

Loving My Neighbor



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 11

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Luke 10:25; Matthew 26:56; Luke 10:27, 28; Matthew 22:37–40; Luke 10:30–37.

MEMORY VERSE: “The man answered, ‘Love the Lord your God. Love him with all your heart, all your soul [spirit], all your strength, and all your mind.’ Also, “You must love your neighbor as you love yourself’ ” (Luke 10:27, ERV).

Our love for other people shows our love for God in a real and powerful way.

WE ALL KNOW the Bible verse: “Love the Lord your God. Love him with all your heart, all your soul [spirit], all your strength, and all your mind” (Luke 10:27, ERV). Our love for God will grow weak if we say we love Him but do not obey Him. We say we love God, but how do we show this love in our day-to-day lives? We can't love God with only half our heart. We must give Him all our heart, spirit, body, and mind. We must give Him these things every day. Anyone can say, “I love God,” but really loving Him is a choice we make that takes all our strength and effort.

Loving God is important. At the same time, God also wants us to love other people. Our love for other people shows our love for God in a real and powerful way. The Bible says, “If we say we love God but hate any of our brothers or sisters in his family, we are liars. If we don't love someone we have seen, how can we love God? We have never even seen him” (1 John 4:20, ERV). Paul also tells us, “You obey the whole Law when you do this one thing, ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself’ ” (Galatians 5:14, NLV).

This week, we will learn how we can follow these important Bible rules in our lives.

THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION (Luke 10:25)

Who are we? Why are we here? What happens when we die? These questions are the most important questions we humans can ask. In the book of Luke, someone comes to Jesus with the most important question of all.

What question did the lawyer ask Jesus? Why did he ask it? Read Luke 10:25 for the answers.

The Bible tells us that the lawyer asked his question because he really wanted to give Jesus a test. Many people today are the same as this lawyer. They come to Jesus with doubt. But Jesus can touch their hearts anyway. That's what Jesus did with the lawyer. Jesus knew that the lawyer's question gave Him the perfect chance to encourage this man and the people in the crowd to search their own hearts. Jesus knew why the lawyer asked the question. At the same time, Jesus wasn't going to refuse to answer the man or not be polite to him.

In the end, what question is more important for us than the lawyer's question? " 'Teacher, what must I do to get eternal [everlasting] life?' " (Luke 10:25, ERV). This question is the reason for everything we do. No question has more meaning for us as humans, whose lives are "like [the same as] a fog. You can see it [the fog] for a short time, but then it goes away" (James 4:14, ERV).

Read 1 Corinthians 15:30–32. What is Paul saying in these verses? How does this idea help us understand that everlasting life is very important?

The lawyer may have asked Jesus this question to give Him a test. Jesus wanted to save the lawyer. So, Jesus asked the lawyer a question, too. Do you see how Jesus used these questions to touch the hearts of the people in the crowd who watched and listened to Him?

How can we use every chance that comes our way to share the Good News about Jesus?



Jesus wanted to save the lawyer.

JESUS' ANSWER (Matthew 26:56)

The Bible tells us that the lawyer wanted to give Jesus a test. Jesus knew the real reason that the lawyer asked Him the question. God knows the feelings that are in our hearts more than we do.

Sometimes people from other religions ask us about our faith. Our Muslim friends may say, "Where in the Bible did Jesus say He is God?" Or "Why do you say there is one God and that God is three separate persons?" Often, we may feel that our friends attack our faith when they ask us these questions. We must remember that their questions may hide a deep wish for Jesus to fill their hearts. We don't know their hearts. We don't need to. We must do our best to help them, whatever their reasons for asking us hard questions.

Read Matthew 26:56; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 15:3; and 2 Timothy 3:16. How do these verses help us understand Jesus' answer to the lawyer in Luke 10:26?



We must do more than pay attention to what other people tell us. We need to read the Bible for ourselves.

Sometimes we want Bible answers, but we are too lazy to study the Bible ourselves. Jesus asked the lawyer, "What is written in the law? What do you understand from it?" (Luke 10:26, ERV). Jesus helps us to understand a very important part of learning. We must do more than pay attention to what other people tell us. We need to read the Bible for ourselves. The answers are already there. The Holy Spirit works on our hearts and helps us know our duty.

God gave us His Word, the Bible. From it, we can learn all the Bible truth we need to know about how to live and how we should love other people. The Bible also teaches us about everlasting life. Yes, teachers and preachers are necessary. But in the end, we must go to the Bible for ourselves to learn about the important truths for our lives. "Your word is like [the same as] a lamp that shows me the way. It is like a light that guides me" (Psalm 119:105, NIV). This verse is more than a beautiful word picture from a poem. This verse is holy Bible truth that shows us that the Word of God is important to our lives.

