

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"LOVE MAKES A NEIGHBOR" | LUKE 10:25-42 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What comes to mind with the word "neighbor"?

"The Good Samaritan" (Luke 10: 25-37)

The lawyer asked Jesus "Who Is My Neighbor", suggesting he believed there were limits to who he had to love. Yet Jesus' story shows that's the wrong mindset. **Why do people want to limit who receives their love and compassion?**

In the parable the Samaritan helps in a way that is both risky and costly, showing sacrifice, and then Jesus says go and do like that. **How can people truly live like this consistently?**

"The Good Devotion" (Luke 10: 38-42)

Jesus challenges Martha about how her busyness and frustration with her sister comes from her worry and anxiety. **Why is anxiety so powerful at causing distraction? How can following Christ impact a person's anxiety?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Pastor Brian's message focused on a man who struggled with a legalistic approach to God and a woman who struggled with a busy approach to God. Jesus challenges them both to change their focus and to think about what it truly means to love God and to love others. **How has your focus or mindset towards God been challenged recently? How did that impact you? Pray and ask God to direct your focus and actions to truly honor and worship Him.**

Love Makes A Neighbor

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

A. Slide2-7 Shane: Youth Camp TY. VBS TY. Missions Prayer. DC & GS. Facilities.

B. Slide8 Prayer:

II. **Intro:** Love Makes A Neighbor

A. **Outline:** 2 stories, The Good Samaritan & The Good Devotion.

1. The Good Samaritan story is calling for an *active doing* disciple. The Mary-Martha story is calling for a *being* disciple.
2. The Good Samaritan story is evangelical calling for a religious man to become Jesus' disciple. The Mary-Martha story is about discipleship of a believer being reoriented by Jesus.

III. Slide9 **THE GOOD SAMARITAN (25-37)** Read

A. This isn't some simple religious platitude about how to be kind to other people.

This is a hard-hitting parable of conviction that is designed to crush the pride of a sinner who is in denial about his lost condition.

1. To put him to the test - he's not in the search for *information*, but to see *what kind of answer* Jesus would give. Maybe he's hoping he would answer badly, then he would step in and wow the crowd.
2. Teacher what should I do - he's coming from a *salvation by works* angle.

B. Slide10a We find ourselves warped and off track, like the lawyer, the priest, and the Levite when we're trying to define **who's in and who's out** on *THE NEIGHBOR SCALE*

1. When we're asking, **who is an insider and who is an outsider**, a neighbor and a non-neighbor, **us versus** them, who is someone to love and who is someone to ignore, when one group counts and another group doesn't, who I should care about and who I can wash my hands of ... then we're still asking the wrong question.

2. Where are **my limits** to love? **my boundaries**? It's surely **conditioned** upon something ... **or is it?**

C. **Slide10b** (27) These 2 scriptures he squeezes together, sums it up *love God and love your neighbor*. Joseph Parker said, *Love of God means love of man. Religion is the divine side of philanthropy; philanthropy is the practical side of religion. We must first be right with God, or we never can be right with man.*

1. **Slide10c** You and I are called to love every human on this planet, **as we love our self**. Anyone who has *fallen in the gutter* we need to help them get out, **and not ask, how did you get here?**

D. (28) The lawyer is now on the spot. This system is seeking to defend, is a system that cannot save anyone. *The lawyer just condemned himself & the whole world. Because no one can perfectly/persistently obey the whole law w/their whole person.*

1. When Jesus says, *do this and you'll live*, He isn't saying you can get to heaven by being perfect. He simply holding up **a mirror** so the man can **Slide11a see his sin**. As one said, *You've got to get them lost before you can get them saved.*

2. **See**, the the only thing that keeps you from *being saved*, when you understand the gospel is, **the issue whether or not you will admit to your sinfulness.**

E. **The Lawyer** (one who studies the Law) - Is thinking, **how do I evade the real issue by theoretical discussion?** he is trying to *manage the boundaries of his compassion*. As God's standard is more than a little too high, so we find a way to **lower the bar a bit**. He tries to focus the attention on the worthiness of the object of love, **rather than** on the condition of the heart of the one who is to do the loving.

1. **Slide11b** For with God, *whom we image*, there's no limit to compassion.

F. **It's difficult to test one's love for God**. But if you want to measure one's love for God you can look at his love for his neighbor. (*see* Book of James & 1st Jn.)

G. Jesus uses the same word **written** in vs.26 just like He did in vs.20 & it also is in the *perfect tense*. **Q:** What did God need only to command once, **but** meant for all eternity? The **A:** *read* vs.27.

