

4. What is different between the expert's answer in vs. 27 and his question in vs. 25, in term of what God asks of His people? How does Jesus' answer in vs. 28 connect to eternity / salvation ideas?

5. What does the word "But" which begins vs. 29 tell us about this expert? What does it mean if a person wants to "justify" themselves? What connections can be made between the words "justify" and "justification" (as it applies to salvation)?

6. How do the robbers in vs. 30 show disdain / disrespect for human life?

7. Who are the two potential helpers to the robbed man in vs. 31-32? What do we know about them? What do their actions tell us about their disdain / disrespect for human life?

8. Read John 4:7-8. What is typical of interactions between Jews and Samaritans? What is Jesus saying by having a Samaritan be the one who helps the injured man in vs. 33?

9. What does the Samaritan **do** for the injured man in vs. 34? How do his actions contrast with the actions of the priest and the Levite?

10. How does the Samaritan show in vs. 35 that he values the life of this person, even though he doesn't know him?

11. Why does Jesus ask the question he does in vs. 36, rather than making a statement, like He does in the Sermon on the Mount?

12. The expert's answer in vs. 37 uses a word not used before in this story. What is that word, and what does it say about being a neighbor?
13. How is Jesus' final comment to the expert similar to what he said to him in vs. 28? What do these two answers suggest is important in being a neighbor? What's the difference between having neighbors and being a neighbor?

Application: Though we may not like to admit it, there can be something of the expert's attitude in us as well. He was looking for loopholes about who to relate to, and how to relate to them. We also can find ourselves thinking of ways to "fulfill the law" without really caring about the deeper issue: people and our relationship to them and to God. Do we love our difficult, crabby, gossiping, unfriendly neighbors the same way as those that we like and are easy to get along with? You know the answer to that: we should, but it's not always easy.

Our text uses this paragraph: "Jesus' parable leaves no room for self-justification. If we are looking for a way out of loving that person who is too difficult, or in too much trouble, or frankly probably wouldn't help us if the tables were turned, then we betray our hearts that do not love as God loves. Instead of looking for loopholes, let us search for opportunities to use what God has given us to bless *all* our neighbors."

Prayer: Father God, thank You that you love everyone, and you demonstrated that love both while You lived on this Earth, and when You died on the cross. We want to love You with all of our beings, and we want to love our neighbors as You love both them and us. Whoever you place before us, let us love them as You love, and as we love ourselves. In Jesus' name, Amen.

