

13. Can't Love Your Neighbor?

Jesus tells us that we should love our neighbors. He explains that our neighbors are not just those who live next to us, but are all the people around us; no matter where we are at. So He's basically telling us that we should love people in general and care for them.

Luke 10:25-37 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he (Jesus) replied. "How do you read it?" 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.'" "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 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. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side, But, a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 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. 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.' Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

When I was first saved and read the scripture above, I knew I fell short. Actually, I totally failed at loving my neighbors. I didn't care much for people and had no desire to help them. After all, no one ever helped me. All the people in my life that were supposed to love and protect me, failed me. It has always been me against the world. I didn't trust anyone and I didn't feel sorry for them either.

I told the Lord I was sorry my heart was so hard. I just couldn't love like that since my heart was hard as a rock. The Lord gave me a vision of a heart that was limp. It had holes all over it and blood was gushing out of all the holes. It was barely able to beat. The Lord told me that my heart was not hard, it was just wounded. He didn't expect me to be able to love like that, and He released me of any guilt.

It took years for the Lord to heal my heart, but He DID heal it. It surely wasn't an easy road to get where I am now, but now I love and have compassion for my neighbors. I volunteer and donate to places that help people. And I give all the glory to God for that.

If you are unable to love like Jesus wants us to, don't feel bad about yourself; just give it to God. Let Jesus heal your heart so you can love and have compassion for others. Jesus will not fail you. He is always faithful and patient, even with those high maintenance people like me. So let Him heal you and mold you. Let Him make you into someone that He knows you can be.