesn't. Someone has extra garden produce and gives it away. Someone notices that an older neighbor needs help with a project and simply shows up.

This kind of neighborhood economy can be messy and inconvenient. It is often easier to outsource our needs, protect our independence, and keep our relationships neatly within the boundaries we choose. But the ordinary needs of everyday life can become opportunities for relational love. Our neighborhoods are already full of opportunities to move toward one another.

This week, we encourage you to dream as a group of how you can start to make your local neighborhood a community and build relational bridges where you already are.

Scripture to Read:

- Luke 10:25-37
- Acts 9:36-42

Discussion Questions: *(feel free to pick & choose the questions your group wants to tackle together)*

- Do you find your neighborhood to be a community? How can you start to build connections and relationships within your neighborhood?
- How has your generosity started relationships in the past? How could it in the future?
- How can our group bless those geographically and immediately around us?

PRAYER

- Pray that God would bring opportunities to meet and build relationships with our

neighbors and bless those we live near.

EXTRA RESOURCES/ARTICLES/RESEARCH

- Discussion of Tabitha: <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/tabitha-in-the-bible/>
- Discussion of the Good Samaritan Parable: <https://undeceptions.com/history/the-five-minute-jesus-the-radical-good-samaritan/>
- If you want to read more about the idea of “the neighborhood economy,” check out this book: *Sex & Love in the Home: A Theology of the Household* by David Matzko McCarthy. There is a chapter about this more “mutual” vs “unconditional” understanding of the Parable of the Good Samaritan.
- *The Gospel Comes With a House Key* by Rosaria Butterfield