



Approaching God

Begin your time with an opening prayer

Take a moment to quiet your heart and ask God to help you experience his presence today. Ask Him to free you from any distractions as you begin to read and meditate on today's passages.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - Slowly Read the Following Passages

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Luke 10:25-37

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 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."

Galatians 6:2

2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Thoughts to Ponder - Making Room for Your Neighbor

Read the short essay from John Greco - <https://hereadstruth.com/2019/05/07/making-room-for-your-neighbor/>

“But we were such good friends,” my then-fiancée protested. “That was a long time ago, and we only have room for a hundred people,” I reminded her as I crossed another name from our wedding invitation list. Maybe you’ve had this experience, whether it was planning a wedding or birthday party, or sending out Christmas cards. With lists like these, it can be difficult to pick who gets to stay and who has to go. We want to make room for everyone.

But with other lists, crossing off names can come a bit more easily. Such was the case for many of the religious leaders in Jesus’s day. They knew that God had given His people a commandment to love their neighbors ([Deuteronomy 19:18](#)), and they had discovered (as we all do) that loving people can be difficult. So, they focused on the word neighbor and sought to define the term as narrowly as possible.

When an expert in the law approached Jesus, this was precisely his angle. He wanted Jesus to define neighbor so he could walk away feeling justified ([Luke 10:29](#)). But Jesus knew following God’s Word was never supposed to be a matter of mere technical obedience. The laws in the Old Testament were meant to convict people of sin and show them a way to walk in holiness and love. Telling the parable of the good Samaritan was Jesus’s way of loving this expert in the law standing there in front of Him. This member of the religious elite had been given much, but he had missed the heart of God in His Word. The loving solution to the man’s blindness was to force him to open his eyes.

A neighbor is not defined by geographic proximity, for the Samaritan and the Jewish man in Jesus’s story did not live near one another and met while both were traveling the road to Jericho. Nor can a neighbor be defined by race, for the Samaritans were a people of mixed ancestry and were despised by most Jewish people in the first century. And a neighbor cannot be defined by common beliefs, for Jews and Samaritans disagreed about fundamentals like the Scriptures and worship.

Jesus didn’t narrow the definition of neighbor, but expanded it to include everyone imaginable. Just as the Samaritan loved the man he found in a ditch on the side of the road simply because the man was in his path and had a need, we are called to love anyone and everyone on our path.

It sounds hard, I know. I find myself commiserating with the expert in the law. It can be overwhelming to think about all the people I am commanded to love. In those moments, I have to remember that in my lifetime I am likely to be the man in the ditch a time or two, beaten and bloodied by this world. I’ll want to be considered someone else’s neighbor when that happens. I also have to remember what is truly overwhelming: the love of Jesus, the Son of God, who willingly died for me and made me not merely His neighbor, but His family.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why does Scripture call us to welcome our neighbors?
2. Who is your neighbor? Think of a specific person in your life.

Close in Prayer:

Pray for this person, thanking God that He created every man and woman in His image, giving them worth, value, and dignity. Ask God to give you a soft heart toward this person and courage to make room in your life for them.