

LIFEHOUSES

5.11.14

[WARM-UP]

What has been one of the most outlandish excuses you have either used or heard to get out of some responsibility or opportunity? (For example, to get out of... a date, a chore, a task at work, a meeting, a ministry, an assignment at school, etc.)

What are some of the most common rationalizations/justifications people use to avoid obedience to God?

[DIGGING DEEPER]

Consider the context for the Good Samaritan story by reading Luke 10:25-29. How was this lawyer seeking to justify himself? Why do you think he wanted to justify Himself?

Now, read the story Jesus tells in Luke 10:30-37. Do you think Jesus answers the lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbor?" What are some surprising elements in Jesus' story?

Why is it significant to understand the cultural differences between the Jews and the Samaritans? For a brief explanation of the hostile relationships between Jews and Samaritans, check out this following article:

<https://bible.org/illustration/hatred-between-jews-and-samaritans>

As you read slowly through the story, seek to identify the steps and principles that the Good Samaritan followed and applied as he cared for the wounded man.

In this series, we have been encouraged to look for the brokenness in the lives of our neighbors. Brainstorm a little. How have some of your neighbors been stripped? Beaten? Abandoned? How might they be half-dead? Where do they need new life?

How have you seen followers of Jesus use busy-ness as an excuse to get involved? Share any stories you know about believers passing by hurting people because they are too busy with church activities or going to too many church meetings.

Why are we tempted to show mercy only to the neighbors who are most like us? What cultural differences tend to intimidate US followers of Jesus?

Spend some time exploring scriptures describing the ministries of mercy that are commanded and encouraged in other key places in the Bible. Verses for caring for suffering believers: Matthew 25:40, I John 3:16-18, James 2:15-17. Verses for caring for suffering unbelievers: Luke 6:27-31, Matthew 5:16, Galatians 6:10, I Thessalonians 5:15.

How are we like the wounded man on the Jericho Road? How is Jesus the true Good Samaritan? How does recognizing Jesus as the Unexpected Hero in this story make this story about the gospel rather than a "do-more-try-harder" moral ethic? For more insight on Jesus as the true Good Samaritan, check out Tullian Tchividjian's blog: <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tullian/2014/01/27/who-is-the-good-samaritan-2/>



[LIVING IT OUT]

Have each person bring their family's LifeHouses booklet to share some of the information with the LifeGroup about the 8 neighbors closest to them. Ask each person in your LifeGroup to share which of these neighbors might be the most like the wounded man in the story.

Have each person share at least one idea about how he/she intends to be the Good Samaritan/Unexpected Hero to someone in the neighborhood.

Share practical ideas about how each person in your LifeGroup intends to live on mission or reach out to their neighborhood sometime on Memorial Day weekend.

Close your time in prayer. Pray for the CVC LifeHouses movement as a whole. Then, pray for each family in your LifeGroup to be passionate about reaching out to their neighbors. Pray for responsiveness and openness in the lives of the neighbors. Pray that loving acts of kindness will become bridges over which the gospel can travel.