

## Love's True Grit - Part One, love is genuine

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### BIG IDEA - love doesn't look for loopholes

#### scripture focus - Luke 10:25-29 NLT

“One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: “Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus replied, “What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?” The man answered, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ And, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” “Right!” Jesus told him. **“Do this and you will live!”** The **man wanted to justify his actions**, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

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The word, “expert” bothers me sometimes. Are they experts **because they know something** or are they experts **because they have learned something**?

**Watching a YouTube, Reel or TikTok** on something does not make one an expert!

I am a sucker for useless information that is so appealing to me but holds no value for me or anyone I share it with. Being an introvert at heart, it's my throw away “party” lines to break into the cool crowd of folks who have far more confidence than I do. I throw out quippy tidbits giving the airs of expertise but know really nothing the subject. I mean well. And, I am curious and love facts, stats, and strange random details, but I should keep it to myself. I love throwing down the old “snapple-cap” facts and watching their face freeze for a

moment. I think they are pondering, but the truth is they're thinking, "what's that got to do with anything we were talking about?"

Although I'd like to get all judgey about this "expert in religious law," I realize he was just playing a game of truth-poker with the wrong person. Luke, the Doctor, points out the motive of our "expert" character in this passage.

This might be the kind of lawyer you want to **get you out of jail but not out of a jamb**. The lawyer stands up to test Jesus!

### **Luke 10:25-29 NLT**

"One day **an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus** by asking him this question: "Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?" The man answered, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" "Right!" Jesus told him. "**Do this and you will live!**" The **man wanted to justify his actions**, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

There is a whole backstory to this phrase "**expert in religious law**" in my notes. Basically Ezra, the priest in Israel during the time of Babylon, had appointed a specialized category for some learned men to both preserve and protect the written laws of God, most likely the Pentateuch (Torah), the first five books of our Bible. This new category was called scribes. These men helped Ezra keep the Jewish people on track with God while in exile. God didn't tell Ezra to do this, it was of his own volition. Fast forward several hundred years to the time of Jesus' in the New Testament and the scribes had not only risen in popularity, but they had also risen in power. Now there were specific sub-groups of scribes that included a mix of "legal" experts as well as sociopolitical groups like the Pharisees and Sadducees.

**Luke says this expert stood up to test Jesus.**

Luke uses this word **ekpeirazó: to test thoroughly, tempt.**

The word itself can be used positively or negatively depending on the context.

To think of it **negatively the lawyer was tempting, baiting Jesus into a useless discussion about the “technicalities” of inheriting (kléronomeó: to inherit) as in Israel and ONLY Israel, being THE rightful heir to eternal life.**

If it was a **positive, thoughtful, honest question it would be an experiment, a social discussion, comparing ideas of rights, privileges, and benefits of being a true Jew.**

**This lawyer may have been seeking truth, NOT weaponizing it!**

**How did Jesus see it?** Great question! Like a great, wise teacher, he asks the lawyer.

Jesus replied, **“What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?”**

The man answered, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ And, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

**Winner winner, chicken dinner - great, great we like steak! You are correct sir!**

One commentator writes, **“Jesus used this exact summary in His last duel with the Pharisees** {[Matthew 22:1- Matthew 22:46](#); [Mark 12:1 - Mark 12:44](#)}. **Did Jesus adopt this lawyer’s summary?”**

**Admittedly, it takes great skill, insight, and courage to take two completely different concepts, one from the Shema, the Creed of Israel and the other from an obscure passage out of Leviticus 19:18 and combine them. Genius.**

Jesus basically told the man, “You nailed it!”

You got it...now go do it and you will live!

