

Who Is My Neighbor?



Luke 10:25–37

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“But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians”
(Exodus 3:22).

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“You shall not take vengeance against, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD”
(Leviticus 19:18).

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“Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’
for we are members of one another”
(Ephesians 4:25).

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- All had the same opportunity, but only one responded (a Samaritan at that).
- Three philosophies illustrated here:
 - Thieves: “What’s yours is mine, so I’ll take it.”
 - Priest, Levite: “What’s mine is mine, so I’ll keep it.”
 - Samaritan: “What’s mine is yours, so I’ll share it.”
 - “Beat ‘em up; pass ‘em up; pick ‘em up.”

Must eliminate partiality or prejudice

- “If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors” (James 2:8–9).

Who is my neighbor? Or, to whom can I BE a neighbor?

- Anyone I (not the church) have the opportunity and means to help (not enable) with his physical, or material needs.
 - The Samaritan certainly provided the personal touch (Luke 10:34–35).
 - Individually, we may have the opportunity to help orphans and widows (James 1:27), family members (1 Timothy 5:8), and others which come to our attention.

Who is my neighbor? Or, to whom can I BE a neighbor?

- Anyone I have the opportunity and means to help with his emotional needs.
 - Caused by the death of a loved one, health problems, a job loss, a divorce, a child gone astray, problems within the church.
 - Let's see if we can do better than Job's friends ("miserable comforters"—16:1), and Paul's ("no one stood with me"—2 Tim. 4:16).

Who is my neighbor? Or, to whom can I BE a neighbor?

- Anyone I have the opportunity and means to help with his spiritual needs.
 - It can include those outside of Christ (Philip and the eunuch—Acts 8), but also those who have fallen away from Christ (James 5:19–20).
 - It can also include the weak, fainthearted, and unruly among us (1 Thess. 5:14), and someone not taught properly (Acts 18:24–26).

Conclusions

- The Samaritan couldn't possibly help every victim in the world, but he could and did help this one.
- I can't possibly help every victim/person in need either, but I can help those who cross my path daily.
 - "As we have opportunity, let us do good to all..." (Galatians 6:10).

Conclusions

- If we're looking for a particular need on which to focus, it's spiritual. My neighbor's greatest need is salvation.
 - "What is crooked cannot be made straight..." (Ecclesiastes 1:15).
 - Let's not pour all our effort into problems which can never be fixed—problems to which great resources have been devoted with very little effect.

Conclusions

- If we're looking for a particular group on which to focus, it's our brethren.
 - "Let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).
 - "The household of Stephanas...they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (1 Corinthians 16:15).