

RESPOND

Assess who is in your current “Neighbor” circle. Considering who is inside and outside your circle, in what ways is God inviting you to challenge how you love others? In an effort to practice what Jesus REALLY preached, pick one person (or people group) who you justified as not being your neighbor and identify one act of compassion or presence you will complete for them this week. Detail what you will do and then spend some time reflecting on the lesson as one source of encouragement for your follow-through.



Challenge How You Love Others

**“Practicing What Jesus REALLY
Preached”
Luke 10:25-37**

Luke 10:25-37 (NIV)

²⁵ On 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?” ²⁷ He 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.” ²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ In 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. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He 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. ³⁵ The 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 expenses you may have.’

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

DISCUSS

- Religious people at times try to use scripture to justify themselves, even when they know their actions are not aligned with what the Lord desires. Why might the religious leader be trying to look to Jesus to justify who he is to love? Who have you overlooked or rejected through your own justifications?
- View yourself as the stripped one (meaning you are naked), who is experiencing a beat down at the hand of strangers. You are laying half dead, and the beat down is exacerbated psychologically and emotionally because those who are supposed to help ignore you. Discuss your thoughts and feelings in this moment as you identify with the beaten man.
- Considering the law given in Numbers 19:11, if these religious people tried to assist the man and he was dead, they would be unable to worship or connect with their community for a week. Taking the Law and the people’s positions into consideration, do you think the priest and Levite are justified in their actions? Why or why not? Knowing the Law of Moses given by God the Father in the Old Testament, why would Jesus use the priest’s and Levite’s responses as an example of what not to do? Who are marginalized people whom the church, today or throughout history, have justified as ignorable or avoidable by using the scriptures? How could Jesus’s parable bring healing to the marginalized beat down by religious hurt?
- Even with the high level of hostility the Jewish man still experienced the Samaritan’s mercy which included both compassion and presence. Consider one of the people you identified above as someone you have overlooked or rejected. What would it look like to show both compassion and be present for them in a time of pain and suffering?
- The victim, as a result of the Samaritan’s love, felt cared for as a person to the point that not only was his health restored, but also his humanity. If you identify most with the beaten down man in this parable, how might this community love on you in a way that you experience total restoration for your mind, body, spirit, and soul? If you identify with religious leaders in this story, how might God be inviting you to recognize everyone as your neighbor to whom you must show love? As we practice what Jesus really preached, how can we use this parable to rewrite what it looks like to be a loving and merciful follower of Jesus?