

# RELATIONSHIPS

## How to Be a Good Neighbor Week of January 24 , 2021

### Intro Discussion Questions:

- In what ways has the Lord blessed you this past week?
- Who is the best neighbor you have ever had? What made them such a good neighbor?

### Read Bible Study Summary:

In the previous two Bible Studies, we have looked at God's love for us, and our love for God. We have also looked at God's love for others as we talked about the image of God in humanity. In our study today, we are going to look at the love we are called to have for others. As the Bible says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." We will look at this command through one of the parables that Jesus created in Luke chapter 10 - the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

### Read Main Scripture

- Read Luke 10:25-37

### The Main Points - What does it mean to Love my Neighbor?

#### 1. Do Not Justify Yourself (v. 25-29)

- The Bible says that the man who questioned Jesus was a lawyer, or expert in the law. He specialized in what God said in the Old Testament about what to do and what not to do. The lawyer decides to test Jesus with a question about how to inherit eternal life: "What shall I do?" Jesus, knowing the man's specialization, asked him, "As an expert, How do you read the Law?" The man responded with the two greatest commandments.
- According to Jesus, the lawyer answered correctly. The person who fulfills the commandments will inherit eternal life, or have fellowship with God both now and for all eternity. Jesus was noting one way to inherit eternal life is to fulfill the commandments of God perfectly. If you are perfectly obedient, you will meet God's standard of holiness and inherit eternal life.
- However, none of us can do that other than Jesus. And when the lawyer heard this, he began to feel guilty because he realized he had not fulfilled these commandments perfectly. Knowing this, he asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" It was his attempt to justify himself by bringing the law down to meet his way of living.
- When we realize we are guilty, especially when it relates to sin, we try to avoid our fault, or avoid taking responsibility for what we have done. We begin to try to make excuses. We do whatever we can to remove that guilt and make ourselves look innocent.

- **Read Proverbs 28:13** - *“Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy”*
- **Ask Question** - *Reflect on your past and present. In what ways have you justified, or in what ways do you currently see yourself making excuses for sin in your life?*

## 2. Do Not Qualify Recipients (v. 30-35)

- In response to the lawyer’s question, “Who is my neighbor,” Jesus tells a story of a man who robbed, beaten, and left for dead. Surely, this man needs some love.
- So, Jesus shares two characters who would presumably show love to this man: a priest and a levite. These servants of God returning from worshiping God ought to love the man. However, both saw him, did nothing, and passed him by.
- The third character, a Samaritan, helped the man fully. And, the fact that the Samaritan shows up as the hero in this story who goes to great lengths to care for the hurting man, would have disgusted the lawyer. You see Jews hated Samaritans and Samaritans hated Jews.
- Jesus used this big plot twist to reveal to the lawyer that there are certain people he has already deemed unworthy of receiving his love. The lawyer has excluded viewing some people as his neighbor. For him, the Samaritans would never be considered a neighbor and therefore should not be shown love. He has placed qualifications on the recipients of his love. He is only willing to love those he likes.
  - **Ask Question:** *Who is God bringing to your mind that you have already decided is unfit to receive your love?*

## 3. Love Without Limits (v. 36-37)

- Jesus asked the man, “Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” His question sought to radically change the perspective of the lawyer. The lawyer wanted to know who he had to love in order to fulfill the commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. The lawyer is focused on the object of the love. Who qualifies as a recipient?
- Yet, Jesus does not define a neighbor as the object, he asked a question to reveal the neighbor as the subject. Who was the giver of love in the story? The man is wondering who he is responsible to love. Jesus said, “Do not focus on who you are responsible to love, instead be focused on your heart that you are responsible to make loving.”
- Mr. Rogers was a devout Christian and ordained minister who sought to show the world and particularly children how to be a neighbor. When expressing his understanding of this commandment, he said, “I hope you’re proud of yourself for the times you’ve said ‘yes,’ when all it meant was extra work for you and was seemingly helpful only to somebody else.” This is the love that only the Spirit-filled, Christ-loving, Bible-obeying Christian can carry out. This is a love without limits. This would be loving your neighbor as yourself, and is the love God calls us to express to others
  - **Read John 15:13** - Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.
  - **Read Romans 5:10** - Yet, God through Jesus has displayed and even greater love, he has laid down his life for his enemies.

- **Ask Question:** Jesus didn't limit his love for us. So, how is God calling you to love others without limits? What is one practical way that you can show love to someone else that you have deemed unfit to receive your love?

## Closing In Prayer

- Ask Question: What is the greatest challenge you are facing? Is there some way our group can help?
- Pray together over those requests.