

5 Day Devotional

Day 1: The Question We All Ask

Devotional

There is a question most of us have asked at some point, even if we have never said it out loud. How much is enough? Who exactly do I have to love? The lawyer in Luke 10 asked Jesus that very question. He wanted a boundary, a clear line that would let him feel justified without having to stretch too far.

Jesus did not give Him a definition. He told a story. And the story did not shrink the boundary. It erased it.

This is worth sitting with honestly. We all have people in our lives who are easy to love and people who are not. We have groups we instinctively move toward and groups we quietly avoid. The lawyer was not unusual. He was human. And so are we.

But here is the encouragement buried in this moment. Jesus did not shame the lawyer and walk away. He engaged him. He told him a story designed to get past his defenses and reach his heart. Jesus does the same with us. He does not give up on us when we try to shrink our obligations. He keeps drawing us toward something bigger and truer.

God is patient with our self-justifying tendencies. He knows our hearts better than we do, and He is at work in us, slowly expanding what we are willing to see and do.

Bible Verse

"On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?'" - Luke 10:25 (New International Version (NIV))

Reflection Question

In what areas of your life are you most tempted to draw a boundary around who deserves your love and attention?

Quote

"He wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, and who is my neighbor? Notice that language. Again he wanted to justify himself. I must confess, there are times in which I try to justify myself."

Prayer

Lord, forgive us for the ways we try to justify our own love and limit our compassion. Open our eyes to see others the way You see them, and give us hearts that are willing to be stretched. Amen.

Day 2: The Ones Who Passed By

Devotional

Two religious men saw the beaten man on the road and kept walking. They were not villains. They were people with responsibilities, reputations, and reasons. And yet they passed by.

It is easy to read this part of the parable and assume we would have stopped. But if we are honest, most of us have had our own version of crossing to the other side. We have seen a need and calculated the cost. We have told ourselves someone else will handle it. We have been too busy, too tired, or too uncomfortable to stop.

Compassion is genuinely hard. It is not a warm feeling. It is a decision to move toward someone in their weakness rather than away from them. It costs time. It costs resources. It is rarely convenient.

But here is what is true for those who belong to Christ. We are not left to manufacture this compassion on our own. God does not simply command us to love and then leave us to figure it out. He works in us and through us. The same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead is at work in you, giving you the capacity to see and respond to the people He has placed in your path.

You do not have to be extraordinary. You just have to stop.

Bible Verse

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better." - Ephesians 1:17 (New International Version (NIV))

Reflection Question

Think of a recent moment when you noticed a need but kept moving. What made it hard to stop, and what might it have looked like to respond differently?

Quote

"Let's not underestimate how hard it is to be compassionate. Compassion is hard because it requires the inner disposition to go with others to the place where they're weak, vulnerable, lonely and broken."

Prayer

Father, forgive us for the times we have passed by. Fill us with Your Spirit so that we have the courage and compassion to stop, see, and act when You place someone in our path. Amen.

Day 3: The Neighbor You Did Not Expect

Devotional

Jesus chose a Samaritan as the hero of His story on purpose. To His Jewish audience, this was not just surprising. It was offensive. Samaritans were despised. They were the wrong kind of people. And yet Jesus made one the model of faithful love.

The point cuts deep. Your neighbor is not just the person who looks like you, thinks like you, or votes like you. Your neighbor might be the person whose lifestyle makes you uncomfortable, whose politics set your teeth on edge, or whose background feels foreign to your own.

This is not a comfortable message. It was not meant to be. Jesus was not telling a feel-good story. He was issuing a costly, courageous call to love across every line we have drawn.

And yet there is grace even here. Jesus does not call us to this kind of love and then leave us to our own strength. He calls us to it because He has already modeled it perfectly. He crossed every boundary to reach us. He loved us when we were the wrong kind of people, when we were His enemies, when we had nothing to offer.

That love is the foundation. We love difficult people not because it comes naturally, but because we have been loved first, at great cost, by the One who had every reason to pass us by.

Bible Verse

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." - Romans 5:6 (New International Version (NIV))

Reflection Question

Who is the person or group in your life that you find most difficult to see as your neighbor, and what might it look like to take one small step toward them?

Quote

"The person you dislike, the person or group or ideology that whatever sets your teeth on edge, that's your neighbor."

Prayer

Lord, give us eyes to see the dignity of every person made in Your image, especially those we find difficult to love. Remind us of the grace You showed us when we were far from You. Amen.

Day 4: You Were the One by the Road

Devotional

Here is the turn in the parable that changes everything. When we read the story of the Good Samaritan, we naturally picture ourselves as the helper. We want to be the one who stops, who bandages wounds, who pays the bill.

But look more carefully. Before we are ever the Samaritan, we are the man in the ditch. Stripped, beaten, helpless, and left for dead. That is the honest picture of where we were apart from Christ.

Scripture does not soften this. We were powerless. We were sinners. We had nothing to offer and no way to rescue ourselves. And yet Christ came. He crossed every boundary, entered our broken world, and found us in our worst condition. He did not wait for us to clean ourselves up. He came while we were still in the ditch.

This is the gospel. And it is the only foundation strong enough to hold up a life of genuine compassion. We do not love others to earn anything. We love others because we have already been loved at the highest possible cost.

When loving your neighbor feels hard, and it will, come back to this. Remember the ditch. Remember who found you there. That grace is not just your starting point. It is your daily fuel.

Bible Verse

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." - Romans 5:8 (New International Version (NIV))

Reflection Question

How does remembering that you were once helpless and in need of rescue change the way you approach people who are struggling around you?

Quote

"You see, as we look at this story, I'm the one that got beat up and laying by the side of the road. Christ, surprisingly, is a Samaritan, the one who came from heaven and rescued me."

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for coming to us in our greatest need, when we had nothing to offer and no way to save ourselves. Let the memory of Your grace toward us be the fuel that drives our compassion toward others. Amen.

Day 5: Go and Do Likewise

Devotional

Jesus ends the parable with a command, not a suggestion. Go and do likewise. It is direct, simple, and demanding. But notice what He does not say. He does not say go and earn your salvation. He does not say go and prove your worth. He says go, because of who you are and what has been done for you.

This is the Reformed heartbeat of the parable. Salvation is never grounded in our good works. But genuine salvation cannot help but produce them. We love because He first loved us. We go because He came for us. Our identity in Christ is not just a comfort. It is a commission.

The call is not to do something heroic or dramatic. It is to pay attention to who God has placed in your path today. It might be inconvenient. It might cost you time or money or comfort. It will probably not feel natural at first. But you are not doing it alone. God is at work in you, giving you eyes to see the dignity of every person made in His image.

You were rescued for a purpose. Not to sit safely inside comfortable boundaries, but to represent Christ in this world, to be the surprising presence of grace in someone else's worst moment.

Go and do likewise.

Bible Verse

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." - Matthew 28:19-20 (New International Version (NIV))

Reflection Question

What is one specific, practical way you can stop, see, and respond to someone in need this week, trusting that God is working through you rather than relying on your own strength?

Quote

"Go and do likewise. Why? Because of our identity."

Prayer

Father, remind us daily of the grace You showed us, and let that grace overflow into how we treat others. Give us courage to go, to stop, and to love well, even when it is hard and inconvenient. Amen.