



CONSIDER IT

LEADER DEVO

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

—John 13:34

Let’s just admit it right up front: Loving others is a lot of work.

And loving others as Jesus loves them? That’s nearly flat-out impossible, especially if Jesus is serious about who we’re to love, which is pretty much everyone.

Jesus’ story about the injured Jewish traveler and the Samaritan makes it clear we’re called to love beyond the comfortable circle of our family, church, and tribe. If everyone whose needs we see counts as a neighbor ... well, that’s a big neighborhood.

But you’re not on your own when it comes to loving others. Your ability to love as Jesus has loved you is fueled not just by your determination, but by discipleship. As you follow Jesus, you’ll find He’s transforming you, helping you see others through the lens of His love for them.

That bully who always elbows his way to the front of the line isn’t just rude, he’s wounded and needs to know he’s loved for more than coming in first. The cynic who lashes out with criticism of everyone and everything is trapped by desperately wanting to measure up.

Loving others isn’t a matter of gritting your teeth and just doing it—if that’s your approach, you’ll run out of love long before your neighbors run out of needs.

But if you pause, take a deep breath, and ask Jesus to love others through you ... you’ll be amazed at what happens in your neighborhood.

And in you.



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BIBLE BACKGROUND

JESUS' LOVE REACHES OUT

A lawyer asks Jesus a question: Who should he consider to be a neighbor? Jesus responds with a story about a Samaritan traveler, a story giving the lawyer—and us—an uncomfortable definition of what it means to be neighborly.

Read Luke 10:25-37

In this story, Jesus tells about a Jewish traveler who was robbed, beaten, and left on the side of the road to die. Two men see him and pass on by, but then an unlikely individual stops to offer help—a Samaritan.

Jesus' audience may have gasped in surprise or confusion. The bloodied traveler and his helper were from different cultures and religious backgrounds. Yet despite their differences, the Samaritan chose to love his neighbor—though the beaten neighbor wasn't really his "neighbor" at all, at least by the prevailing standards of the day and place.

Jews were taught that fellow Jews were their neighbors, but people outside that family weren't. And conventional wisdom held that Jews were to love their neighbors but also hate their enemies (Matthew 5:43), which means there would have been no room for a rescue had the roles of the Samaritan and beaten man been reversed.

But this Samaritan didn't just notice the injured man or settle for calling for help. He got involved, making sure the traveler could recuperate in a comfortable room and paying for the injured man's expenses and medical care.

This Samaritan chose to love his neighbor with a love that reached out and met needs in a practical way. He was loving his neighbor as he loved himself.

Read Leviticus 19:18

God instructs Moses to gather God's people and to lay out for them standards by which to live. And in just a few words God sets the bar for what love looks like: In the same way you take care of yourself and your interests, that's the way you're to care for others and their interests.



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BIBLE BACKGROUND

This is the passage Jesus refers to in His encounter with the lawyer. The principle is simple, but everything hinges on how broadly “neighbor” is defined. And in this story Jesus widens the definition for the lawyer—and us.

Who’s your neighbor? Given this definition, who isn’t?