Jesus was the Word of God in a human body. Jesus always told people to read the Bible. What does His advice tell us about why the Bible is so important? Why must we reject any idea that causes us not to trust the Bible?

TO GET EVERLASTING LIFE (Luke 10:27, 28)

What was the lawyer's answer to his own question? Read Luke 10:27, 28?

The lawyer asked the question and then answered it: " 'Love the Lord your God. Love him with all your heart, all your soul [spirit], all your strength, and all your mind.' Also, 'You must love your neighbor as you love yourself' " (Luke 10:27, ERV).

What did Jesus think about this answer? "Jesus said, 'Your answer is right [correct]' " (Luke 10:28, ERV). Then Jesus told him to do something about it: " 'Do this and you will have eternal [everlasting] life' " (Luke 10:28, ERV).

For most of us Christians, giving the correct answer about Bible teachings and faith is easy. The hard part is doing what we know is correct and following what we believe. A lot of people know enough to be saved. They will be lost anyway because they didn't obey what they knew. So, this topic is very important. You know you must love God and your neighbor. That's wonderful! But knowing is not enough. You must show them how much you love them!

Read James 2:17–22. What Bible truth does James teach us in these verses? How is this idea the same thing that Jesus said to the lawyer?

If we love God, we will read the Bible, His Word. We will pray. We will obey His commandments. We will obey Him with all our heart. What if I say I love people, but I don't care about my church members? Or what if I pay no attention to other people's needs? What good is my faith? The Christian faith is more than a set of beliefs. The Christian faith is a new way of life.

"What if a Christian does not have clothes or food? And one of you says to him, 'Goodbye, keep yourself warm and eat well.' But if you do not give him what he needs, how does that help him?" (James 2:15, 16, ERV).

How much do you care about the needs of other people? How much do you follow the words of Paul: "Each one of you should not think only about himself, but about other people also" (Philippians 2:4, WE). How can we, with God's help, show other people that we care about them?



What if I say I love people, but I don't care about my church members?

LOVING PEOPLE AS WE LOVE OURSELVES (Matthew 22:37–40)

Compare what Jesus says in Matthew 22:37–40 with His answer to the lawyer in Luke 10:27, 28.



Paul, Micah, and John explain that the things we do and our behavior show the faith in our hearts.

In Matthew 22:37–40, Jesus says that we show our faith when we love God and other people. In Luke 10:27, 28, Jesus says that when people do these two things, they will have everlasting life.

“Love is the most important rule of God’s government in heaven and on earth. Love must be in our hearts and in everything we think, feel, and do. Only love can keep us loyal to God. Only love can give us the strength we need to say no to sin.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 49, adapted.

Read Galatians 5:14; Micah 6:6–8; and 1 John 4:20, 21. How do these verses teach what Jesus told us?

Paul says, “You obey the whole Law when you do this one thing, ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself’ ” (Galatians 5:14, NLV). Paul teaches that folks can see we love God very much when we show our love for the people around us. A life of faith is not something we hide or that no one can see. Paul, Micah, and John explain that the things we do and our behavior show the faith in our hearts.

In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul explains real love. People may say they have much knowledge. They may do wonderful miracles. They may have a lot of faith or give up their lives for their beliefs. But if these people don’t have love, then, in the end, they “get nothing at all” (1 Corinthians 13:3, NIV).

Look at the Ellen G. White quote above. Do you see how she says that we can say no to sin only if we have God’s love in our hearts? How does this idea teach us that God’s command to love doesn’t mean we are saved because of our good behavior? How does this idea also teach us that love shows us the faith we have in Jesus?

THE GOOD SAMARITAN STORY TODAY (Luke 10:30–37)

After the lawyer gave the correct answer, Jesus said, “ ‘Do this and you will have eternal [everlasting] life’ ” (Luke 10:28, ERV). With these words, Jesus showed us what was in the man’s heart. The lawyer knew how to give all the correct answers. Living them was the problem. If doing the right thing was a problem for this man 2,000 years ago, how hard is it for us today? The lawyer wanted to trap Jesus and show off in front of everyone. The lawyer wanted people to see that he was very smart. So, he asked Jesus another question: “ ‘Who is my neighbor?’ ” (Luke 10:29, NLV).

Read the story in Luke 10:30–37. What lesson does Jesus teach us in these verses?

Are there people around us that have been hurt by other people? Have we done everything we can to help them?

Sometimes pastors, church leaders, and church members don’t help the people who need help the most. Sometimes people from another church or religion are more loving to people in our community than we are. We talk about being loving, but other people may meet the needs of the ones in ways we haven’t. If our faith means anything, we must try to help the ones in need.

