

Being a Good Neighbor
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One thing I was taught in school was, "There is no such thing as a bad question!" I generally agree with this.... but not totally! Sometimes questions have an "agenda." Some questions are NOT neutral or purely inquisitive. Some questions have a bias or an ulterior purpose.

In the Gospel of Luke, a lawyer comes to Jesus and asks, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus responds with the great command: "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." But since the man "wanted to justify himself" he asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" To answer the question, Jesus responds with the well-known parable of the Good Samaritan. (Luke 10:25ff)

We know the story. A man is robbed and left for dead. A priest and a church worker pass him by! However, a hated Samaritan has compassion on the man and takes care of him. (Even though the man would have actually hated the Samaritan under different circumstances).

At the end of the parable, Jesus asks the question, "Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" The lawyer said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

The key point that Jesus is making is this: Neighbors show mercy! To be a neighbor is to be a person of action, showing love and mercy. As you show love to ANYONE, you are "being" a neighbor. Although "Who is my neighbor?" is not a bad question, a better question may be, "Who am I BEING a neighbor to?"

EVERYONE is our neighbor. This means that WE are everyone's neighbor and are called to show love to everyone. A neighbor is not just a "who" but rather, someone whom I am called to show love and concern towards. Is an unborn child your neighbor? Love your neighbor. Is the person arguing with you about their "rights" your neighbor? Love your neighbor. Does your next-door "neighbor" know that you love them? Love your neighbor!

The Good News is that Jesus is the perfect "Good Neighbor" who shows you His mercy, love, and forgiveness every day. Now Jesus says to you, "Go and do likewise."