



5 MINUTE LESSONS ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Religion Without Kindness

“Religion that God accepts as pure and without fault is this: caring for orphans or widows who need help, and keeping yourself free from the world’s evil influence.” (James 1:27 NCV)

God is love (1 John 4:8) and love is kind (1 Corinthians 13:4 NLT).

“...a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, some robbers attacked him. They tore off his clothes, beat him, and left him lying there, almost dead. ³¹It happened that a priest was going down that road. When he saw the man, he walked by on the other side. ³²Next, a Levite came there, and after he went over and looked at the man, he walked by on the other side of the road. ³³Then a Samaritan traveling down the road came to where the hurt man was. When he saw the man, he felt very sorry for him. ³⁴The Samaritan went to him, poured olive oil and wine on his wounds, and bandaged them. Then he put the hurt man on his own donkey and took him to an inn where he cared for him. ³⁵The next day, the Samaritan brought out two coins, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, “Take care of this man. If you spend more money on him, I will pay it back to you when I come again.”

³⁶Then Jesus said, ‘Which one of these three men do you think was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by the robbers?’

³⁷The expert on the law answered, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’

Jesus said to him, ‘Then go and do what he did.’” (Luke 10:30-37 NCV)

The Bible Knowledge Commentary states concerning these verses, “The road from Jerusalem to Jericho descends approximately 3000 feet in about 17 miles. It was a dangerous road to travel, for robbers hid along its steep, winding way. A priest, one expected to love others, avoided the wounded man, probably a fellow Jew.

Levites were descendants of Levi, but not of Aaron and they assisted the priests (Aaron’s descendants) in the temple.

*The Samaritans were scorned by the Jews because of their mixed Jewish and Gentile ancestry. It is ironic, then that a Samaritan helped the half-dead man, dressing his wounds, taking him to an inn, and paying his expenses. By asking “**Which... was his neighbor?**” (Luke 10:36), Jesus was teaching that a person should be a neighbor to*

anyone he meets in need." (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, page 234) The ultimate Neighbor was Jesus, whose compassion contrasted with the religious leaders who had no compassion on those who were sick, poor and perishing.

It is amazing to me that our religion has become more about believing some facts in a church creed than in observing (that is in doing) the commands of our Lord (Matthew 28:20). Jesus said,

"...instruct [others] in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age."
(Matthew 28:20 The Message Bible)

When the emphasis of our religion becomes caring for others, showing mercy and compassion, doing to others what you would want done to you (Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31), then you have become the living Bible (the spirit and intent of God's Word).

My son shared a story with me the other day. As he was visiting Walmart, there was an elderly man who was parked in a handicap spot. He was stranded in his car and desperately needed help in getting out of his car and finding a motorized scooter so he could enter the store. My son immediately went into action and found an employee and asked where he could find a scooter. The employee said they were all being used at the moment so there were none available. He then returned to the elderly man and explained the situation. But he said not to worry that he would help him find one. Unsatisfied with leaving this elderly man stranded, he then began to scour the parking lot on his own looking for an available scooter. Within moments he spotted an elderly couple, one of them on a scooter, returning to their car after buying groceries. After they had finished loading up their car he approached them and asked them if he could take the scooter to another gentleman that needed it. They happily agreed and he brought the scooter over to the man who was still waiting in his car. After helping him onto the scooter, the elderly man was able to go into the store and purchase his food. This simple act of compassion is what Jesus meant when he said to the expert of religious law, go and show mercy, go and do what the Samaritan did (Luke 10:37 NCV).

There are hurting people around us each and every day. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be someone's miracle.

Questions

1 Read Luke 10:25-37 (NCV).

“²⁵Then an expert on the law stood up to test Jesus, saying, ‘Teacher, what must I do to get life forever?’

²⁶Jesus said, ‘What is written in the law? What do you read there?’

²⁷The man answered, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ Also, ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’

²⁸Jesus said to him, ‘Your answer is right. Do this and you will live.’

²⁹But the man, wanting to show the importance of his question, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’

³⁰Jesus answered, ‘As a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, some robbers attacked him. They tore off his clothes, beat him, and left him lying there, almost dead. ³¹It happened that a priest was going down that road. When he saw the man, he walked by on the other side. ³²Next, a Levite came there, and after he went over and looked at the man, he walked by on the other side of the road. ³³Then a Samaritan traveling down the road came to where the hurt man was. When he saw the man, he felt very sorry for him. ³⁴The Samaritan went to him, poured olive oil and wine on his wounds, and bandaged them. Then he put the hurt man on his own donkey and took him to an inn where he cared for him. ³⁵The next day, the Samaritan brought out two coins, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, “Take care of this man. If you spend more money on him, I will pay it back to you when I come again.”’

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Jesus said to him, ‘Then go and do what he did.’” - Luke 10:25-37 (NCV)

Think about or discuss among yourselves some experiences you’ve had of being a good Samaritan.

2 Read Matthew 7:12 (NLT).

“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.” - Matthew 7:12 (NLT)

Read Luke 6:31 (NLT).

“Do to others as you would like them to do to you.” - Luke 6:31 (NLT)

Give some examples of how you have applied these verses to your life.

3 Read Luke 10:29 (NIV).

“But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’” - Luke 10:29 (NIV)

Who is your neighbor?

4 Read Matthew 25:37-40 (NLT).

“³⁷Then these righteous ones will reply, “Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? ³⁹When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?”

⁴⁰And the King will say, “I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!””

- Matthew 25:37-40 (NLT)

When did you see Jesus hungry, thirsty, naked and needing clothing?

5 Read Matthew 25:40 (NLT).

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- Matthew 25:40 (NLT)

When you reach out in love and compassion to others to help them, who are you helping?

Answer Key

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Jesus. "You were doing it to me." Matthew 25:40 (NLT)

"God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them."
(Hebrews 6:10 NIV)

We want to hear from you!

We would love to hear your feedback on these lessons and how you use them in your own study or in discipling others. If you have any thoughts, stories, testimonies, comments, or questions we would love to hear them!

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