

Week 4: Spiritual Learning Journal

Read the following passage and answer the questions at the end using everything you learned this lesson:

Luke 10:25-37 (NIV)

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

²⁷ He answered, "'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.' "

²⁸ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.

³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

³⁶ "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same."

Questions:

1. What background issues are in this passage that we covered this week?

There was hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans due to the disputes that had been going on. For a Samaritan to care for this man on the side of the road (this very well could have been a Jew), would have been extraordinary. The priest and Levite would have seen the wounded man as unclean because he was bloody and wounded. He also would have probably been of no interest to them if he was of the non-elite in the land.

2. As you read this familiar story again, how has your understanding of this story changed or become deeper?

Jesus use of this illustration was intentional as he confronted the issues they were dealing with and related them back to the love of the Father by asking the question – which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers? Jesus knew there was hatred and tension between Jews and Samaritans. He also knew the priests and Levites had become focused on themselves and their own holiness that they did not care for the people. He also confronted the issue of money. The Samaritan was generous as our Father in Heaven is generous. All the these factors create an interesting background for the illustration that Jesus used as he conversed with one of the elites, an expert in the law.

3. How might you retell this story using contemporary characters to represent the Samaritan, priest, and Levite? For example, a South African artist paints a black man helping a white Afrikaner.



I would use the example of an African-American man helping a middle to upper class caucasian who had been beaten and robbed. This illustrates a person of the minority culture, of lesser means demonstrating God's kind of love and care for the person who would symbolize the oppressor to them.

Week 5: Journal Study Questions

Read the entire chapter from Acts 17 (NLT). You may read it in other versions if you prefer.

Question:

1. What surprised you most as you read this chapter knowing what you now know? Explain.
There were Jews that were jealous so much so that they dragged Jason and some of the other brothers out to the city council and accused them of treason against Caesar. They declared to the council that Paul and Silas and these men spoke of another king against the decrees of Caesar. I guess what is surprising is that these Jews had submitted to the Imperial Cult and decrees of Caesar. Wow!
They took money from Jason and the other men and then let them go. When they heard that Paul and Silas went to Berea, they followed them there to stir up trouble in Berea.
2. Luke wants the reader to take away some spiritual insights and truth. What do you think he wants the reader to understand?
It is interesting how the people of those two different cities had a very different attitude toward the gospel. In part, Luke is showing us the contrast. In one city, Paul spent 3 sabbaths explaining to the Jews in the Synagogue, who rejected the message. In another city, the people examined the scriptures and were eager, open to hearing what Paul had to say.

Our part is to share the gospel by word and deed, however we do not have control over how people respond. Some hear and receive it, and some do not. Another point Luke makes is that God does not need us, but He chooses us. He has appointed a day of judgement and will judge the living and the dead. He says that God overlooked ignorance about these things in earlier times, but not he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to Him.

Spiritual Learning Journal Week 6

Prayer for Our Nation

Father of Heaven and Earth, all glory and honor and praise belong to You. The earth is Yours; the earth belongs to the Lord and the fullness thereof. You are great and mighty, high and lifted up. You laugh at your enemies and have planned out the times and seasons of the earth and the number of our days.

This nation belongs to You. You raised her up to a purpose of bearing the light and message of the gospel to the nations. Lord, forgive our generation and those generations before us for our sins - that we have not cared for our neighbor; we have not carried the image and message of Christ to the world as You have commanded us to do; we have not been the salt and light to those around us and to the people's of the earth as we are called to do.

We have let darkness grow and have not pursued Your love. We have been self-centered and divisive with one another. We have not been witnesses and carriers of your transforming love to those in need, our neighbors and those without Christ and without hope in the world. Let us not be taken captive by those who seek power and evil because of our sins in this nation. Raise up authorities and men of God in this nation who will not oppress, but honor You, Lord God. Father, by your grace and the working of the Holy Spirit, help us to turn and give our hearts completely to you.

I pray for Pastors and spiritual leaders, that they will seek your face and hear from heaven. That they will preach and teach the Word of God with grace and conviction. That they will follow Your leading and instruction and not the agenda of men/others. That our pastors, spiritual leaders, and believers of all denominations will be filled with Your wisdom; that they will walk with and serve the Lord with fullness of focus, sincerity of faith and in the demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit.

I ask for your grace and mercy to be poured out upon the people's of this nation, as a mighty rushing river that will bring change and transformation. Lord, let us be obedient to follow the Word of God and the Holy Spirit so that we can become carriers of Your Glory to the peoples that we influence, and the peoples of the nations. Holy Spirit, prepare us and the latter rain from which great grace will pour out to all who will receive, that the name of Jesus would be lifted up in this nation. Prepare us with clean hearts to carry your glory and to manifest the Glory of Christ in us. Let Your Kingdom Come and Your Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.