### **What was it that shifted in his heart, his mind?**

He was engaged and tracking with Jesus then **AFTER Jesus affirms him and says great you know what to do, now get on with it, something happened.**

**Luke tells us the man wanted to justify his actions.**

Two Greek words, theló: to will, wish or desiring to. dikaióo: to show to be righteous. **He desired to prove himself righteous.**

**Is it wrong to show yourself or prove yourself, right?** Well, I guess that depends. **Are you trying to do right OR get out of doing right?**

**The lawyer's own question revealed his act of pretense pretending to be righteous.**

**He could have been a contender, but he turned out to be a pretender.**

**Maybe the lawyer thought that he had already been doing a fine job at neighboring?**

**Maybe he was the best neighbor ever in the Jewish community but couldn't stand non-Jews or foreigners.**

**I have questions!**

**Was Jesus challenge to DO what he already KNEW too much? Did it offend him, embarrass him?**

**Did Jesus step on an incongruent nerve between knowing and doing?**

**Is it embarrassing for someone to point out a behavior that may betray our knowledge?**

What was it? What is it that allows us to KNOW what to do but lack the WILL to do it?

Knowledge doesn't always come easily for people. There are plenty that DO NOT **know** what to do! There are also those who know what they should do, but don't.

**Love's True Grit doesn't look for loopholes, it looks for opportunities!**

**The first letter, "G" in G.R.I.T. stands for GENUINE.** Love that is true is GENUINE.

**Takeaway: The lawyer's interaction with Jesus teaches us two things: One, we have to DO what we already know. Two, God doesn't want us looking for loopholes to avoid loving people,**

One of our seniors, a widow who practiced being a neighbor under very difficult circumstances – **shared grief is easier to bear.**

Close with the story about our widow and her neighbor. She warmly greeted the children and just waved and smiled until she finally found out their names. Then she found out the children's parent's names and had brief but pleasant conversations with both the husband and wife. One day the husband called her in a panic. Could she come over to watch the children because his wife was having a medical emergency. The point is, he knew he could call for help if needed. Our widow was safe and had already established a rapport with the children. She went over to their home to watch the children and wait to find out what happened to the wife. It turns out the wife had brain aneurysm and died. This now devastated husband was a father of two young children. Fortunately, his parents were close, and they have been able to help when needed. But he was struggling with grief and the loss of his wife. He would get to a point that was completely overwhelming for him, so he would show up at our widow's door, distraught and depressed. They would sit at her dining room table while he would cry and ask a lot of really tough questions. It was very emotionally difficult on both our widow and her neighbor. At one point he was able to ask her, "How did you handle

losing your husband.” She calmly told him that she belonged to a church and had a lot of people who loved both her and her husband, so she was surrounded by support from friends. Then she asked him, “Do you go to church?”

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## NOTES

### Scriptures

#### Luke 10:25-29 NLT

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### Questions

**Q:** What are our religious limitations or our cultural, friend group limitations?

**Q:** What do think shifted in this lawyer’s mind?

**Q:** How could he be spot on answering the question, but so far off in application?

**Q:** Had the lawyer thought that he had already been neighboring?

**Q:** Was Jesus’ challenge to DO what he already KNEW too much?

**Q:** Did Jesus step on an incongruent nerve between knowing and doing?

**Q:** Is it embarrassing for someone to point out a behavior that may betray our knowledge?

## COMMENTARY REFERENCES

### Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers

(25) **And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up.**—On the word “lawyer” and its difference from the more generic “scribe,” see Note on [Matthew 22:35](#).

[**A lawyer.**—The precise distinction between the “lawyer” and the other scribes rested, probably, on technicalities that have left little or no trace behind them.

The word suggests the **thought of a section of the scribes who confined their attention to the Law**, while the others included in their studies the writings of the Prophets also. In [Luke 7:30](#); [Luke 11:45](#), they appear as distinct from the Pharisees. The question asked by the "lawyer" here and in [Luke 10:25](#) falls in with this view.]

Here, as there, **the "tempting" does not necessarily imply hostile purpose**. It was simply a test-question to see if the new Teacher was sound in His view of the ethical obligations of the Law.

**He gives to the much-debated question of the schools, as to which was the great commandment of the Law?** Would He fix on circumcision, or the Sabbath, or tithes, or sacrifice, as that which held the place of pre-eminence?

