

Being Neighborly
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A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan. In vivid detail, she told how the man was beaten, robbed and left for dead. She then asked, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?" One thoughtful little girl broke the silence, "I think I'd throw up."

She was being honest. There are many adults who would not respond well to such situations.

In New York City, a mailman, shot by a sniper, was ordered to leave a building lobby because he was dripping blood.

In Oklahoma City, a woman gave birth unexpectedly on a city sidewalk. Bystanders turned their faces and ignored her. A taxi driver looked, then sped away. A nearby hotel refused to provide her a blanket.

In Dayton, Ohio, a dozen people saw a woman drive her car into the Miami River. They watched indifferently as the woman climbed on the car's roof and screamed that she couldn't swim. The woman drowned.

What has happened to us? These people are our neighbors! One of our greatest concerns should be that these aren't isolated incidents. In the Scriptures, an expert in the law asked Jesus how he should be neighborly. His first question, however, was, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus responded, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?"

The expert 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 this expert in the law wanted "to justify himself" and so he asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?"

In reply Jesus shared this story: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell amongst robbers. They stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. Likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But when a Samaritan came by and saw him, he took pity on him. The Samaritan bandaged the man's wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his donkey and took him to an inn to care for him. 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.'

“Which of these three,” Jesus asked, “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.”