

Luke 10:25-37 (NIV) ²⁵On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" ²⁷He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" ²⁸"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." ²⁹But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³²So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

³⁶"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" ³⁷The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

- By referring to the Law, Jesus is directing the man to an authority they both would accept as truth: the Old Testament.
- The scribe asked the question "who is my neighbor?"
 - The word "neighbor" in the Hebrew means "someone that you have an association with."¹ This interprets the word in a limited sense, referring to a fellow Jew and would have excluded any foreigners, including Samaritans.²
- Jesus answers with the parable of the Good Samaritan to give the lawyer the answer **that shows God's heart, not just the letter of the law.**
- Jesus is making a statement by using the Priest and the Levite as the ones who didn't care. Both would have understood the letter of God's law of loving one another. But in the story, even though their job was all about loving and serving others, they didn't live out what they knew.
- The next person to come by is the Samaritan, the least likely to have shown compassion for the man, who the listeners would have assumed was a Jew.
 - There was no such thing as a "good Samaritan" to a Jew. Pretty much the worst insult that a Jew could use was to call someone a Samaritan.
- By having a Samaritan as the good man, Jesus is drawing a strong contrast between those who knew the law and those who actually followed the law in their lifestyle and conduct.
- Jesus then tells the lawyer to "go and do likewise." Basically saying, "Go and be like the person in the story you hate," because he should start living out what he knows the law tells him to do.

THERE ARE THREE PERSPECTIVES IN THIS STORY THAT ARE COMMON IN PEOPLE TODAY:

1. Robbers: "What's yours is mine if I can take it."
2. Religious Leaders: "What's mine is mine, and you can't have it."
 - There were excuses they could tell themselves to justify not helping the man.
 - What excuses do you use to not help someone in need?
 - It's easy to perpetuate this perspective of what's mine is mine and you can't have it, even if the "mine" we are talking about is our time.
3. Samaritans: "What's mine is God's (and He can use it), and you can have it." It's the perspective we are supposed to have as Christians.

TWO IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE SAMARITAN PERSPECTIVE:

1. WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE

- The Samaritan went over and above in loving the man through his actions. He didn't rely on just knowing or even saying the right things. True love includes action.

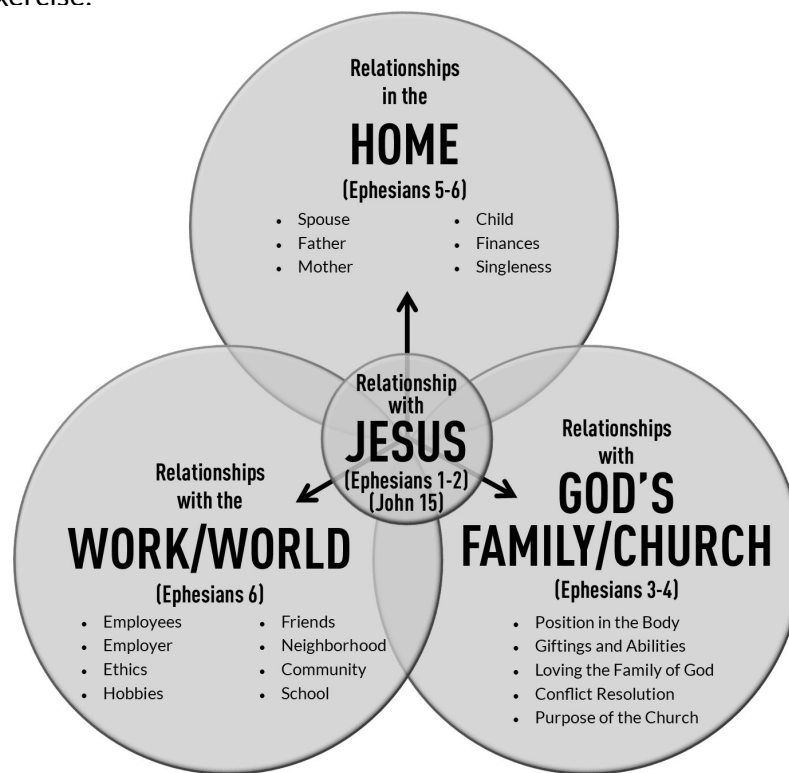
James 2:14-17 (NLT) ¹⁴What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? ¹⁵Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, ¹⁶and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well" - but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? ¹⁷So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

2. WHO WE LOVE

- God loves everyone, and we're supposed to, as well.
- The Jews, and even the early Church, often looked at who they could exclude in God's Kingdom. They took God's commands, which told them not to be like pagans, and turned that into not letting anyone else know that God loved them.
 - This was never God's plan. His plan was always to use the Israelites to show the world who God is.
- The religious leaders were really separating loving God and loving others, and sometimes we do the same. But Jesus said that when we love others, we love God. (See **Matthew 25:34-40**)

GOD HAS GIVEN YOU A SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, AND HE WANTS YOU TO INFLUENCE!

- In the same way that God was calling the Jews to represent Him well to the rest of the world, God is calling us to do the same.
- Who is in your sphere exercise:



- God doesn't expect us to meet every need, but He does want you to pay attention to the world around you, and God does want you to respond to some needs.
 - Scripture makes it clear that God has given us resources and abilities to be a blessing to others in Jesus' name.

HOW DO WE KNOW WHICH NEEDS TO RESPOND TO?

- What needs are before you?
- Will helping really help?
- What do other mature believers have to say about the situation?
- Pray. God will show you.
- When in doubt, err on the side of generosity.
- The greatest form of help we can give anyone is to tell them about Jesus.

Passage to Prepare for Next Week: Matthew 18:23-35

¹Find translations for Greek and Hebrew words used in the Bible in one of the Concordances at BibleHub.com

²Find more background information on Samaritans at www.godquestions.org/what-is-a-Samaritan.html

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