1. Slide11c There are *no conditions* on expressing *kindness and compassion*.
 2. Gal.5:22,23 *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!* (or no prohibitions!)
 - a) When the life of the believer expresses these qualities, *there is no need for the law*. Those who *live by the Spirit* produce *fruit* reflecting *the character of God that the law* could not.
- H.(29) **Jews** would answer *your neighbor is the Jews or a righteous Jew* (i.e.religious). *And all others* are as *outside the neighborhood of God*.
1. Slide11d There's *not* a universal brotherhood *but* there *is* a universal neighborhood. [Only those that are *in Christ* are part of the brotherhood. *And the only way to enter into this brotherhood is by adoption*]
 2. *In Christ's Kingdom, one day* ethnic Jews will be worshiping besides ethnic Samaritans. Russians besides Ukrainians. Calvinist next to Arminians. *And yes*, even Republicans standing next to Democrats.
 3. Slide11e *Don't* hold grudges against "*others*". *Don't* be the Christian holding the *permanent marker*, be the Christian holding the *eraser!*
- I. *But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus* - This is Luke doing a *cut away* to a Dunder Mifflin conference room (The Office w/its Cringe Comedy). *Where the lawyer here looks into the camera and says, see I was trying to trick him in to saying something heretical.*
- J. **Half dead** - a technical term among the rabbis, meaning *close to dead* and at the least *unconscious*. *Kenneth Bailey, professor of theology, and linguist.*
1. *So*, it would be impossible for *the priest* to identify him based on his *speech pattern* and *dialect*. *Also*, his *clothing* would've revealed who he was, an insider *or* an outsider. Someone to love *or* someone to be ignored, for the sake of *other law keeping*. [*touch dead body*, unclean. Then, time-consuming ritual of cleansing. *Or, touch a foreigner*]

2. They asked, do I risk an unconditional commandment (touch dead body), for a conditional commitment (of helping a possible neighbor)?

a) So being a victim of *a rulebook ethical-theological system*, he chooses the *easy road* of *better safe than sorry!*

K. A priest is a Levite **but** not all Levites are priests. [Levite, lesser restrictions re: purity laws]

1. So the **Levite** goes & takes a closer look. It appears he's not able to tell whether this man counts.

L. Then Jesus hits with the surprise/shock of the parable ... a **Samaritan** *is the hero of the story*. *Yep, an unclean heretic*, who *comes, cares for, protects, & provides for* the injured man.

1. **Slide12a Everything** is touched in this man: his eyes, heart, feet, hands, thought, time, beast, speech, and money. He what is love by his actions. We call that *practical Christianity* ... **but** is there any other kind?

a) **Slide12b Compassion** w/suffering. [pathos = feeling/suffering] While the other 3 showed **apathy** (*a-pathos w/o feelings*, lack of interest), **he showed** both **sympathy** (*sum-pathos w/feelings*, u want to do something about it) **and** **empathy** (*em-pathos in/feelings*, when you can/must do something about it).

2. **And he does this at great risk to himself**: He could be held responsible for this man's suffering. By taking him to an inn and then coming back and checking on him, this Samaritan man loses his *anonymity*. **And** if this injured man is Jewish and dies, his family may **seek vengeance** on him.

a) **Slide12c** *It cost something to be a real neighbor.*

3. The Samaritan **models** the true intent of the command and what God has **written**. He gave the care he would have hope to receive from another, even though it came at great risk to himself.

a) **Slide12d** *You are never more Christlike than when you feel another's hurt & seek to help.*

M. **You go and do likewise** - He's not telling the lawyer *how to be a better person*.

1. No, He explains life isn't just about **giving the right answers** or **knowing the right answers** but **living the right answers** and **doing the right answers**. And guess what? No human has ever done that before. *It's why we need Jesus!*
 2. **The point of the story** is **not** that we need to *show ourselves to be a good Samaritan towards others*. **Instead**, it's intended to show us the **depravity** of our hearts; **our inability** to keep the law as a means to obtaining your eternal life; **and drive us to Christ** and His **mercy** and **grace** to **save** us, and **empower** us to *love God and others* as we should.
- N. **Slide13** The question *isn't* who is my neighbor? The question *is*, **Who needs me** to be a neighbor? Who might I be Christlike towards? *LOVE MAKES A NEIGHBOR!*
- O. **What Questions** do we need to ask?
1. What prejudice do I struggle with? Where is my blind spots?
 2. Are you putting Jesus to the test, or have sincere questions for Him?
 3. Who do you consider your neighbor after the story?
 4. Do you love in a way that you desire to be loved?
 5. Do you play it safe in loving others? Have you ever loved at great risk?
 6. Have you placed boundaries on your compassion?
 7. Who are you in the story? Jesus? no. The good Samaritan? sometimes. Remember we're **the lawyer** every time we're *asking the wrong question*.
 8. Can you start asking the question who needs to be my neighbor today?

