

# “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?”

## Won’t You Be My Neighbor?

No matter how much we prepare, every human being eventually faces a painful scenario for which we just are not *ready*— something that hurts more or differently than we thought it would. This may be caused by other people, uncontrollable outside circumstances, or even ourselves, but regardless of the cause, these situations all have one thing in common: they force us to rely on the people around us to get through the season of pain.

### Start Talking

1. Who is the best neighbor(s) you’ve ever had? Explain.
2. Who was the worst neighbor you ever had? Explain.
3. Would you rather find yourself living between fun neighbors, or neighbors you never notice? Why?

### Looking Back

1. Last week, Andy talked about intentionally evaluating what we hope people will remember us with gratitude for after life is over. How did you answer that question? And what did you change about your life over the past week to make it happen?
2. Did you identify any people around you experiencing the three “nots?” (Those for whom things are not going well, those who find themselves walking through circumstances for which they were not prepared, or those who are not in church.)
3. Were you able to extend the invitation from last week’s message? (Life is complicated. You want to get it right. We want to help. Will you come sit with me?) How did it go?

### What About You?

1. Have you ever faced a situation in life for which you were technically *prepared*, but still not *ready* for reality or gravity of how you would feel as the circumstances unfolded? What was it like?
2. Do you find it more difficult to deal with pain caused by other people, the uncontrollable nature of life, or your own mistakes? Why?



3. When life is difficult, do you find it easy or difficult to share your needs and struggles with other people? If you don't, what is the biggest obstacle impeding communication?
4. Why do you think it's so difficult to make the decision to get helpfully involved in other peoples' lives when we see that they are struggling?
5. Have you ever felt isolated during a season of pain? What happened?

### Look It Up

Read the Following Passages: Luke 10:25 – 37

6. Why do you think the expert in religious law asked Jesus this specific question? How do you react to his answer?
7. Why do you think Jesus asked such a specific follow-up question about who qualifies as a "neighbor?"
8. In the parable, what sorts of justifications do you imagine are going on in each passerby's internal monologue? How do they excuse their decision not to get involved?
9. Why is the fact that Jesus chooses to cast the victim's rescuer as a *Samaritan* so notable? What does it say about our responsibility to our fellow human beings?
10. How would you describe the nature of the Samaritan's assistance? What does it tell us about God's will for how we should serve those who are struggling?
11. Why do you think Jesus uses this specific example when discussing what a person must do in order to inherit eternal life?

### Putting It All Together

1. Speaking candidly, which of the passersby do you find most relatable? *(This may be a good spot for leaders to share their answer. "For me, it's the guy who used religious rules as an excuse." "I really relate to the person who maybe wanted to help but was too busy." "I find myself quibbling about who really qualifies as a "neighbor" entitled to my help.")*
2. Who do you find yourself most willing to classify as a "neighbor?" You don't have to answer out loud, but who do you find yourself least willing to grant that status in your life?
3. What can you do to follow the example Jesus gives us this week, and get involved even with people society says you shouldn't care about— even at potentially great cost to yourself?
4. What reminders can you leave yourself to be actively on the lookout for people stuck in painful situations as you walk through your daily life this week?
5. How do you think our community would be transformed if every follower of Christ took the parable of the Good Samaritan seriously for the next seven days?

