

## The Good Samaritan

Lesson 03 in the series, "Parables"

### A. One day a religious expert asked Jesus an abstract theological question in order to test him.

One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: "Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?" The man answered, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" "Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!" The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Luke 10:25-28 (NLT) (see also Deuteronomy 6:5 & Leviticus 19:18)

*Note:* Jesus isn't interested in how much we know. He is interested in what we do with what we know.

"Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." John 13:17 (NIV)

### B. Jesus answered by telling a parable about a good Samaritan.

Parable = a short story that explains spiritual truth by using everyday objects and relationships.

Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling on a trip from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. "By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. "Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.' "Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked. The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same." Luke 10:30-37 (NLT)

*Note:* "road to Jericho" = "bad part of town" and "Samaritan" ≠ "good" to Jesus' audience.

*Life Application:* God doesn't want us calculating if others are neighbors/non-neighbors. He wants us to be good neighbors to everyone.

### C. Four things we can all do to become good neighbors.

#### 1. We can think of others first.

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!" Philippians 2:4-8 (NIV)

"Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets." Matthew 7:12 (NLT)

*Note:* Ministry opportunities often look like interruptions.

#### 2. We can be kind.

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you." Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT)

"Greet each other in Christian love. All the churches of Christ send you their greetings."

Romans 16:16 (NLT)

"When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality."

Romans 12:13 (NLT)

*Note:* Good neighbors take initiative.

3. We can serve others.

“Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:26-28 (NLT)

“Our people must learn to do good by meeting the urgent needs of others; then they will not be unproductive.” Titus 3:14 (NLT)

*Note:* Jesus wants us to serve people we don't like.

“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:43-48 (NLT)

4. We can invest in others.

“You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.” 2 Timothy 2:2 (NLT)

“Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure...” Titus 2:3-5 (NIV)

“So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.”

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NLT)

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## Discussion questions:

1. What is the kindest thing anyone has ever done for you?
2. Who is one person that has invested in you? Why did they do it? Name someone in whom God wants you to invest? Why do you think God wants you to do it?
3. Read the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. Which character can you most readily identify with? Why? Why did Jesus pick a Samaritan to be the hero instead of the priest or Levite (full-time temple staff)? What risks were involved in helping the victim? What risks are involved in helping needy people today? How far should Christians be willing to go when helping others?
4. In 1973 an experiment involving seminary students at Princeton University was carried out to see what might have inspired the Priest and Levite to pass by the injured man in Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan. Researchers placed a man pretending to be injured directly in the path of students who were given an assignment to complete in a nearby building. The amount of "hurriedness" induced in the seminary students had a major effect on their helping behavior. In low hurry situations, 63% helped, medium hurry situations 45%, and in high hurry situations only 10% offered aid. The researchers concluded that "hurry" more than any other factor contributed to the neglect of an injured person. Do these results surprise you? Why? Why not? If "hurriedness" keeps us from helping others what changes do we need to make in our lives? (see [http://faculty.babson.edu/krollag/org\\_site/soc\\_psych/darley\\_samarit.html](http://faculty.babson.edu/krollag/org_site/soc_psych/darley_samarit.html) for more on this experiment.)
5. What do the following verses say about loving our neighbors?
  - Matthew 22:36-40
  - Romans 13:8-9
  - Galatians 5:14
  - James 2:8,9
6. Spend time in your Connect Group praying for each other.
  - Ask God to open your eyes and ears to the needs of people around you.
  - Ask God to show you how to pray for your neighbors, coworkers and friends.
  - Ask God to show you how to serve others in a meaningful way.
  - Ask God to give you opportunities to be hospitable to someone this week.
7. Discuss the following quotations:

"Love your neighbor as yourself but don't take your fence down." Carl Sandburg

"Want to snatch a day from the manacles of boredom? Do overgenerous deeds, acts beyond reimbursement, kindness without compensation. Do a deed for which you cannot be repaid." Max Lucado

"God does not need your good works but your neighbor does." Martin Luther

"Do not waste time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him." C.S. Lewis

"You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late." Ralph Waldo Emerson