IV. **Slide14/15 THE GOOD DEVOTION (38-42)** *Martha a Distracted Disciple Read*

- A. **Slide16a** **Martha** was doing something good. **Mary** was doing something good. **Both** are women of character. Martha's problem wasn't her service, it was paying too much attention to *what Mary wasn't doing!*
1. **Mary and Martha** are both examples to follow. There is a time to **go and do**, and there is a time to **sit and listen**. **And we need to do both at different times**.
- B. It seems that **Martha** is the oldest sister, since it is called *her house*.

1. If you had siblings growing up you watched this play out multiple times. One member not *pulling their weight*. I remember my brother Mark, who's 4 years older than me, getting out of mowing lawns on Sat, because of his allergies to *lawn mowing* ... which only showed up on Saturdays.
2. So we can even say here Martha's frustration was real and reasonable. But what she did wrong was to *triangulate with Jesus* in order to publicly rebuke her sister.
3. Slide16b Martha's Blindspot was actually a symptom of *distracted discipleship*

C. For Martha I think her issue was *pride*.

1. This pride happens when we become focus on what we are doing rather than why we are doing it. It's when we value *the doing of good Christian duties* as the measure for ourselves. It's when we compare our service to that of others. It's when we become so distracted by *the doing* that *the doings* is all we can see.
2. It gets so out of hand she actually orders/commands Jesus to *get her sister in line*, Wow! - Oh, and *the manipulation tactic* right before it, *don't you care!*

D. Slide16c Jesus says the issue is 3 words: *distracted, anxious, troubled by many things*.

1. When we get *distracted* by busyness, *as we all do as Christians*, it often leads us to *the wrong conclusion*. Where *someone else* is the problem rather than *looking inward* to the true source of the issue.
 - a) Slide16d This wasn't a case of *wrong action*, but *right action in the wrong spirit* and with the *wrong focus*.
2. So Jesus turns her *towards this* with *a loving response* to snap her out of her being distracted ... he calls her name twice (not in *disgust*, but in *love*) Hearing slowly and softly, *Brian, Brian*, I'm reminded who I am.
3. Then he reminds her about where her focus should be, the *one thing*, the *good part, good portion*, *His very presence w/them!*
 - a) He refuses to tell Mary to *turn away from Him*. [sounds a lot like what the disciples said in the feeding of the 5000, *send them away! NO!*]

b) **Worship** is at the heart of all that we **are** & all that we **do** in the Christian life.
[Ps: both servicing Him & listening at his feet ... are both *worship*]

c) **Also**, *in that culture, many rabbis thought that teaching women was a waste of time. But Jesus took the time to evangelize and teach women, thus showing the **value** that God puts on every person.*¹ [sitting at the Rabbis feet was *the posture* of a disciple]

d) **Slide17a** What's interesting is that **Mary wasn't distracted**. You know she was picking up the social cues big sis was laying down, **but** she was able to ignore her insistent and incessant **to do-list** so she could **listen to Jesus**. **That's hard to do**.

4. **Slide17b** *Be careful to not be so focused on a multitude of less important things and forget the most important thing.*

E. We can become so **distracted** by the many good tasks that make up our Christian calling that we became **disconnected** from **our power source**: *the very presence of God*. [my A/C a few weeks ago, wire came loose off the breaker, *the power source*]

F. **Slide17c** You are **anxious** and **troubled** about many things - Be careful our **inner state** (being **anxious** & **troubled**) can lead us to **focus on** our **outward service**.

1. Instead, **the one thing** needed for *a hurried soul* is to **sit at the feet of the Lord**, **and** through this **soul care** we will be made whole, **and** focused again, **and** able to practice **attentioned discipleship**.

2. **Mary has chosen the good portion**, or (msg) *the main course*.

G. **What Questions** do we need to ask?

1. Lord can you show me how to **serve** with a glad heart **rather than** a jealous one?

2. Lord, what do I need to do to **undistracted myself** and **re-orient my service** towards you?

3. What is your biggest distraction today that keeps you from sitting at your masters feet and reflecting?

¹ Steven Cole

4. Does your life seem to be one giant complaint? If so, what needs re-oriented in your life?
5. How is your doing/serving? Are you serving? If you are, is it balanced w/ doing & sitting?
6. Have you asked the Lord lately, don't you care? If so, does this passage help answer that question?

H. Prayer: Lord, may we **love You** with Mary's heart, **and serve You** with careful Martha's hands.

I. Keywords: Commandments, love.