

## MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ consider the needs of others above their own by serving others with love and humility (Philippians 2:3–4).



## SCRIPTURE

LUKE 10:25–37

## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The lawyer mentioned in this passage wasn't what we think of when we hear the word *lawyer*. Instead of a courtroom attorney, he was a student of Old Testament Law—more of a theological expert than criminal defense. But these religious leaders enjoyed a good debate, similar to most lawyers today. His line of questioning toward Jesus leads us to believe that the lawyer wasn't really interested in finding the truth but more likely trying to bait Jesus into a debate with the hopes of finally tripping Jesus up.<sup>1</sup> Whether he was honestly seeking the truth or not, the truth is precisely what Jesus taught him.

Check out the *Teacher Prep Video* for this lesson: <https://vimeo.com/1065899171>

**FACILITATOR NOTE:** We're giving you a lot of teaching material. Don't feel like you should cover everything here. You know your group better than anyone. Choose the material that will best fit your students and skip over the rest.

## OPENING

### PRAYER

1–2 minutes

Start your small group by asking the Lord to bless your discussion and time together.  
*OPTIONAL: Give students an opportunity to lead the prayer.*

### OPENING QUESTIONS

3–5 minutes

- How was the week? What's the best thing that's happened? Anything major going on?
- Describe a time when you traveled somewhere and met someone you normally wouldn't encounter.



## EXPLORE

### EXPLORE GOD'S WORD

3–5 minutes

In this passage, a lawyer asks Jesus a theological question, and Jesus responds with a well-known parable. Even people who do not know the Gospel have heard the phrase "good Samaritan." This story is powerful because Jesus summarizes and illustrates God's love so we can better understand it. Jesus shows that disciples are not only called to love one another but also to love our enemies sacrificially. Jesus modeled this love throughout his life and commanded that we do likewise.

## Read Luke 10:25–28 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **Does Jesus' answer in verse 28 mean we can earn eternal life with good works?**  
No. We can never truly love God or our neighbor without the Holy Spirit. Compare the kind of love you have for the people you love the most to how the Bible defines love (1 Cor. 13:4–7) to see how far our love falls short of God's standard.
- **Why was the lawyer trying to test Jesus?**  
Jesus was a very popular teacher and healer, but many religious leaders did not trust him. They often tried to trick him into saying the "wrong thing."
- **How can we better love God and our neighbor?**  
We can only do this through surrender to God and by relying on the Holy Spirit. We can grow in our love through prayer, Scripture, and connection with other Christ-followers.



*Say something like:* In this passage, the lawyer believes he knows what is required to have eternal life. Jesus agrees that the man knows what the Old Testament asks from disciples: to love God and love his neighbor fully. However, God's definition of loving your neighbor was more significant than the man could have imagined.

## Read Luke 10:29–35 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **Why does the man ask, "And who is my neighbor?"**  
Because he was trying to "justify himself" (v. 29). He knew he did not truly love everyone and may have been hoping for an easier call.
- **Why does Jesus mention the social and ethnic status of the three men?**  
The first two men are important members of Jewish society, and Jesus' audience would see them as holy and righteous. The third man is a Samaritan, a hated group that did not follow the Old Testament's teaching. The one assumed to be the least likely to help was the only one who showed love and mercy.
- **How might Jesus's audience have responded to this story?**  
They might have been shocked that both the priest and Levite left the man for dead, while the Samaritan showed such love and mercy. This parable would have been upside-down to their expectations.



*Say something like:* Jesus' shocking parable ushered in a new understanding of what God wants from his disciples. Like the good Samaritan, Jesus wants us to put the needs of others above ourselves. Jesus proves that a true disciple isn't the one with the most impressive religious resumé but the one who humbly serves.

**FACILITATOR NOTE:** If you have extra time, go through the next set of questions. If not, skip to the **Connection** section.

## Read Luke 10:36–37 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **What does this passage show us about Jesus' desire for his disciples?**  
He wants us to model the sacrificial love he showed throughout his life, ministry, and death.
- **What does it mean to show "mercy" (v. 37), and how can we better show it?**  
This passage defines mercy by the action of the Samaritan. He sacrifices his own comfort and safety by helping someone who cannot help himself.



*Say something like:* Jesus finishes this powerful story by commanding his listener, "You go, and do likewise" (v. 37). This command applies to all his disciples, not just the lawyer in the story. In this passage and others (Mark 12:31), Jesus commands his disciples to "love your neighbor as yourself." Understanding that "neighbors" applies to more than the people who live next door reminds us how big and challenging this call is. It is only through God's help that we can achieve it.



## CONNECT & APPLY

### CONNECTION

5-7 minutes

Show your students how Scripture connects to their lives: Use the example below OR share a personal story of how loving our neighbor includes loving our closest family members.

*Example:* Jesus's call to love our neighbor extends to everyone we encounter. Sometimes the hardest people to love are those closest to us. In an article for Visionary Family Ministries, 17-year-old Lissy Reinow details the difficulty and power of loving her siblings. She writes, "We cannot love our siblings through our own strength. We must pray and ask God to fill our hearts with forgiveness and love."<sup>2</sup> While our siblings may not require the type of love we see in the parable of the Good Samaritan, we are called to forgive them, sacrifice for them, and put them before ourselves (Philippians 2:3-4).



- What would it look like to humbly and sacrificially love your siblings or other family members?

Answers will vary. Come prepared to share your own answer to help get the conversation started.

### MARK OF A DISCIPLE

2-3 minutes

Disciples of Christ consider the needs of others above their own by serving others with love and humility (Philippians 2:3-4).

Use the Mark of a Disciple to reinforce the lesson and challenge students to apply it to their lives.

### APPLY IT

5-10 minutes

Pick a neighbor you encounter throughout the week. It could be a friend, acquaintance, coworker, family member, or literal neighbor. Ask God how you can love this person sacrificially. Then, commit to taking one action this week.



**Be specific:**

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?



**FACILITATOR NOTE:** Allow students who are comfortable to share their plans for application. This may encourage or spark ideas for other students, plus add a level of accountability.



## CLOSING

### PRAYER

2–3 minutes

Take a moment to ask for prayer requests. Spend some time praying that the Holy Spirit will reveal the people in our lives that God has called us to love and equip us to show sacrificial mercy toward them.

*Write down any prayer requests mentioned and ask your students about them at your next meeting.*

### MEMORY VERSE

*Send the memory verse graphic included in your download to your students later this week to keep the conversation going.*

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Philippians 2:3–4 (ESV)

### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992), 173.

<sup>2</sup> Rienow, Lissy, “Loving Your Neighbor Starts With Loving Your Siblings,” *Visionary Family Ministries*, June 1, 2020, <https://visionaryfam.com/loving-your-neighbor-starts-with-loving-your-siblings/>.

