

Being A Neighbor

Introduction

- Being a neighbor can be tricky.
- We see neighbors as those who live near us.
 - Our dictionaries support this view.
 - The definitions of the biblical words for neighbor generally support this view.
- These definitions fall short of Jesus' teaching on *who is my neighbor* and what it means to *be a neighbor*.
- Let's consider O.T. and N.T. teaching on being a neighbor.



Old Testament
Being a Neighbor



O.T. Neighborliness

- Israel had a special covenant with God no other nation possessed – Gen. 17:7-8
 - Sealed by circumcision – Gen. 17:11
 - Demanded separation from idolatrous peoples – Ex. 23:32-33
 - Certain Gentiles were never allowed in the temple – Deut. 23:3-4
- God wanted Israel to be graciously mindful of the foreigner among them.
 - Provisions given for strangers/foreigners to partake of Passover – Ex. 12:48
 - Portions of crops were to be left to feed the stranger – Lev. 19:9-10
 - Third year tithe of crops stored up to feed the Levites, strangers, fatherless, widows – Deut. 14:28-29
 - Why? Because the Jews were once strangers in Egypt – Lev. 19:33-34
- These differences led Israel to believe the *stranger* among them was to be a *proselyte* to Judaism.

O.T. Neighborliness

- O.T. emphasis on neighborliness concerned Jews – Lev. 19:16-18
- Commands concerning one's *neighbor* were not applied to the *stranger/foreigner* among them
 - Release of their neighbor's debt every seven years – Deut. 15:1-3
 - Restriction against charging their neighbor interest – Deut. 23:19-20
- Easy to see why the Jew believed commands concerning their neighbor referred to their interaction with fellow Jews.
 - Ethical commands – Deut. 5:20-21
 - Commands concerning your neighbor's property – Deut. 23:24-25
 - Helps us understand why it was taught, "You shall love your neighbor [Jew/proselyte] and hate your enemy [heathen/idolater]" – Matt. 5:43

New Testament

▸ Being a Neighbor

The Good Samaritan – Luke 10:25-37

- A lawyer sought to test Jesus, but answered his own question – 10:25-28
- The lawyer sought to justify/vindicate himself by asking “Who is my neighbor?” – 10:29; Lev. 19:34, 18
- Jesus’ answer was found in the Good Samaritan – 10:30-37
 - Jesus shows Jewish limitations placed on *neighbor* were artificial
 - Jesus shows the extensive demands of being a neighbor
 - These requirements answer not only “who is my neighbor,” but what shall I do to inherit eternal life” – 10:25

Neighborly Responsibilities of a Christian

- We must love our neighbor as ourselves – Gal. 6:13-14
- A neighbor does no harm to his neighbor – Rom. 13:10; Jas. 4:11; Eph. 4:25; Lk. 6:45
- A neighbor must seek to do what pleases his neighbor – Rom. 15:1-3
- A neighbor shows love by doing good even to his enemy – Matt. 5:43-45