

Love Your Neighbor

What does it mean to love our neighbor? Who is my neighbor?

If we look at what Jesus says in Luke 10:25-37 we find He answers these exact questions in his telling of the parable we call “The Good Samaritan”.

²⁵And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ He said to him, “**What is written in the Law? How do you read it?**” ²⁷And he answered, “You shall 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 your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁸ And he said to him, “**You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.**”

²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ Jesus replied, “**A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” ³⁷ He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “**You go, and do likewise.**”**

Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)

So, who is our neighbor? From what Christ says here, EVERYONE is our neighbor.

How do I love my neighbor then? By showing compassion, by being “interruptible”, by helping those in need, by meeting the needs we see in others.

What does being interruptible mean? By this, it is meant that you are not too busy, or absorbed in what you have going on, or need to do, that you cannot take time out for others. We see in the parable that the Samaritan stops his journey to bind the man’s wounds, but he didn’t stop there and say, “I am sorry I can’t to more I have somewhere to be.” No, the Samaritan loads him up on his animal and takes him to an inn to be cared for and pays them for it. This was not convenient for him. He went out of his way, to make sure this man’s needs were met. Whether this made him late to wherever he was going, or took him a longer route, he didn’t care. The Samaritan was “interruptible” and did what he knew needed to be done. This is what it means to be interruptible.

Here are just a few ways that you can love your neighbor.

(Some ideas are for people with whom you have already established relationships, other ideas are for the random person God places in your path.)

- **Invite them into our home regularly for a meal.**
- **Once or twice a year bring baked goods and a note and knock on their door.**
- **Mow their yard on occasion.**
- **Pick up their mail and packages when they're traveling.**
- **Host block parties/street potluck on occasion**
- **After establishing a relationship, invite them into a discipleship group.**
- **Ask them if they have any needs and that you/the church is here to meet them**
- **Let them simply be a part of what you do - watching the big game, go to Home Depot, etc**
- **Do something they like to do**
- **Babysit for friends**
- **Encourage your encouragers**
- **Spread good news** – If you notice someone doing something nice, generous, or uplifting; share it with others. With all the bad news these days good news and heartwarming stories can really help someone get through the day.
- **Take a vacation day from digital** – “Unplug” from your phone, laptop, tablet, or other electronic device. Give your full undivided attention to friends and family. Make sure to make it a priority to focus your attention and really listen to them. Savor the time you have in person rather than through the digital screen.
- **Call instead of text** – If there is someone in your recent text or emails that you haven't spoken with lately call them instead. The sound of a voice is a comforting alternative to digital connection and make communication easier and clearer. Words on a screen can be misunderstood easier than an audible voice.
- **Make someone's day with a playlist** – Send someone a Spotify playlist of worship songs or music that speaks to what they are going through or will encourage them. Send it with a personal note of encouragement.
- **Talk to strangers** – Take time each day to be intentional and look for opportunities to encourage people who God places in your path. Take a moment to really listen and connect. You may never know the power of kind word or a small kind act on someone's life. It could be the thing that makes their day, week, year, or might even change or save their life.