



# SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 1 November 5, 2023

“The Bridge Between Our Differences”



## OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for Jesus and his example of how to leverage ourselves for the benefit of others. And, Father, you have called us all to serve you, but too often we put our own needs ahead of the needs of others. So during our “Be Rich” campaign please stir our hearts and make it clear where we should serve. We pray this in the powerful and matchless name of Jesus. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

### Matthew 5:46-48 (NIV)

*<sup>46</sup>If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? <sup>47</sup>And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? <sup>48</sup>Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

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### INTRODUCTION

It's not hard to see how divided our nation is in politics, within families, and even in the church. If we want to fix our polarized nation, Christians need to set the example. But many Christians seem to find an exception to Jesus' command to love one another when it comes to people we don't agree with. We are not commanded to *agree with others* we are called to *love one another*.

Love is the bridge between our differences. Jesus tells us to let our light shine in our world. And if we can love people who are not like us, our light will shine even brighter. During “Be Rich,” our month-long generosity campaign, we remind our communities that everybody matters to God. So, we are asking everyone to serve one hour during the month of November. Where will you serve this month?

### QUESTIONS

1. Growing up, how was it modeled to you to treat people who believed differently than you politically and socially?
2. If someone reviewed your social media posts, what is the first word they would use to describe you? Is it one of these?  
Curious • Funny • Opinionated • Loving • Social  
What makes you say that? Do you wish it was a different word?
3. Do you see the tension created by disagreements on political and social issues more as an advantage or as a problem? Somewhere in the middle?
4. What can you do to take a step toward people who don't have the same perspective as you? Is there something you should stop doing? If so, what?
5. Read Matthew 5:46-48 (on page 1) where Jesus gives guidance on how to treat those who are different. What stands out to you? In verse 48, how would you define the word “perfect” in this context?

### FINAL APPLICATION

This week, serve one hour somewhere in your community or in the church.