

## The Good Samaritan

*Luke 10:25-37*

### Introduction

In this parable, Jesus is approached by an expert in the law, a lawyer, and asked a great question: “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus’ answer provides us with an incredible explanation of what it truly means to love God and others.

### Who’s Who – The Context

Overall, from the previous sections of Scripture, we see that Jesus is on a journey to Jerusalem from somewhere near Galilee and Samaria. *Luke 8 – Luke 10*

- It is definite that the Disciples are present with Him, but we also see that there are others that come into view as Jesus and the Disciples travel. Specifically, along that way Jesus appoints and teaches 72 “disciples” to go out and be his ambassadors in places where he is about to visit. *Luke 10:1-20*
- Beginning here in this chapter, we find what almost appears to be a recollection by Luke of one occasion where a lawyer approaches Jesus to test Him by asking a question about eternal life. *Luke 10:25*
- This section also seems somewhat removed from the events in the context, and probably relates back to Jesus’ teaching with the Disciples in the section above about His kingdom. *Luke 10:21-24*

### So What – The Meaning

Just prior to the actual parable, we see a dialogue between Jesus and the lawyer. This dialogue is what ultimately leads Jesus to give a parable to answer the lawyer’s question(s).

- First off, we see that in response to the lawyer’s initial question about eternal life, Jesus asks him a question. He asks this *expert in the law* to think about and respond with what he thinks the law says concerning how one is to inherit eternal life. *Luke 10:26*
- The lawyer’s answer reflects his understanding of the law given to Israel and to him and in a way affirms that he is a “good Jew,” ready to affirm his knowledge of the law when asked. *Luke 10:27, Deuteronomy 6:1-9 & Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:34-40*
- The lawyer’s understanding is also reinforced by the fact that he answered correctly. However, with Jesus’ response to “Do this and you will live” he is now presented with a whole new set of problems. Instead of relenting his pride and seeking to understand how he can live out this calling (of course that would be possible only through Christ), he diverts the instruction away from himself and instead asks another question. *Luke 10:28-29*

By this point, we see very clearly that the lawyer’s motive in asking Jesus these questions was absolutely impure. This is based on the fact that:

- He asked the first question to test Jesus. His motive was not to learn or grow in his understanding, but rather to catch Jesus in some sort of trap. *Luke 10:25*
- He asked the second question to justify himself. He was not concerned with loving God and others, but rather he was more concerned about diverting any inquiry into his own actions and justifying himself. *Luke 10:29*

To answer the lawyer's question about his neighbor, Jesus gives this parable. It is important to recognize that the parable is given as a narrative, a story that would have likely happened, to illustrate one main point. It is not intended as an allegory and there is no indication that we can assign meaning to any particular part. *Luke 10:30-35*

In the parable we see four individuals presented:

- The Victim – Likely to be a Jew traveling on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho, a common but treacherous journey of about 17 miles through dangerous country.
- The Priest – A fellow Jew, who was likely expected to love the victim, but simply passes him by on the other side.
- The Levite – A descendant of Levi, who was assigned to assist the Priest in the temple. He also passed by on the other side.
- The Samaritan – Hated and scorned by the Jews because of mixed Jewish/Gentile ancestry. The most unlikely to help the Jewish victim. But this is who took pity on the man and took care of his needs. Quite ironic.

The lawyer then answers Jesus' question correctly by stating that the one who had mercy on the victim was his neighbor. Jesus concludes with the command to "Go and do likewise." *Luke 10:36-37*

### **You Can Do It – The Application**

It seems clear that the ultimate message of the parable is to show mercy to those in need. Like the lawyer, we are called to act out love and mercy and to live like the Samaritan and help our neighbor in need.

- And who is our neighbor? – Ultimately *anyone* in need of mercy. This could include family, friends, the homeless, people with broken-down cars, people who ask for money/food, etc.
- We are called to be a neighbor to *anyone* who is in need of help, regardless of geography, citizenship, or race and whether it is a spiritual or physical need.
- Unlike the lawyer, as believers we have a new heart that desires to love God with all we are and to love others as ourselves through the work Christ has done in us. *Matthew 22:34-40, Luke 10:27, Romans 13:8-10*
- How can we "Go and do likewise?" *Romans 12:9-21, 1 John 3:16-20*

### **Conclusion**

The lawyer came with impure motives to trap Jesus and to justify himself, but even still, from this account we gain an incredible explanation and example from Jesus of how we are to love others as our neighbors. And as believers with pure motives, we must be willing to live this out in all we do.