[Glenn: We know the Pharisees observed and obsessed over particular areas of the Law. The Sabbath was one that was strictly regulated and lawbreakers would be fined or shunned if caught violating the excessive additions

([https://www.ou.org/holidays/the\\_thirty\\_nine\\_categories\\_of\\_sabbath\\_work\\_prohibited\\_by\\_law/](https://www.ou.org/holidays/the_thirty_nine_categories_of_sabbath_work_prohibited_by_law/))

to commandment #4 - Exodus 31:12-17.]

### MacLaren's Expositions

The lawyer knows the letter too well to be at a loss what to answer. **But it is remarkable that he gives the same combination of two passages which Jesus gives in His last duel with the Pharisees** {[Matthew 22:1](#)- [Matthew 22:46](#); [Mark 12:1](#) - [Mark 12:44](#)}. **Did Jesus adopt this lawyer's summary?** Or is Luke's narrative condensed, omitting stages by which Jesus led the man to so wise an answer? The lawyer's question, 'Who is my neighbour?' is turned round the other way in Christ's form of it at the close. It is better to ask 'Whose neighbour am I?' than 'Who is my neighbour?' **The lawyer meant by the word 'a person whom I am bound to love.'** **He wanted to know how far an obligation extended which he had no mind to recognise an inch farther than he was obliged.**

Probably he had in his thought the **Rabbinical limitations** which made it as much duty to 'hate thine enemy' as to 'love thy neighbour.' Probably, too, he accepted the **national limitations**, which refused to see any neighbours outside the Jewish people.

**[Glenn: What are our religious limitations or our cultural, friend group limitations?]** 'Neighborhood,' in his judgment, implied 'nearness,' and **he wished to know how far off the boundaries of the region included in the command lay. There are a great many of us like him, who think that the obligation is a matter of geography**, and that love, like force, is inversely as the square of the distance.

[Glenn: Maybe in our case, it's the opposite? Maybe we think of loving a neighbor is in a region far from us, our church, our own home. Truth is, **maybe our neighbor is actually our next door neighbor**. Pastor Emily, sharing in our staff

Devo a few weeks back, says “we tend to think of **our neighbors as metaphorical not not and literal or physical.**” We have been reading a book called “The Art of Neighboring” by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon.]

### Word Studies in the New Testament

Matthew 6:13 (WSNT): Temptation (πειρασμόν). It is a mistake to define this word as only solicitation to evil. It means trial of any kind, without reference to its moral quality. Thus, Gen. 22:1 (Sept.), “God did tempt Abraham;” “This he said to prove him” (John 6:6); Paul and Timothy assayed to go to Bithynia (Acts 16:7); “Examine yourselves” (2 Cor. 13:5). Here, generally of all situations and circumstances which furnish an occasion for sin. We cannot pray God not to tempt us to sin, “for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man” (James 1:13).

Matthew 5:43 (WSNT): Neighbor (τὸν πλησίον). Another word to which the Gospel has imparted a broader and deeper sense. Literally it means the one near (so the Eng., neighbor = nigh-bor), indicating a mere outward nearness, proximity.

### The Bible Knowledge Commentary

An expert in the Law asked Jesus, Teacher ... what must I do to inherit eternal life? This question surfaced on several occasions (Matt. 19:16–22; Luke 18:18–23; John 3:1–15). The question in this case was not sincere, as can be seen from two points in the text: (1) The lawyer wanted to test Jesus. (He called Jesus “Teacher,” didaskale, Luke’s equivalent of a Jewish Rabbi.) (2) After Jesus answered the man’s question, Luke recorded that the man wished to justify himself (Luke 10:29).

Jesus answered his question with two other questions (v. 26), driving the Law expert back to the Old Testament Law. The expert answered correctly by quoting from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. One must love ... God and one’s fellowman in order to keep the Law properly. Jesus affirmed that if the man did this, he would live.

**The man’s response should have been to ask, “How can I do this? I am not able. I need help.”** Instead, he tried “to justify himself,” that is, to defend himself against the implications of Jesus’ words. So he tried to move the focus off himself by asking, And who is my neighbor?

## INTERNET LINKS

**Who is my neighbor - <https://www.gotquestions.org/who-is-my-neighbor.html>**

## Summary of Messages – Love's True Grit:

- **True Love is Genuine:** Love doesn't look for loopholes.