

Small Group Materials: Luke 10

Loving God and Your Neighbor

Study Summary and Learning Objectives

This study is intended to help us identify our neighbor and how to show God's love to them.

Objectives

- Trace the history of the coming of God's kingdom throughout the Bible.
- Look at how we as believers are called to show God's love.

Steps to Prepare (For Leaders)

- This study has quite a few textboxes with historical context information and other Scripture. Read through these so you can provide summaries as needed and have the information available as you move through your discussion.
- Reflect on the opening activity.

Questions for Discussion

? Have you ever received love and kindness from someone you wouldn't have expected? What did it look like?

Leader's Note: This a long passage; try to break it up by having multiple people read.

Read Out Loud: Luke 10 (NIV)

¹ After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ² He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. ³ Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. ⁴ Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

⁵ "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' ⁶ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

⁸ "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. ⁹ Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ¹¹ 'Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.' ¹² I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

¹³ "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴ But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. ¹⁵ And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades.

¹⁶ “Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”

¹⁸ He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

²¹ At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

²² “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

²³ Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. ²⁴ For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

²⁷ 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.’”

²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ 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. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ 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.’

³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

⁴¹ “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Activity

Read Out Loud: On your own, take five minutes to brainstorm a list of people and groups who are your neighbors. Think about how society treats them. **Only complete the first two columns, we will come back to the third later.** After five minutes we'll share our lists with the group.

Possible Answers: If people get stuck, encourage them to start by thinking about their physical location. Maybe it's their upstairs neighbor. Maybe it's the homeless population or those who live in North Minneapolis. Maybe it's the Muslim and Somali populations.

My Neighbor	How Society Treats Them	How I Can Treat Them
<i>Example: Muslims in our community</i>	<i>With suspicion and avoidance</i>	<i>With respect by saying hello, making eye contact, having conversations</i>

Questions for Discussion



In verse 2, Jesus refers to the world as a "harvest."

How does this idea change the way you think of the world?

Possible Answer: We should seek to love and tell the Gospel to all people. Jesus doesn't want us to just show love to those inside the church, but outside of it too.

Read Out Loud: Jesus sends out 72 disciples at the beginning of the chapter. According to Genesis 10, the number of the world's nations is 72. This number symbolizes that the Gospel is going out to all the nations.

"The number "twelve" was meaningful in the choosing of the apostles [earlier in Luke], so we are predisposed to regard the number seventy-two is significant too. According to Genesis 10...the number of the world's nations is seventy-two...Accordingly, the appointment of the seventy-two can be understood as prefiguring the universal mission of Acts [to preach the gospel to all the nations.]"
~Joel B. Green, Gospel of Luke Commentary

Isaiah 11:1-2 (NIV)

¹ Then a shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD.

Isaiah 11:6a (NIV)

And the wolf will live with the lamb...

? In vs. 3, Jesus tells His followers that He is sending them out like “lambs among wolves.” This is a reference to Isaiah 11, saying that when the Messiah comes, peace will be on the land so that the wolf will live with the lamb, and all of the nations will come to the Messiah. What do you think Jesus is claiming here?

Possible Answer: That in the sending out of these disciples, the Messiah, Jesus, is bringing nations into His kingdom like He said He would. The time of peace is upon us.

? Jesus instructs His disciples to tell the people they meet that the kingdom of God is near. What is the kingdom of God? Why is this important?

Possible Answer: The fulfillment of what Isaiah 11 says. God’s justice and peace coming to the earth through His Messiah. God undoing the effects of the fall through miracles.

? If all the nations are supposed to be included in God’s kingdom, then as Christ-followers, what should be our response to racism and prejudice?

Possible Answers: That in Christ, there is now no distinction between people, the only dividing line is Jesus Himself. All people in Christ are in the same family. Although ethnicity and race do create divides in our culture and world today, God ascribes equal value to all people regardless of ethnicity or race. We see this in passages such as Galatians 3, Romans 10, and John 4. During the first century there was a huge ethnic divide between the Jews and the Gentiles. The practices and teachings of Jesus (and by extension Peter, Paul & other NT authors) were radical in that they broke down the dividing wall between those two groups of people and declared all people to be equal in the sight of God.

Leaders’ Note: We realize that this may become a heated topic in your group. Please feel free to direct people that this is not meant to be a debate, but a time of wrestling through a challenging topic as a Gospel-centered community. Also, please be careful not to get “stuck” here. The main objective of this study is to move forward in thinking through concrete ways we can love and serve our neighbors.

The relation between Jew and Samaritan was one of hostility. The expulsion of Manasseh by Nehemiah for an unlawful marriage, and his building of the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim by permission of Darius Nothus, took place about 409 BC. The inhospitality (Luke 9:52, 53) and hostility of the Samaritans induced many pilgrims from the north to Jerusalem to go on the east of the Jordan . . . The Jews repaid hate with hate. They cast suspicion on the Samaritan copy of the law, and disallowed the steadfast claim of the Samaritans to Jewish birth (John 4:12). Social and commercial relations, though they could not be broken off (4:8), were reduced to the lowest possible figure.
-Unger Bible Dictionary (959)

? When the Expert of the Law asks Jesus who his neighbor is, what answer do you think he expects?

Possible Answer: He is trying to trick Jesus. He is being legalistic—if he has a list of who to love and who not to, it's easier to enforce.

? In what ways do we try to “trick” God to make Him fit into our desired lifestyles, view of Christianity, etc.?

Possible Answers: Taking Bible verses out of context to support one cause or another. Selling products or services to Christians on the basis that the item is “Christian”.

We do not know the nationality of the injured man. Without any clothes, and unconscious, the Priest and Levite cannot tell if he is a Jew. If the person lying there is a non Jew, the priest and Levite (assistant priest) could be risking defilement, especially if the person were actually dead. If he defiles himself, he cannot collect, distribute, and eat tithes. His family and servants will suffer the consequences with him. This will last until he completes a week long cleansing. The Samaritan is not a gentile. He is bound by the same law as the Jews. The Samaritan would not be naturally from that area, so the half dead man would certainly not qualify as his neighbor.

~Walvoord, John F., and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

? Optional: There are potential consequences to the Priest, Levite, and Samaritan if they decide to help. Not helping, the man could die. Are you surprised that the Priest and Levite choose not to help? Why or why not?

Possible Answers: It's not surprising: The Priest and Levite weighed the consequences (discomfort to themselves and family, along with shame for being unclean) to the gain (saving a man whose nationality is unsure), and decided the risk was not worth it. It is surprising: God commands us to love one another, regardless of background. See Malachi 2:10.

? The Expert of the Law has so much animosity for the Samaritans that he won't even say his name in response to Jesus' question. In our present day society, where do we see this animosity?

Possible Answers: Derogatory names or slang terms for people of other races. Disparities in homelessness, or income, based on race. The freedom to travel based on race.

Read Out Loud: Let's now take some time to go back to our lists and complete the last column. Think about specific actions that you can take. Discuss with the group if you have difficulties thinking of specific ways to live out the coming of the kingdom of God.

For Discussion and Accountability

? Look at your list. Who are you going to have the most trouble showing love to? Why do you think that is? Think of something you can do this week to show love to others because of Jesus.