Jesus ended the story about the good Samaritan with a question. Who among the three men was the real neighbor to the person who needed help?

“Jesus answers the question, ‘Who is my neighbor?’ Jesus shows us that our neighbor is not only someone in our church or a member of our religion. Our neighbor does not belong only to one race or has only one skin color. Our neighbor doesn’t belong only to one class of people. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help. Our neighbor is every person that Satan has hurt and injured. Our neighbor is everyone who is God’s property.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 503, adapted.

Task #1: Pray every day for someone who is different from you. Or pray for someone who you may not really like.

Task #2: Make a list of three people you know who aren’t Seventh-day Adventists. What are their needs? How can you help meet their needs? What can you do for them in the coming week? Ask God to help you meet their needs.



**If our faith means anything,
we must try to help
the ones in need.**

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Good Samaritan,” pages 497–505, in *The Desire of Ages*.

“‘Here are the beliefs and way of life that God our Father accepts as pure [holy] and without fault [sin]. When widows are in trouble, take care of them. Do the same for children who have no parents. And don’t let the world [people who don’t follow God] make you impure [not clean in your heart].’ [James 1:27, NIV]. Jesus wants us to be loving and to help people. Jesus wants us to say loving words to cheer people’s hearts. He wants us to do unselfish acts. He wants us to love the poor and needy. He wants us to help people who are suffering. Our hearts must be filled with pity for people who feel sad and hopeless. Give to the needy. Offer clothes to people who have none. Invite strangers into your house and make them feel welcome. Give them a place in your home and in your heart. When you do these things, angels will come very near, and the angels in heaven will be filled with joy. Every time we are fair to someone or show a person mercy or love, the angels in heaven sing songs. God the Father sits on His throne in heaven. He sees the ones who do these acts of mercy. These people are God’s most precious treasures. ‘The Lord said, “They belong to me. I will be kind [show mercy] to them. Parents are very kind to their children who obey them. In the same way I will be kind to my followers.” ’ [Malachi 3:17, ERV]. In God’s eyes, every act of mercy and love we show to the needy and the suffering, we do to Jesus. Remember this Bible truth when you help the poor. When you show pity to the suffering and help orphans, your relationship with Jesus grows deep and strong.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 2, page 25, adapted.



“Invite strangers into your house and make them feel welcome.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What are some of the hard feelings we have in our hearts about people who are different from us? How can we learn to let these feelings go?
- ② What Bible verses can you find to show that we need to show mercy to other people, whoever they are?
- ③ How can we make sure we understand that obeying the command to love God and other people isn’t the same as saving ourselves with our good behavior?

THE ROAD TO SPAIN: PART 1

Luis got sick shortly after he was baptized. At that time, Luis started studying to be a pastor at the Venezuelan Adventist University.

At first, Luis thought he had the flu. But then he got worse. He had trouble breathing. Doctors thought that the pollen, or yellow powder, on the orange blossoms around the university made Luis sick. Luis got many shots to help him breathe more easily. But his lungs continued to give him trouble. Luis's doctors told him to quit his studies and go home to get well. But Luis didn't want to leave school. He continued to get more medical tests to figure out his problem.

Then a medical test showed that Luis had HIV. HIV can cause AIDS, a terrible disease that can cause much suffering and death. At that time, people in Venezuela were very afraid of HIV. Many people thought they could get HIV if they touched someone who had it. Luis was asked to leave school.

Luis had no choice but to go home. At home, he had more medical tests. The tests always showed the same thing: he had HIV. Luis didn't understand why this was happening to him when he was trying so hard to follow God. Wasn't he also studying to become a pastor? He felt very sad.

A church leader saw that Luis looked very sad. The church leader told him, "You should be joyful. If you aren't joyful, then you haven't really met Jesus."

The church leader's words cut Luis deep in his heart. Luis went home and knelt down on his bedroom floor. He prayed, "I don't want You to heal me. I just want to preach for the rest of the days that You give me to live."

In that instant, something strange happened. Luis felt as if fire filled his heart. The heat spread over his whole body. Then Luis fainted.

Later, when Luis got another medical test, the test showed that he no longer had HIV. Luis was surprised. He asked to take another test, and another test after that. Always he was HIV-free. The doctor said, "Why do you keep asking for more tests? You don't need to take any more tests. You're healed."

Luis kept his promise to God. Luis became a preacher and helped many people to accept Jesus. Luis got married and finished his studies at the university in 2006.

Luis says, "I haven't stopped preaching the Good News about Jesus since He healed me."

Today, Luis and his family are workers for God in Spain.

Thank you for your Sabbath School mission offering that helps support church workers worldwide. Read more about Luis next week and learn why he left Venezuela.

INSIDE
Story
by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Luis felt as if fire filled his heart.

