

Message Discussion Guide EMPOWER THE POOR

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

November 1, 2009

Luke 10:25-37

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Invite learners to describe their memories of Mr. Rogers and his neighborhood. Ask: **How did his show influence what you thought about a "neighbor?"** Encourage learners to share their answers.

Explain that today we'll discuss the story of the Good Samaritan and how Jesus changed the idea of a neighbor.

Option 2

Invite learners to describe a time when they have had a bad neighbor. Ask: **What did you think were your responsibilities to these person/persons?**

Explain that today we'll take a look at how Jesus informs our understandings of how we are to love our neighbors.

Review the Message . . .

The Point of the Story...

- This is not just a story about helping other people.
- This is a story about needing a new heart.

Discussion

- Enlist a learner to read Luke 10:25-29. Explain that the lawyer was indeed an expert in the Mosaic Law—the Law that the Jewish people were to follow.
- Why was the lawyer questioning Jesus? Known as "an expert of the Law", how could his public questioning of Jesus potentially affect Jesus' ministry?
- Why do you think the lawyer choose the question of eternal life to ask Jesus?
- How did Jesus' question to the lawyer appeal to his expertise and emphasize the importance of God's covenant with His people?
- Enlist two learners to read Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18. What did the lawyer's answer to Jesus indicate about His knowledge of God's commands?

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- Looking at Verse 29, the lawyer was not completely satisfied with Jesus' simple answer. What did his question reveal about his heart?
- Enlist a learner to read Luke 10:30-37. Invite any learners to explain what they may know about the relationship between Jews and Samaritans. Emphasize that the relationship between these two peoples became extremely strained after the Jewish people returned from captivity to find that some of the Jews who had remained in the land had intermarried with foreigners and adopted their cultures, leading to hostile relationships and great hatred.
- Jesus made a point to note how those persons who were knowledgeable about the Law (the priest and Levite) did not obey it. How would the inclusion of the Samaritan as the "hero" of the story affect the lawyer?
- In verse 36, how did Jesus reverse the focus of the lawyer's question from one of identifying a neighbor to one of being a neighbor?
- How did this change of question reveal that obeying these two commands required a change of heart and not a change of action?

Application . . .

- Pastor David said that the question the lawyer asked was a good question and the most important question of life. Why?
- What questions do we sometimes focus on too much as Christians that do not really affect the eternity of anyone?
- Do we, like the lawyer, ever try to justify our "good" lives before Christ? How?
- Are there any commands that we know we should be obeying, but justify why we don't obey them?
- What is the relationship between eternal life and showing mercy? How do we sometimes neglect this relationship?
- Do we view obedience as something we strive for or as evidence of God's work in our lives?
- Is there anyone that we see as undeserving of receiving the benefits of mercy? Of eternal life?
- What do our prejudiced attitudes reveal about our hearts?
- Can we fulfill the commands to love God with all of our being and to love our neighbor as ourselves?

The Heart of Mercy...

- See the love God requires.
 - Undivided love for God.
 - Unselfish love for others.
- Embrace the love God offers.
 - We need to realize our poverty.
 - We need to receive His mercy.

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- Give the love God desires.
 - His love is compelling.
 - We are not motivated to care for the poor by guilt.
 - We are motivated to care for the poor by the Gospel.
 - His love is comprehensive.
 - Mercy does not restrict who is loved.
 - Mercy does not restrict how much one is loved.
 - His love is costly.
 - Mercy from God takes great risks.
 - Mercy from God involves great sacrifice.
 - Mercy from God leads to great reward.

Discussion

- Looking at Luke 10:27, what kind of love does God require of His followers?
- How does this command (and the Law) reveal the inability of God's followers to fully meet those requirements?
- Looking at verses 36-37, how can a person show such incredible mercy without having experienced the mercy of a changed heart from Christ?
- How does the mercy that Christ offers enable His followers to show it?
- What was the motivation of the Samaritan to care for the hurt man?
- Describe the way that the Samaritan cared for the man? What restrictions did the Samaritan place on whom he cared for and how much?
- What did the Samaritan risk in helping this man? What did he sacrifice?

Application . . .

- How would our pursuit of righteousness change if we truly loved God with an undivided love?
- What would a completely unselfish love look like in our lives?
- Why is realizing our spiritual poverty often difficult to do? How does this kind of realization make us feel? Embarrassed? Humbled? Grateful?
- How does the love of the gospel serve as a motivator for us to care for others?
- How can we often confuse a right conviction to help the poor/needful with guilt?
- Who do we not want to serve? Where is it too hard for us to serve? To whom is it too costly for us to serve? Where is it too risky for us to serve?
- What do these restrictions reveal about our hearts and our willingness to obey God's commands?
- How can our small group (individually and corporately) demonstrate the mercy of Christ by loving our neighbors as ourselves?