

# CITY CHURCH-EASTSIDE WEEKLY WORSHIP GUIDE

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Damon Winter  
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## Move: Serve

*“And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him”...*

The gospel accounts show that the religious leaders consistently tried to trap Jesus in his words, but to no avail. In Matthew 22:34-40 Jesus again finds himself the object of attack, the Pharisees and Sadducees uncharacteristically joining forces against their common enemy. For these leaders faith in God was a matter of “jot’s & tittles”, corporate ladders, and power plays. Perhaps this time they could catch this leader who always seemed evasive and thus prove him to be one of the many pretender messiahs. Yet in the end they were caught in their own trap as they asked Jesus to select which of the great commandments was the greatest. Which one would he pick, they wondered? They expected his answer to form the proper trapping, but in replying “love God and love others” Jesus left them stunned. With careful elegance and orthodox articulation, Jesus demonstrated that our highest affection must be for God and alongside that must

be love for people. Stated simply Jesus taught that love for people must be a preeminent concern along with love for God and yet this love for others must flow from a love for God. Outlining this answer, Jesus is not describing a religious work ethic. Instead, Jesus is describing what it means to be in personal relationship to God and the impact this will have on our other personal relationships. Jesus desires that we become enraptured by the love of God wholly devoting ourselves to him. But amidst the broken ruins of our soul this is a difficult endeavor. The only way this becomes possible in our life is by realizing the infinite, unconditional, and majestic love that God has for us in Christ. On the cross Christ experienced separation from God in order that we might forever experience a blessed trinitarian union with Him. And it’s here that we come to understand the power behind loving others. We can love like no one else when we are loved like no one else. Apprehending the love, adoration, approval, (et al) that we have

in Christ we do not have to use service to others to acquire such things. Without the love of God in Christ, we commonly love to get credit, love ourselves, self-glory, and power. In this way, we truly don’t love others because we’re only serving ourselves! We are a broken and sinful people, yet because of the obedience of the Son we are graciously loved by Christ and this alone equips us to selflessly love others. May our hearts be filled with this kind of love! How does this change the game? Significantly. First, we realize as Christians that we are thoroughly equipped to be God’s emissaries in our daily life. As we experience the love of God and thereby enjoy loving others, we participate in kingdom work, making his invisible kingdom visible here on earth as it is in heaven. This is good news for the city! The city can often feel like an enclave for the brokenhearted and the epicenter for exploitation. Believing the gospel, day in and day out, we have the chance to change this landscape. May God bless us to do just that in the week

# Sermon Application

The questions and thoughts below can be used for further reflection this week. Seek to use a journal or discuss with a friend. Most of all use this to consider how the gospel of Christ can be transforming. Enjoy!

## Application Questions: Matthew 22:34-40 **Vision Focal Point: Reflecting on Peace**

1. Serving others has been a consistent feature of rural life, but not so consistent within industrialized urban cores. Why do you believe we've seen a resurgence in "loving thy neighbor" here in the city?
2. Consider your own story. Have you had a consistent motive for serving others in your life and how did this motive shape your experience in serving others? Share a practical illustration of your answer.
3. Read the Scripture text above. What was the aim of the Sadducees? Why did Jesus answer the way he did and what does that mean for us?
4. Tom, an Eastside resident, left the church in his twenties due to burn out. He grew weary of the Christian call to love God and love others because it always seemed like an overwhelming endeavor. What are some features of the gospel that would breath new life into Tom's soul?
5. What is so unique about Christianity's approach to loving others? How does the love that God has for us in Christ impact our ability to love others?
6. There are a number of reasons outside the gospel why Christians & Non-Christians attempt to love others. Discuss some of those reasons and their resultant weakness.
7. At the end of the sermon a quote from N.T. Wright was read that highlights the importance of our daily work for the kingdom. How has this Scripture text been transformative in your life this week?

Centered on the gospel, experiencing the love of God...ok what next? When it comes to serving others where to do we begin? Here at City Church we want to make this easy for you and thus mention a few practical opportunities.

- **Monthly Service:** This takes place in our community groups. Once a month our groups link arms with community partners to change the landscape of our neighborhoods. Check out a community group if you haven't already!
- **Dignity 2010:** You've heard the announcements. Now come out to City Church the weekend of Feb 4th-6th and bring friends. The weekend's events will raise awareness about the atrocities of sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Not only that but you'll have the opportunity on Saturday morning to learn about what you can do here locally to fight this dark industry.
- **Winter Church-Wide Service Project:** More details to come on this, but mark your calendar for February 20th. We'll be putting on the work gloves and picking up rakes to serve homeless men who are getting a new lease on life at Clifton Sanctuary Men's Ministry. Not big on working with your hands? Check out opportunities to serve other families in the church by providing child-care that day at City Church.
- **The Spirit & Service:** Each week spend some time in prayer asking God to show you ways in which you can serve those around you. Often we are so busy moving from here to there that we miss out on the work of God right in front of us. God intends for our life to be an amazing kingdom venture.

"City Church—Eastside seeks to embody and articulate the historic Christian faith, bringing about spiritual, social and cultural renewal on Atlanta's urban eastside and, by extension, the world."

*Vision Statement of City Church-Eastside*

