

Merciful Care

By Shari Miller

Discuss with a partner or your small group how you define the word "neighbor." Be specific.

Opening Prayer: Dear Lord, we adore You and thank You for sending Jesus to live a perfect life, suffer, and die to cancel the debt of our sin. We praise You that, because He rose again to life, we might live eternally in heaven with Him. Continue to help us grow in faith and love and mercy for our neighbors by the power of Your Spirit. Be with us as we study Your Word. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Read the parable of the Good Samaritan in **Luke 10:25-37**. Jesus teaches this parable in answer to the question, "*and who is my neighbor?*" Samaritans and Jews were enemies of one another, so for this Samaritan to rescue the injured Jew was quite remarkable. Identify the specific steps taken by the Samaritan in his rescue mission in the following verses:

33: _____

34a: _____

34b: _____

35: _____

How does this parable describe Jesus' (our Good Samaritan's) rescue mission on earth?

Psalm 103:8; Luke 7:13 _____

Isaiah 53:4-5; 1 Peter 2:24 _____

Romans 5:8 _____

1 Peter 5:7 _____

Colossians 2:13-15; Titus 3:4-7 _____

Jesus says in Luke 6:36: *Be merciful even as Your Father is merciful.* See **Romans 12:1-2**. Discuss why and how a believer in Jesus is able to show mercy and care to those in need.

How does this parable prescribe a Christian's actions to and for a neighbor, especially one in need?

Colossians 3:12-17 _____

Romans 15:2; Galatians 5:13-14 _____

1 Corinthians 12:25-26 _____

Philippians 4:14-18 _____

1 John 4:7 _____

Faith Talk: Of what are we assured in Lamentations 3:21-23? How can this message uplift our lives each day? _____

The Samaritan in Jesus' parable took several risks in his act of mercy and compassion. He knew nothing about the injured man or if he had any contagious disease(s). His act of mercy might have been resented by both Samaritans and Jews alike. Besides the personal risks, the Samaritan gave a great deal of his time and money (the equivalent of two days wages) for the care of the injured man.

Faith Talk: How much did God's love, mercy, and grace for us cost Him? _____

Acts of mercy may also cost us intime, money, and inconvenience. In response to God's grace and mercy, are we always ready to make these sacrifices and take these risks? _____

Who gives us the power to follow in Christ's footsteps? Read Galatians 5:25. _____

How does the Spirit keep us believing in Jesus our Savior and help us to grow in faith? See Mark 14:22-24; Romas 1:16; and Romans 6:3-4. _____

Faith Talk: In the parable, what is Jesus' answer to the questions, "And who is my neighbor?"

Faith Walk: Memorize **Lamentations 3: 21-23** and/or print it on a card to be placed where you can see it every day.

Faith Walk: Identify a neighbor in your life who is in need or in trouble. Look for ways to help relieve your neighbor's physical needs and, at the same time, share with her/him the Good News of salvation in Jesus. With your partner or small group, share one step you could take to help this neighbor. (Make a plan, be specific.)

Closing prayer: Dear Lord, You have shown us how to love our neighbor with Your perfect gift of salvation. Help us, in our frail, human nature, to love our neighbors, those in need within our community. Give us the strength and courage to care for all those we meet. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

"Six Weeks of Love" This article appeared in the Quarterly some time ago. I have adapted it to make it simpler.

Week 1: The Hand of Love: Write a note to a few friends or neighbors who might be feeling lonely or afraid.

Week 2: The Voice of Love: Call two or three people, just to let them know how much you care or to mend a quarrel.

Week 3: The Deed of Love: Give a few friends - someone you care a lot about, but to whom you rarely express it - a small token of your love, be it something you made or something you bought - a loaf of bread, flowers, or a book.

Week 4: The Heart of Love: Pray. List 10 people for whom you will pray each day.

Week 5: The Mind of Love: Pray again - for yourself. Read and meditate upon the Word of God.

Week 6: The Victory of Love: Celebrate! Revel in the love God has for us - as revealed everywhere. Go outside, breathe the good air. Enjoy the fellowship of friends. Let your joy abound in the abundant life in the Father, full of faith, hope, and love.