

Engagement Project - Tour 4 Articles

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The Engagement Project

Tour 4-Part 2: Engagement-the Royal Task

Dr. Del Tackett, renowned for his influential Christian worldview teachings such as *The Truth Project*, has continued his mission to equip believers with a biblical perspective through *The Engagement Project*. This 10-week small-group program, available via streaming or DVD, delves into the purpose of Christians in the world today—why we're still here and what God calls us to do. Designed for leaders, small group facilitators, and everyday families, it aims to transform lives by fostering a deeper understanding of engagement with others. At its core, *The Engagement Project* emphasizes practical application of Scripture, encouraging participants to live out their faith in tangible ways.

In Tour 4, Part 2, titled "Engagement: The Royal Task," Tackett builds on the foundational "Royal Law" from James 2:8: "If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well." This session, which picks up around the 21:53 mark in the video series, shifts the focus to a fresh perspective on this command. Tackett challenges viewers to see it not as a lofty ideal but as a divine mandate entrusted primarily to ordinary Christian families, rather than church hierarchies or elite ministries. He draws from Acts 17:26, reminding us that God has sovereignly placed us—and our neighbors—exactly where He intends, for the purpose of building genuine relationships.

Addressing the Common "But Waits"

Tackett anticipates objections to this neighbor-focused approach, addressing them head-on with biblical insight. These "but waits" represent common hesitations that prevent believers from fully embracing the Royal Law.

First, he tackles the question: "Aren't we supposed to love God first? How can loving my neighbor take precedence?" Tackett points to Scriptures that inextricably link loving God with obedience to His commands. He references John 14:15 ("If you love me, you will keep my commands"), John 14:21 ("Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me"), and 1 John 5:3 ("For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments"). The connection is clear: fulfilling the command to love your neighbor is an expression of loving God Himself. Thus, summing up the law in "love your neighbor as yourself" (as in Romans 13:9 or Galatians 5:14) is not inconsistent—it's the practical outworking of devotion to God.

Next, Tackett addresses the Great Commission from Matthew 28:19-20, which calls believers to make disciples of all nations. Some might argue this supersedes neighborly love, prioritizing global evangelism. However, Tackett reframes it through the lens of Genesis 1:28—"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth"—and the ongoing process of spiritual multiplication. He cites 2 Timothy 2:2, where Paul instructs Timothy to entrust teachings "to faithful men who will be able to teach

others also." This reflects God's method: working through His people to produce fruit that, in turn, bears more fruit. Tackett suggests the Great Commission might be fulfilled primarily "one neighbor at a time," rather than through grand campaigns. He envisions missionaries not just converting individuals but teaching them to engage their own neighbors, creating a ripple effect. Reflecting on the early church's growth in Acts, he notes how the gospel spread household to household, from one relational network to the next.

Tackett then confronts the idea that the Royal Law is merely philosophical or sentimental, akin to the feel-good vibes of Coca-Cola's famous "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing" advertisement from the 1970s. He quotes C.S. Lewis, who warned that loving "Humanity" abstractly often serves as an excuse for loving no one in particular. To illustrate, Tackett references a classic *Peanuts* cartoon where a character quips, "I love mankind; it's people I can't stand." The point is sharp: True love demands action toward real individuals, not vague ideals.

The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) comes under scrutiny next. Tackett uses it to define what a "good neighbor" truly looks like—someone sacrificial, zealous, and committed to the *shalom* (true peace and well-being) of another. The Samaritan didn't just pass by; he stopped, helped, and invested in the wounded man's recovery. This story isn't about distant aid but immediate, personal involvement with those in need.

What about focusing on the physically poor and hungry, as emphasized in social justice movements? Tackett urges a deeper view, aligning with God's perspective on spiritual poverty. Even neighbors in nice homes might be "poor, wretched, and miserable" in God's eyes (Revelation 3:17). He points to 2 Timothy 2:25-26, encouraging gentle instruction in hopes of repentance, freeing people from the devil's snare. Just as the priest and Levite ignored the beaten man in the parable, modern Christians often "drive right by" spiritually needy neighbors, missing opportunities for eternal impact.

