Good Samaritan Bible study

Luke 10:25-37. 2 sessions of about 45 minutes, or one longer session. For small groups and personal study.

Jesus answers an expert who asks who his neighbor is. The story describes a wounded man, two people who pass by, and a Samaritan who sees him, has compassion, and provides care. Jesus then asks which traveler was a neighbor to the wounded man. The expert identifies the one who showed mercy. The closing instruction calls him to do likewise. The movement is from defining who qualifies for care to becoming a person who gives it.

READ TOGETHER: LUKE 10:25-37

25 One day an expert in the law stood up to test Him. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit
eternal life?” 26 “What is written in the Law?” Jesus replied. “How do you read it?” 27 He answered,
“‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and
with all your mind’ and ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ” 28 “You have answered correctly,” Jesus
said. “Do this and you will live.” 29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my
neighbor?” 30 Jesus took up this question and said, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to
Jericho when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving
him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down the same road, but when he saw him, he
passed by on the other side. 32 So too, when a Levite came to that spot and saw him, he passed by on
the other side. 33 But when a Samaritan on a journey came upon him, he looked at him and had
compassion. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put him
on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two
denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Take care of him,’ he said, ‘and on my return I will repay
you for any additional expense.’ 36 Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who
fell into the hands of robbers?” 37 “The one who showed him mercy,” replied the expert in the law.
Then Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Scripture from the Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain.

BACKGROUND

The questions frame the story

Luke identifies the speaker as an expert in the law and says he stands up to test Jesus. His first question concerns inheriting eternal life. Jesus asks what the Law says and how he reads it. The expert answers with love for God and neighbor.

Verse 29 names the desire to justify himself before the expert asks who his neighbor is. Do not begin at the roadside scene and leave out this conversation. The story challenges the attempt to limit the obligation of love, not a lack of knowledge about the command.

Watch the verbs rather than inventing motives

The priest and Levite each see the man and pass by on the other side. The Samaritan sees him, has compassion, approaches, bandages his wounds, provides transport, and arranges continuing care. Compare what each actually does before proposing a reason for it.

Tyndale's notes on Luke 10:29 and 33 explain the significance of neighbor language and the surprising identity of the helper. The story does not authorize contempt toward Jewish people or the

claim that one ethnic group is naturally more compassionate than another. Its ending directs the question back to the listener.

FOLLOW THE CONVERSATION FROM A LIMIT TO AN ACTION

The question changes as the story unfolds. Keep the opening exchange and the final instruction in view.

The first question (10:25-28)

An expert asks about inheriting eternal life. Jesus responds with questions about what is written and how the expert reads it. The expert knows the commands to love God and neighbor; Jesus affirms his answer.

The attempted limit (10:29)

Luke explicitly says the expert wants to justify himself. The follow-up question asks whom the command includes. The narrative gives this motive; it does not invite us to invent private motives for every other character.

The acts of care (10:30-35)

The Samaritan's compassion takes material form. He approaches, treats wounds, uses his own animal, brings the man to an inn, cares for him, and provides money with a promise about further expense. The care continues beyond the first encounter.

The question turned around (10:36-37)

Jesus asks which of the three was a neighbor to the injured man. The expert identifies mercy as the decisive action. Jesus closes with an instruction to act. Knowing the definition is not the end of the exchange.

SESSION 1 OF 2

Hear the question behind the parable

Read Luke 10:25-37. Follow the opening exchange and notice how Jesus changes the expert's question.

Observe: what does the text say?

1. What does Luke say about the expert's purpose in verses 25 and 29? What questions does Jesus ask?

2. Compare the question in verse 29 with the question in verse 36. Who is being asked to identify a neighbor in each?

Interpret: what did it mean then?

3. Why does it matter that the expert already knows the commands to love God and neighbor before the story begins?

4. How does the story answer an attempt to limit the command rather than merely supplying a definition of kindness?

Apply: what does it mean for us?

5. Where might you be defining a responsibility so narrowly that you can avoid a real need? You can discuss a hypothetical example.

