

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Luke 10:25-37

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- What do you think it means to love your neighbor?
- How well do the Christians you know love their neighbors? What examples support your response?

When asked to name the greatest commandment, Jesus quotes the Shema from Deuteronomy and says the greatest commandment is to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.” In both Matthew and Luke he follows that declaration quickly with the command to love your neighbor as yourself. By studying the parable of the Good Samaritan, we begin to discover practically who exactly our neighbor is and just how loving our neighbor helps us to love God.

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- Why do you think Jesus omits identifying details for the injured man in this parable, yet specifically identifies the three passersby?
- When have you found yourself calculating the risks of involvement or allowing details to dictate whether or not you help someone who has a need? Can you love someone without condoning their beliefs? Or does helping them, showing them love, and being with them automatically indicate an acceptance of their beliefs/actions? What can you do to help yourself see individuals who may have views entirely unlike yours as God’s image bearers?
- When has someone you least expected helped you? What was your reaction?
- Why is it so difficult for us to love people unconditionally, before salvation changes them? Where do you see this evidenced in the world around you? Where do you see this in your own life? Which human flaws or sins are at the heart of this difficulty?
- Why does it matter how you treat people matter? What is the relationship between your eternal life and how you treat people—both those like and unlike you?

Related Passages

- **Matthew 22:34-40**
- **John 13:34-35**
- **1 John 4:19-21**
- **Leviticus 19:9-18, 32-24**

Conclusion

Consider this explanation of the Good Samaritan story from the *Concordia Commentary: Luke 9:51-24:53* by Arthur A. Just, Jr.:

*Legalists who cross-examine Jesus make no progress until they recognize that **they** are the man half dead and **Jesus** is the one who does mercy as neighbor. The lawyer says, "I will act to love my neighbor as myself; tell me who he is." But Jesus answers, "You cannot act, for you are dead. You need someone to love you, show mercy to you, heal you, pay for you, give you lodging, revive you. I am the one you despise because I associate with sinners, but in fact I am the one who fulfills the Law, who embodies the Torah, and who brings god's mercy. I am your neighbor and will give you the gifts of mercy, healing, life. As I live in you, you will have life and will do mercy--not motivated by laws and definitions, but animated by my love."*

How does putting Jesus' in the position of the good Samaritan affect your perspective and understanding of the story and what Jesus means by loving your neighbor? Reflect on the difference between mercy motivated by love and mercy motivated by laws and definitions. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you see people with God's eyes, love them with God's heart, and show them mercy motivated by God's love.

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/love-your-neighbor>

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