



The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

A Jewish lawyer asked Jesus what he must do to receive eternal life. Even though the lawyer was an expert in God's laws, he did not understand the *true* meaning of God's Word. Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan to answer his question and to show the lawyer his need for a Savior. Pray each day to talk to God about what you are learning.



Day #1: Loving Others

What is it that you like to create? Maybe you love to draw, or maybe you build amazing things with Lego's. What if you spent hours creating a masterpiece? You were so proud of your work, you ran to show it to your mom or dad. You were beaming because it was your finest work ever. What if they took it from you, said, "Big deal," and tossed it in the trash? How would that make you feel? You would be crushed. Why? Because you created it. It was, in essence, part of you.

That is how God feels when we disregard the needs of others. God created every person, much like you create a beautiful painting. When we treat other people badly it is like treating God badly. But when we help other people, it is like helping God, Himself. Jesus told His disciples that when we give food to a hungry person, give a drink to a thirsty person, or take care of a sick person, it is just like we are doing those things for Him. In Matthew 25:40, Jesus said, *"What I'm about to tell you is true. Anything you did for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did for Me."*

Notice Jesus said the "least important" of my brothers. In our world today, that would be anyone without much power or popularity. People are very willing to be nice or helpful to someone that is seen as important. But who takes the time to help an unimportant person? Are you willing to help a child that is younger than you? Are you willing to invite a visitor at church to sit by you - no matter who they are or what they look like? Are you able to stand up for a child at school that everyone seems to pick on? If you do these things, you love your neighbor as yourself. And you are doing these things to the Creator of the universe!

Pray and ask God to show you ways that you can give love to others - and you will be showing love to Jesus.

Day #2: My Neighbor

The Bible tells us the lawyer was trying to make himself look good when he asked, "Who is my neighbor?" He was probably expecting an answer like, "Your neighbors are your

Day #2 continued:

friends and relatives." Then he could smile and say, "I do love my friends and relatives." Surely, he was not expecting the answer Jesus gave!

In Jesus' story, the two men that we would expect to do the right thing did not. The Jewish priest was a man who offered sacrifices to God in the temple. A Levite was a Jewish man who worked in the temple to keep it clean and be a helper to the priests. These two men looked good on the outside because they had important "godly" jobs, but both men chose to walk away from the man who needed help. (It is interesting that Jesus makes this point to the Jewish lawyer. The lawyer was also a man that looked good on the outside because he had an important religious job - being an expert in God's law.)

The only righteous person in Jesus' story was the Samaritan man. Back in Jesus' day, Jewish people hated people from Samaria. Jews felt that Samaritans were a lower class of people. John 4:9 tells us that Jews had nothing to do with Samaritans. The Jewish lawyer (and the other Jews listening to the story) would never have imagined that the lowly Samaritan would have been the one that did what was right when the two religious men did not. The man from Samaria went out of his way to show love to a stranger.

Jesus made an important point that day. He was teaching that God's requirement goes much deeper than what is on the outside of a person. It doesn't matter what type of job someone has, what family they are in, how much money they have, or what race they are. What matters to God is the motivation of our heart.

God, create in me a pure heart. Give me a new spirit that is faithful to you. - Psalm 51:10

Pray and ask God to help you think of others' needs before your own. Think of one thing you can do to help a neighbor (that could be anyone!), and DO it this week.

Day #3: Requirements

It would be an interesting experiment to stop people in a crowded place and ask each one, "What must I do to receive eternal life?" It is certain that you would get many different answers - but there is only ONE right answer. The lawyer in Luke 10:25 did well to ask Jesus! He is the AUTHORITY on eternal life (John 17:2, Hebrews 2:9-10).

Jesus gave the lawyer two requirements: Love God with all of your heart, soul, strength, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus did not give these answers because he thought the lawyer could do these things.

Day #3 continued:

Actually, Jesus was showing him just the opposite. Jesus explained that "neighbor" meant everyone - even our enemy. This is quite a high standard to set. Until Jesus explained this point, the "expert" in the law thought he was keeping the laws very well. Jesus showed the lawyer that even though he *thought* he could keep all of the laws, he really couldn't.



