

## **I Belong to Something Loving**

### **Questions for Covenant Groups Week of August 20-26**

Hosts – This is the fifth sermon in the I Belong series.

**Ask,** Can anyone help me out with a review of where we have been in this series? Give participants time to think back through and reflect on a main point that they may remember from each sermon topic. (Just a reminder here are the main themes from the series – Bigger, Safe, Ancient, Growing)

**Say,** This week, Michael spoke about I Belong to Something Loving  
(Assign these passages to be read throughout the group time. It is always a good idea to read these in your preparation time as well. Mark 12:30-31; Luke 6:32-36; John 13:34-35; Ephesians 5:25-30)

Ask someone to read this Mark 12:30-31

*“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

Michael’s first point was **Loving of God** -

**Say,** While this may seem to be a no brainer, it is foundational in our being a surrendered, obedient follower of Christ.

**Say,** We at times find ourselves chasing after things that are not God-focused. Things like loving idols, chasing trends, celebrating and preferring sameness rather than diversity. (Allow participants to reflect on things they may have chased other than God.)

**Ask,** How have you found your way back to surrender and obedience to God? (Allow some time for participants to reflect on ways that God has drawn them back to Himself. Some may mention certain people who have held them accountable; a Bible study that God has used; possible times of prayer and Bible study; a difficult circumstance that God has brought them or is bringing them through.)

**Say,** The second point is Loving of neighbors, enemies and one another - this category is everyone other than God.

**Ask,** Who are your neighbors? - those who are not believers in Christ (people not like us) (those of other belief systems)

**Ask,** Who are your enemies? and before the answer, have Luke 6:32-36 read in the group.

*“If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”*

**Say,** Christ says that others will know that we are His disciples when we have love for one another. Read John 13:34-35.

*“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

**Say,** The third point is actually a question - Loving of self? - When we don't like ourselves we try to hide those things we don't do well, work harder to change ourselves or medicate.

**Say,** The idea of Self-esteem is really a sinful elevation of self. The world says there are two ways to achieve proper self-esteem - 1. lower one's standard /expectations, or 2. achieve more. Self-esteem is not biblical. Scripture says that other-mindedness (or selflessness) is our calling rather than selfishness. Read Philippians 2:3 - *Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.*

**Say**, Feeding self-love results in one of two things: Anxiety and depression

Briefly explain this - Anxiety – when self-love tells me I have to achieve more. Depression – when self-love tells me I will never be enough.

**Ask**, What insights do you have regarding Michael’s point about anxiety and depression? Allow time for participants to respond.

Say, The final point is Loving of the church.

Have someone read Ephesians 5:25-30 (Remember that most times this passage is read about the husband loving his wife and it is but it is also a beautiful word picture for the church)

*“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.”*

Ephesians 5:25-30

If you have time, lead the group through this time of reflection. You may just want to read these, allow participants to reflect, and then move to the next one. They do not have to answer out loud.

Say, As believers, it would be crazy to think that we would not love the church and yet deceive ourselves in believing we were in love with Christ.

Do you love the church with words of affirmation?

Do you love the church with quality time?

Do you love the church with acts of service?

Do you love the church by receiving/giving gifts?

Do you love the church through physical touch? (Serving and praying for others who need physical needs met and even physical healing)

Close the time in prayer.