

CHOOSING COMPASSION

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?" Jesus 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?"

Luke 10:25-29 (NIV)

❖ Who is our Neighbor?

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of 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, took him to an inn and took care of him.³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense 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."

Luke 10:30-37 (NIV)

• My neighbor DESERVES my LOVE... because Jesus GAVE me His LOVE.

"By chance a Jewish priest came along; but when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Levite (Temple assistant) walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt deep pity."

Luke 10:31-33 (NLT)

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

John 13:34 (NIV)

1. We are to love God from a GRATEFUL HEART.

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

James 1:17 (NIV)

2. We are commanded to love others as an ACT of OBEDIENCE.

"You have heard it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

Matthew 5:43-44 (NIV)

3. The message of Jesus without LOVE is a FALSE WITNESS.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

1 Corinthians 13:1 (NIV)

➤ Key Truth: Lack of love is easy to JUSTIFY, but it is never RIGHT.

• My neighbor NEEDS my LOVE... and I need the FREEDOM that comes from it.

“He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’”

Luke 10:34-35 (NIV)

1. Living by the GOLDEN RULE frees me from the RULE of GOLD.

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Luke 6:31 (NIV)

2. The end result of a CRITICAL, UNLOVING spirit is to DRY UP spiritually.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean.”

Matthew 23:27 (NIV)

3. The most FREEING RESPONSE in any situation is LOVE.

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

1 John 4:18 (NIV)

➤ Key Truth: Our neighbor is ANYONE, no matter race or creed, that is in NEED.

• My neighbors will see the LOVE of JESUS by how I personally show LOVE to them.

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. ¹⁷If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? ¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

1 John 3:16-18 (NIV)

1. If you ever wonder what real love is... PICTURE JESUS on the CROSS.

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

John 15:12-13 (NIV)

2. Love with our MOUTH not matched by love with our MONEY is BOGUS.

Suppose you see a brother or sister who needs food or clothing, ¹⁶and you say, “Well, good-bye and God bless you; stay warm and eat well”—but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?

3. There is a time to FALL on our KNEES... and a time to ROLL UP our SLEEVES.
Dear brothers and sisters, what's the use of saying you have faith if you don't prove it by your actions? That kind of faith can't save anyone.

James 2:14 (NLT)

➤ Key Truth: Not, "Do they DESERVE help?" ... But "Does JESUS deserve our HELPING?"

❖ Closing Truth: So then, "Who is your neighbor?"

We love because he first loved us. ²⁰If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. ²¹And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

1 John 4:19-21 (NIV)

"Our neighbor is ANYONE that God puts in our PATH that we can HELP by SHARING the LOVE of Jesus with them in REAL and TANGIBLE ways."