

Love your neighbor. No greater command exists except the co-command to love God. But who is my neighbor? That exact question was asked of Jesus and He responded by giving us the parable of the Good Samaritan.

In this parable we find a robbed and wounded man left for dead on a road. Both a priest and a Levite passed him by. Along comes a Samaritan. A Samaritan, to the Jewish audience, was the hated of the hated. Even ruthless Romans came before them. Who in our tolerant culture would be this hated as a group? ISIS maybe? They were despised as unclean dogs and the Jews would have no contact with them. But yet, it is the Samaritan that stops to help and who cares for injured man.

We see this story used often as an example of loving our neighbor by caring for the sick and needy. But what was the question that was asked of Jesus? How do I love my neighbor? No, it was who is my neighbor. In this parable, it turns out that the despised Samaritan is the neighbor. Jesus just gave a lesson on loving our enemy.

There are people in my life who are easy to love. Bless God. But there are also people that I have a more difficult time with. Maybe they've hurt me, or they hold antagonistic views to mine, or maybe we're just different. The people God specifically instructs me to love are those that aren't easy.

That's going to take some work on my part. And I won't always feel like it. But love isn't a feeling. It is an action, an act of obedience. And with God's help, it will train my heart to follow suit. I want a heart like Jesus, to love without love in return. That's how He first loved us and now we get an opportunity to go and do likewise.

Who's your neighbor?

"If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them." Luke 6:32



Who's my neighbor?

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