

Keys to the Story (Luke 10:25-37)

A priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan traveling the road from Jerusalem to Jericho—what’s this story about? Here are some keys that help to unlock the meaning of Jesus’ parable of the good Samaritan.

Notice first that Jesus does NOT answer the expert’s question. The expert in the Law asks, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus sticks with his original nudge to “do this and you will live.” Jesus ends the story with another question for the expert: “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” His point is *not* “Who is your neighbor” but “Are *you* a neighbor?”

LOVE OTHERS
Love Your Neighbor series

Next, take in some background on the people in the story:

- *The religious elite* – a **priest** who taught and offered sacrifices and a **Levite** who worked in the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus implies that both these religious leaders were returning from service in the Temple. Jericho was a favorite country home for the religious elite. The expert in the Law that Jesus was talking with—and everyone else—looked up to these religious elite.
- *A religious heretic* – a **Samaritan**. Jesus himself said the Samaritan religion was confusing and wrong (John 4:19-22). Jewish people hated their half-breed
- neighbors and went out of their way to avoid them. Relations between the Jews and Samaritans were especially bad in Jesus’ day, with acts of terrorism inflicted by both groups.

Finally, think about the hurting man: Jesus says the man beaten by robbers was “half-dead”, not *dead*. The priest and Levite might have had reason to *hesitate* if the man were dead, as touching a dead body would make them ceremonially “unclean.” If he were dead, they at least could have given him dignity by covering or moving his body. But he was obviously *half-dead* and in full view of anyone traveling the road. The religious elite deliberately and hard-heartedly walked on.

If we’re not careful, our children can grow up believing *they* should be served, not the other way around. What’s the latest movie to watch? Which is the best video game to play? Serving others defends our kids against self-focus by touching their hearts with the needs of others and giving them a taste of the joy God gives when we get outside ourselves to help them. Initiate, encourage, and celebrate your children’s acts of love for others!

It's All About Love

All of creation, all of redemption, all of history hang on these two great purposes—that humans love God with all our heart, and that from the overflow of that love we love each other. John Piper

1. Read Luke 10:25-37. What struck you differently about this story after hearing Adam's message on Sunday?

A man . . . fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. . . . But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was. (Luke 10:30, 33)

2. What do you think God had in mind when He said “love your neighbor as you love yourself”? See Leviticus 19:9-18 and Ephesians 5:28-33.

3. Jesus said in Matthew 22:40 that the whole Bible “hangs on” the commands to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. What do you think He meant? Consider these verses:

- Matthew 22:37-40—
- Micah 6:6-8—
- Matthew 7:9-12—
- Romans 13:8-10—

4. How do our acts of love for others give *us* assurance that we truly belong to Christ? In what ways does showing love to others demonstrate the truth about Jesus and Christianity to *them*? Consider these verses:

- James 2:26—
- 1 John 3:14-18—
- Galatians 5:6—
- Matthew 5:13-16—

5. What are all the *actions* the Samaritan took to “love his neighbor”? What would be the equivalent today?

6. Who in your life do you need to love more with “heart action”? What steps could you take this week to do that?

Love your neighbor as yourself. Luke 10:27