

## Who is My Neighbor?

The story of the Good Samaritan is found in Luke, Chapter 10 and is one of the best known and most popular stories found in the bible. An expert in Old Testament scriptures has challenged Jesus by asking, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Rhetorically, Jesus replies, "What is written in the law?" The expert answers, quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27) Jesus commends the lawyer and replies, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." (Luke 10:28)

While discussing biblical doctrine, I've heard many speak of what they call "salvation issues". They talk about belief, repentance, faith, confession, baptism, rightly dividing the truth, and scriptural worship. But I don't ever recall anyone speaking of benevolence as a salvation issue, however, isn't that exactly what Jesus told the lawyer? I'm afraid that we may be so distracted by our efforts to get things religiously correct that we may have neglected the second most important commandment (Matt. 23:23). James 2:14-26 teaches that "doing" is much more important than just "saying" and by not caring for those in need, our faith is dead. After telling the wonderful story of the compassionate Samaritan, Jesus gave us our directive to "Go and do likewise." and by doing so, we too can live eternally.

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