

# As Yourself

## Week 1 • Wake Up: The Gospel's Missing Half

Aug 19, 2026 • Mark 12:28–34 • Dr. Geoffrey D. Lentz

Print reading: Preface vii–x • Introduction 1–8 • Chapter One 9–21

Tonight's rhythm: Opening prayer & Scripture 5 min • Teaching 30 min • Table time 20 min • Practice & closing 5 min

### Teaching Block 1 • The Words We Hurry Past (10 min)

Read Mark 12:28–34 slowly. Jesus names love of God and love of neighbor, then places the self inside the comparison: “as yourself.” The phrase does not create a third commandment or make the self the center. It recognizes that neighbor-love always passes through a real person—with a body, history, desires, wounds, limits, and gifts. The question is not simply whether we love ourselves, but which self we love and what good we seek for it. (pp. 11–12)

Jesus' image of the eye and the log shows why this matters. Fear, shame, pride, resentment, and the hunger for approval shape what we notice in another person. Honest self-examination can clear our vision for love. (pp. 12–15)

*“The self is not the center of the commandment. But the self is inside it.” p. 11*

### Table Time 1 • 5 min

*Choose one question. Make room for each voice; anyone may pass.*

**Why do you think the church has taught neighbor-love more confidently than truthful love of self?**

**When did the phrase “self-love” begin to sound suspicious to you?**

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### Teaching Block 2 • What Holy Self-Love Is—and Is Not (10 min)

Christian suspicion of self-love often comes from worthy concerns: we do not want narcissism, indulgence, or self-justification. But holy self-love is not self-esteem alone, and it does not ask us to invent ourselves. It is the truthful reception of the creature God has made and the desire for that creature's genuine good in God.

(Introduction, pp. 3–7)

- **Holy self-love is not narcissism.** Narcissism makes the self the center; holy self-love receives the self as a creature who belongs to God and lives among neighbors.
- **Self-denial is not self-erasure.** Jesus confronts the false center—the anxious, grasping self—not the goodness of creaturely existence. (pp. 15–18)
- **Self-care is not selfishness.** Immediate advantage is not always our true good, and pain is not automatically holy. Faithful care seeks the good that makes love more possible. (pp. 16–19)

## Table Time 2 • 5 min

*Choose one question. Listen for experience as well as ideas.*

**Which confusion is most familiar: self-love with narcissism, self-denial with self-erasure, or suffering with holiness?**

**Where is it hardest for you to distinguish faithful self-care from selfishness?**

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## Teaching Block 3 • Wake Up and Receive Your Life (10 min)

Chapter One begins with a life crowded by ministry, responsibility, and usefulness. Good work can still become a hiding place. Waking up does not mean abandoning vocation; it means allowing the person God called to become present inside it. The Morning Question begins that recovery of presence. (pp. 9–11)

To receive yourself as a creature entrusted to your care is an act of stewardship. Your body is neither an idol nor trash. Your gifts are not proof of superiority, and your limits are not moral failures. Holy self-love practices truthful attention, gratitude, repentance, rest, courage, and care so that love may move more freely through the life God has given. (pp. 18–19)

**The movement is simple: receive the self from God, tell the truth about it, seek its genuine good, and offer it in love.**

## Table Time 3 • 10 min

*Begin with the first question, then move to the second if time allows.*

**When has responsibility made you lose touch with the person carrying it?**

**What might it mean to receive yourself as a creature entrusted to your care?**

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## Practice & Closing

1. Before the phone, calendar, or task list takes over, pause.
2. Ask: “How are you?” Notice your body, emotions, desires, and resistance without rushing to fix them.
3. Ask: What does the life God has entrusted to me need today?
4. Choose one small, faithful act of truth, gratitude, repentance, or care. (p. 20)

**Closing prayer** *God of love, help me receive the life you have given and offer it freely in love. Amen.*