

Guided Bible Study: Week 12

June 6 - 12, 2020

During the time we cannot have Sunday School and Wednesday Bible Study due to the Corona Virus emergency, Rick is posting a guided Bible study on here to help fill the void left by not having those classes. We encourage you to read the passages in the Bible together with your family. We will post the study for each week.

OF LOVE AND NEIGHBORS

During the time we cannot have Sunday School and Wednesday Bible Study due to the Corona Virus emergency, Rick is posting a guided Bible study on here to help fill the void left by not having those classes. We encourage you to read the passages in the Bible together with your family. We will post the study for each week.

With all the strife in the news recently, a look at Jesus' encounter with an "expert in the law" and the subsequent parable seems in order. How are you doing with this matter of loving and being a neighbor?

READ: Luke 10.25-37

Let's look first at **verses 25-28**. Just to get off to a good start and not get sidetracked by other questions and issues, remember this was DURING Jesus' earthly ministry. The Old Testament Law was still in effect. Therefore when asked what to do to inherit eternal life, Jesus did not talk about faith in Himself, repentance, confession of faith, baptism into Him, and living a faithful Christian life. The verses we are considering, however, still form a considerable part of submission to Jesus as Lord. They are part of what we turn to in repentance and live out in Christian living.

[DISCUSS: How much do you love God? How much do you love yourself?]

When we learn to love God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind that pretty much takes in our whole being as a person. Don't let loving God be a casual thing. Don't just claim to love God and then not really live it out. Put all your being and all your effort into loving God.

I know some people who have been through bad stuff in their lives have trouble "loving themselves". That usually means accepting themselves as special in God's eyes and as being worth living a good and happy life. When they have been through a lot, some people have trouble doing that. Maybe this is true of some of you. Having acknowledged this, the fact is

most of us have a pretty high opinion of ourselves, even when we are humble people. We want to feel well and be happy. We want to accomplish something worthwhile. When we love others as we love ourselves, we want those same things for them and do our part to help them have these things in their lives. Again, this doesn't work if it's just in the mind. We have to put it into action. [READ AND DISCUSS PUTTING INTO PRACTICE I **John 3.16-18.**]

The expert in the law was doing well so far, but apparently he had something nagging at him. He probably had some people he didn't like. He might have held some prejudices. First Century Jews often held Samaritans in contempt. They assumed the worst about them much like some people, now days, hold certain races or nationalities in low regard. Considering this truth and the main character of the parable Jesus was about to unload on him, this man likely held such prejudice against Samaritans. As we consider the next section, please be honest about any unloving prejudices and stereotypes you might have.

Luke 10.30-32: Being an expert in the Mosaic (Old Testament) Law, the man Jesus was talking to was almost certainly Jewish. In their cultural setting, he would have assumed the man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho to be Jewish as well. The priest was one of their religious leaders. Priests were to be there as God's person to help the Jewish people with their sacrifices and their relationship with God. We could compare the priest to a minister, today. The Levites were the priests' helpers. Comparing the Levite to deacons in today's scheme of things would be fairly accurate. These were men who should have loved the injured man, been "neighbors" to him. Instead they were both so tied up in their own little religious world that they just passed him by and left him to die!

Luke 10.33-35: Samaritans were a nationality of people who were pretty well half Jewish and half Gentile in ethnic origin. Their people group harkened back to the time of the exile when Judah had been taken captive to Babylon but some of the people remained in the land. These people intermarried with Gentile people and began this people group. Jews looked down on them. Truth be known, many of the Samaritans, in turn, hated the Jews.

To help the injured man this Samaritan had to overcome prejudice. Even if he wasn't prejudiced against Jews, he had to know there was a good probability that the injured Jew was prejudiced against him. He had to know that, even in his distress, the man might be rude to him when he tried to help. (There is no indication this happened, but it had to have been on the Samaritan's mind as a possibility.) There might also have still been robbers lurking in the background, ready to pounce on anyone who stopped to help. The Samaritan not only had to overcome prejudice, but he also had to get out of his comfort zone and take a risk.

The Samaritan came through with flying colors! He was truly a neighbor to the injured man. He didn't just help him a little. He went above and beyond. After administering first aid, he took him to an inn and paid for the man's care. [DISCUSS: Is this how we would want someone to treat us? If so, then doesn't our love for them "as we love ourselves" lead us to put such effort into loving and caring for others?]

Luke 10.36-37: The expert in the law might not have been an expert on loving and being a neighbor but he couldn't miss Jesus' point. He answered that the man who had mercy on the injured man, was his neighbor. The Samaritan proved to be his neighbor. Jesus told him and tells us to go and be a neighbor like this Samaritan was.

WHAT DO WE TAKE FROM THIS?

1) There is good in most people who are of other races and nationalities. It's a matter of the heart, not the ethnic origin or color. Therefore get rid of racist and other prejudiced attitudes toward people. Learn to see people for who they are, not what they look like or where they came from.

2) Regardless of what others might think of us (or we assume they think of us) be an actively loving, helpful, neighbor to those around us. This is all the more so when someone is in need. Go out of our way to love and help like the "Good Samaritan"!