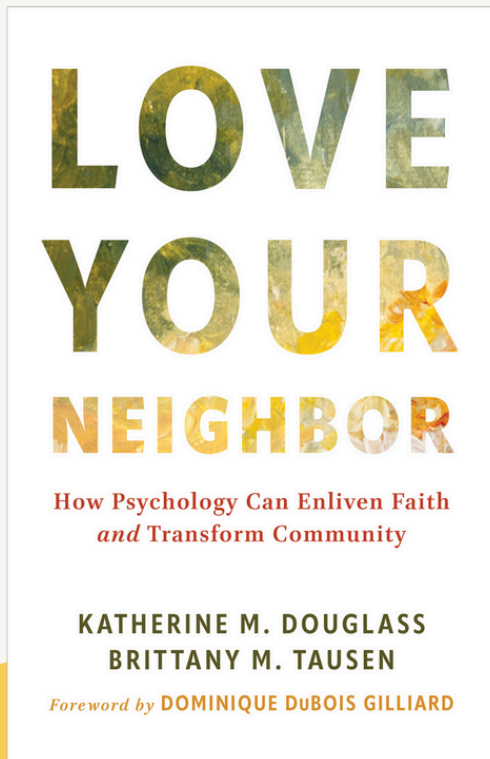


Love Your Neighbor

How Psychology Can Enliven Faith and Transform Community

by Katherine M. Douglass and Brittany M. Tausen



Discover how science can shed new light on one of Scripture's greatest commands—and transform your community one relationship at a time.

The biblical call to “love your neighbor” echoes through centuries, yet remains one of Christianity’s most profound—and challenging—practices. In this innovative synthesis of practical theology and psychological science, professors Katherine M. Douglass and Brittany M. Tausen bring ancient wisdom from Scripture and cutting-edge research into a conversation that can revolutionize how you build meaningful connections.

Pulling from their respective areas of expertise, Douglass and Tausen illuminate the psychological pathways and spiritual practices that activate neighbor love. Through engaging stories and evidence-based insights, they reveal why human connection often falters—and provide actionable strategies to overcome these barriers.

Each chapter pairs illuminating research with practical exercises that readers can implement immediately, creating ripples of connection that extend far beyond their immediate circles. *Love Your Neighbor* doesn't just explain the biblical command—it empowers you to live it.

Ideal for personal growth, small groups, or community-wide initiatives, this essential resource will help you love better and cultivate more Christlike ways of living in community.

Publishing Details

ISBN 978-0-8028-8523-4

January 15, 2026

Paperback, 240 pages, \$24.99

Primary BISAC: REL067070 Religion / Christian Theology / Ethics & Moral Teaching

Purchase link:

eerdmans.com/9780802885234/love-your-neighbor/

Contact Information

Jason Pearson

Marketing & Publicity Manager

jpearson@eerdmans.com

(616) 234-0513

Key Features

- Loving better is hard. Psychological science can make it easier to love others the way that you want—and are called—to love.
- Readers are introduced to profound findings from psychology that overlap with teachings from Scripture.
- Plenty of stories and anecdotes to make psychological ideas accessible.
- Practical activities and exercises readers can start doing today.

From the Authors

“The idea for the book came from a conversation we had about how we would love to share the research that we get to talk about in class with those who are not currently college students. As researchers who work together, we see significant overlap between the fields of psychology and theology. We hope this book will encourage individuals and groups who want to align their actions more closely with their beliefs.”



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Conversation Topics & Questions

Intersection of Faith and Science

- Science and faith are often seen as being in conflict with each other. How do you address that tension?
- Theology answers 'who and why' while science focuses on 'what and how.' What is an example of how this plays out in practice?
- What's been the most surprising psychological finding that illuminated a biblical truth for you?
- In what other broad themes of the Bible is there an overlap between psychology and theology?

Loving Our Neighbor

- Why do Christians often struggle to come to a shared vision on how to best love our neighbor?
- What factors shape our willingness to engage with our neighbors?
- How can we engage with our neighbors in a way that will be perceived as loving?
- How can our own thoughts undermine our goal to love faithfully? Is there anything we can do about it?
- How does understanding psychology remove barriers to love?
- What's one area where you still struggle to love your neighbor well?

Practical Applications

- How can readers get the most out of the book?
- You mention that we don't have to rely on willpower alone—that there are small changes we can make. Can you share one simple strategy that's made a real difference in your own life?
- What's one common roadblock to loving others that most Christians don't realize they're experiencing?
- How can readers' own personalities impact their ability to love well?

Bringing Together the Psychologist and the Theologian

- Talk about that first 'aha moment' when you realized psychology and theology were pointing toward the same conclusions about love. What was that conversation like?
- How did your friendship evolve to coauthoring a book? What made you think 'we need to write this down'?
- The homeless encampment project seems like a pivotal moment. How did that experience shape your research and ultimately this book?

The Bigger Picture

- In our current political climate, how might your approach help bridge some of the divisions we're seeing even within Christian communities?
- What do you hope readers will do differently after finishing your book?
- Beyond individual transformation, do you see potential for this psychology-theology integration to impact how churches approach community engagement?

About the Authors

Katherine M. Douglass is associate professor of educational ministry and practical theology at Seattle Pacific University. She is also an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Her research interests include the role that the arts play in faith, confirmation as a rite of passage, ministry with marginalized youth, and religious socialization in the home.

Brittany M. Tausen is associate professor of psychology at Seattle Pacific University and director of Classrooms that Cultivate Character, an initiative that leverages science-backed practices to help young adults grow in virtue. Her research focuses primarily on ways to reduce dehumanization, enhance neighbor love, and cultivate virtue so that loving intentions more readily manifest in loving actions.



kmdoug



britmarie5



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