6. What question could help your group move from discussing who deserves care to asking what appropriate care it can provide?

SESSION 2 OF 2

Follow mercy into practical care

Read Luke 10:25-37. Name the concrete actions of care and choose a responsible response without pretending to know unstated motives.

Observe: what does the text say?

1. List what the robbers do, what the priest and Levite do, and what the Samaritan does. Which people see the wounded man?

2. What care continues after the Samaritan leaves the inn? What resources does he commit?

Interpret: what did it mean then?

3. Why is compassion more than an inward feeling in this story? Point to the actions in verses 34 and 35.

4. Which proposed reasons for passing by are not actually supplied by the narrator? How should that limit our explanation?

Apply: what does it mean for us?

5. Choose one specific need you can respond to responsibly. What can you offer, and what should be referred to someone trained to help?

6. Who could share responsibility for follow-up so that the person receiving help is not left alone after the first response?

ONE-SESSION PATH

Study the Good Samaritan in one meeting

Read all of Luke 10:25-37. About 45 to 60 minutes.

Observe: what does the text say?

1. Read all thirteen verses. What questions begin and end the exchange?

2. Name the actions of the priest, Levite, and Samaritan. What do they share, and where do their responses differ?

Interpret: what did it mean then?

3. How does Jesus' final question change the way the expert has framed his responsibility?

4. Why do the bandages, animal, inn, money, and promised return matter to the meaning of mercy?

Apply: what does it mean for us?

5. Name a need you could respond to without requiring the recipient to belong to your own circle.

6. Choose a safe first step and an appropriate follow-up. What help or training would you need?

FOR THE LEADER

- Let the opening exchange set the task. The expert's knowledge is not the problem the story solves. Luke names self-justification in verse 29, and Jesus ends with an instruction to act.
- Do not claim that fear of ritual impurity, danger, haste, or any other proposed reason is the narrator's explanation for the priest and Levite. The text records seeing and passing by, without stating why.
- The wounded man's ethnicity is not identified. Do not present him as a named person or use the story to rank ethnic groups. Tyndale's note helps explain the surprise of the Samaritan helper without turning an ancient conflict into a present stereotype.
- Mercy is not a bargain for earning God's favor through enough good deeds. The exchange exposes the attempt to justify oneself and refuses a narrow limit on love. Do not turn the closing command into a quantified salvation checklist.
- The oil, wine, and bandages are narrative details, not present-day medical instructions. In a real emergency seek appropriate help. Do not require untrained intervention, unsafe contact, personal disclosure, or a visit to an abusive person.
- For a group project, ask what the recipient actually needs, use existing safeguarding and care processes, and agree who can responsibly follow up. Avoid taking photographs or sharing someone's story as evidence of the group's generosity.

WHERE CHRISTIANS READ IT DIFFERENTLY

Why did the priest and Levite pass by?

Readers propose reasons such as danger, inconvenience, or concerns about contact with a body. The story itself does not state their reasons. Its comparison rests on what they do after seeing the man and on the Samaritan's different response. A proposal about motive should remain a proposal, not become a fact used to excuse or condemn a whole group.

Should every detail receive a symbolic meaning?

A Christian reader may reflect on how this mercy resembles Christ's care. But the dialogue itself explains the immediate point by asking who acted as a neighbor and commanding the expert to do likewise. It does not provide a code assigning a separate theological identity to the inn, animal, money, or each wound. Begin with that stated question and answer before making wider connections.

SOURCES

Luke 10:25-37, Berean Standard Bible. Berean Bible. Public domain. Full primary passage, questions, narrative sequence and closing instruction; checked October 31, 2026.

Tyndale Open Study Notes, Luke 10. Tyndale House Publishers. CC BY-SA 4.0. Located notes on 10:25, 29 and 33 for the law expert, neighbor language and unexpected helper; checked October 31, 2026.

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Protos

The full study, with links to the commentary and dictionary, is free at protos-app.com/study-guides/good-samaritan. Protos is a Bible app for iPhone and Android that puts the history and context beside the passage you are reading.