*So it can't be said that anyone will be made right with God by obeying the law. Not at all! **The law makes us more aware of our sin.** - Romans 3:20*

Romans 3:23 tells us, "*Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory.*" Not one of us could ever be so perfect that we could love God completely and always love everyone more than we love ourselves. The law says to love with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind. Loving any less is not meeting the law's requirement. No one can do this. We are all imperfect and each one of us needs a Savior!

But now God has shown us how to become right with him. The Law and the Prophets give witness to this. It has nothing to do with obeying the law. We are made right with God by putting our faith in Jesus Christ. That happens to all who believe. - Romans 3:21-22a

Day #4: Manipulation

Take a piece of clay or play-doh and mold it into a shape. When you first get it out of the can, it is usually a little hard and you have to mash it back and forth in your hands. You have to squeeze it this way and that way to get it to move the way you want it to move. You are "manipulating" the clay into the shape you want.

Sometimes people try to manipulate God's word. They want to change it into something that it is not. The lawyer wanted to manipulate the word "neighbor." He wanted Jesus to put a limit on who his neighbor was, so he could show everyone he was a good neighbor. Then he would look good to the people around him, and he would feel important.

The priest and the Levite may very well have thought of verses that they felt gave them an *excuse* not to do the right thing. They may have thought about verses that said they should remain "clean." This would be manipulating the Word to get out of doing something they didn't want to do.

A modern day example might be like this: the Bible says that a man should provide for the needs of his family (1 Timothy 5:8). A greedy businessman wants to earn lots and lots of money. He treats people badly at work and steals other people's ideas. He takes credit that he doesn't deserve so he can succeed and make more money. He excuses his behavior in his mind by telling himself that what he is doing is taking care of his family. We know this is not right because he is going against the Bible in so many other areas. He is manipulating God's Word so he can act the way he wants.

We have to be very careful not to manipulate the Word of God. We can't make a decision and then pick out verses to support our decision. Quite the opposite - we must study God's Word and form our opinions and decisions based on what it says.

Day #4 continued:



I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. - Psalm 119:10-11 (NIV)

Pray and ask God to reveal truth to you. Ask Him to help you live out His Word correctly.

Day #5: Similarities

In a way, there is a story within a story in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Many Bible teachers believe that the priest and Levite did not help the wounded man because they were not sure if he was a fellow Jew and they didn't know if he was dead or alive. Touching a non-Jewish person or even going near a dead person would have made them "unclean" in their society. They would have had to leave the city gates and would have suffered great embarrassment. They would have had to go through a lot of time, trouble, and cost to become "clean" again.

The Samaritan people were disliked by the Jews because they were only half-Jewish. That means one parent was Jewish and the other parent was a foreigner. Because they were half-Jewish, Samaritans had to follow the same rules as the Jews. The Samaritan man, also, would be considered "unclean" if he helped the man. The Samaritan truly put the injured man's needs before his own. It didn't matter to him about the time and trouble it would take to become clean.

There are several things about the Samaritan that sound familiar. Let's look at how the Samaritan in our story is very much like Jesus. First, the Samaritan was an outcast among His own people. Likewise, even though Jesus was Jewish, He was disliked by the Jewish leaders. In fact, they are the ones who plotted to kill Him (John 11:53). Next, the Samaritan was willing to help the unclean man. Jesus healed the sick (Matthew 9:35) and even touched the lepers (Mark 14:3). Also, The Samaritan paid the cost to help heal the man. Jesus paid for our sin debt on the cross (Colossians 2:13, 14). Moreover, the Samaritan gave freely - never expecting to be repaid. Jesus gave freely - we could never repay what He gave to us. In addition, the Samaritan would likely suffer shame for helping the man. Jesus suffered shame when He hung on the cross between two criminals (Hebrews 12:2). Also, the Samaritan promised to come back to finish caring for the man. Jesus promised that He would one day return to take us to heaven (John 14:3).

Finally, let's look at the wounded man. Jesus simply calls him "a man." He does not say if he was a Jew or non-Jew, rich or poor. His clothes were stripped off and he could not even talk. So we have no idea who the man was or what type of person he was. He could have been ANYONE. Likewise, Jesus came to offer salvation to EVERYONE.



*My brothers, here is what I want you to know. I announce to you that your sins can be forgiven because of what Jesus has done. Through him **everyone** who believes is made right with God. Moses' law could not make you right in God's eyes. - Acts 13:38-39*