Finally, Tackett leaves open the question of whether this is solely the work of pastors and professional ministries. He argues it's not—the Royal Law is simple yet profound, and sadly, often ignored by the broader body of Christ. Grading the church's performance in steadfast, sacrificial zeal for neighbors' *shalom*, Tackett suggests it's failing. Why? Reasons include inconvenience, the time and energy required, the need for real compassion, and setting aside personal agendas. Building true relationships demands vulnerability: knowing others' needs and admitting our own. Unlike superficial social media interactions, this is messy and authentic.

A Personal Story and a Grand Vision

To bring it home, Tackett shares a poignant anecdote from his own life. When hogs from a neighboring property destroyed his wife's flower beds, he returned them expecting a simple exchange. Instead, he encountered two energetic young boys and their overwhelmed mother in her 20s, holding a baby, with dark circles under her eyes. The home was in disarray, the hog pen inadequate, and the father absent most of the month due to work in North Dakota's oil fields. The pigs, intended to teach the boys responsibility, had become a burden. This encounter underscored Tackett's point: If you pray for opportunities to engage as God commands, He will provide them abundantly—"in spades."

Tackett paints a compelling vision: With over 80 million evangelical Christians in the U.S., if each engaged just three neighbors, the entire population could be reached. This isn't about complex

strategies but ordinary Christian families committed to their neighbors' *shalom*. It's simple, brilliant, and world-changing—one neighbor at a time. As Tackett concludes, this approach could "turn the world upside down—or right side up!" echoing the transformative power seen in the early church (Acts 17:6).

The Engagement Project challenges believers to move beyond knowledge to action, embodying the Royal Law in everyday life. For those interested in hosting or participating, resources are available through Tackett's website, offering training and materials to launch small groups. In a world craving authentic connection, Tour 4, Part 2 reminds us that the kingdom advances not through programs, but through faithful, relational obedience.

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The Engagement Project

Tour 4, Part 2: Engagement, the Royal Task

Dr. Del Tackett, creator of the influential *The Truth Project*, continues his mission to equip Christians with a biblical worldview through *The Engagement Project*. This 10-week small-group study, featuring 50-minute video tours, challenges believers to understand their role in God's kingdom. It's designed for facilitators and families to foster transformative discussions.

In Tour 4, Part 2, titled "Engagement: The Royal Task," Tackett delves into James 2:8's "Royal Law": loving your neighbor as yourself. Starting around the 21:53 mark, he reframes this as a divine mandate for ordinary Christian families, not just church leaders. Citing Acts 17:26, Tackett emphasizes God's intentional placement of us among our neighbors to build authentic relationships.

Tackett addresses common objections—"but waits"—with scriptural depth. On prioritizing love for God, he links it to obedience via John 14:15, 14:21, and 1 John 5:3: loving neighbors fulfills God's commands. Regarding the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), he connects it to Genesis 1:28's call to be fruitful, suggesting discipleship happens one neighbor at a time, as seen in the early church's household spread and Paul's instruction in 2 Timothy 2:2.

He critiques sentimental views of love, quoting C.S. Lewis on loving "Humanity" abstractly as an excuse for loving nobody, and a *Peanuts* cartoon character quips, "I love mankind; it's people I can't stand." The point is sharp: True love demands action toward real individuals, not vague ideals. The Good Samaritan parable illustrates sacrificial zeal for others' *shalom* (true well-being). Tackett expands "poor and hungry" to include spiritual poverty (Revelation 3:17), urging gentle instruction per 2 Timothy 2:25-26.

This is for the common Christian family; the church earns a poor grade in neighborly engagement due to inconvenience, time demands, and vulnerability. Tackett shares a personal story of hogs ruining his wife's garden, leading to a encounter with a struggling neighbor family—highlighting God's provision of opportunities when prayed for.

With 80 million U.S. evangelicals engaging three neighbors each, the nation could be reached. This simple vision—Christian families committed to neighbors' *shalom*—promises to turn the world right-side up, one relationship at a time. *The Engagement Project* calls believers to action, embodying faith in everyday interactions.

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