

Defining "Neighbor"

²⁵ Just then a religion scholar stood up with a question to test Jesus.

"Teacher, what do I need to do to get eternal life?"

²⁶ He answered, "What's written in God's Law? How do you interpret it?"

²⁷ He said, "That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence—and that you love your neighbor as well as you do yourself."

²⁸ "Good answer!" said Jesus. "Do it and you'll live."

²⁹ Looking for a loophole, he asked, "And just how would you define 'neighbor'?"

³⁰⁻³² Jesus answered by telling a story. "There was once a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way he was attacked by robbers. They took his clothes, beat him up, and went off leaving him half-dead. Luckily, a priest was on his way down the same road, but when he saw him he angled across to the other side. Then a Levite religious man showed up; he also avoided the injured man.

³³⁻³⁵ "A Samaritan traveling the road came on him. When he saw the man's condition, his heart went out to him. He gave him first aid, disinfecting and bandaging his wounds. Then he lifted him onto his donkey, led him to an inn, and made him comfortable. In the morning he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take good care of him. If it costs any more, put it on my bill—I'll pay you on my way back.'

³⁶ "What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbor to the man attacked by robbers?"

³⁷ "The one who treated him kindly," the religion scholar responded.

Jesus said, "Go and do the same."