



## “COMPASSION: Going The Distance”

Luke 10

Small Group Plan

Who is my neighbor?

Eleanor Bradley was shopping on 5th avenue in Manhattan when she tripped and broke her leg. Dazed and in shock she called for help for forty minutes. No one stopped. Shoppers, executives, students, everyone walked around her and stepped over her. Finally, after hundreds of people had passed by, a cab driver pulled over, helped her into his cab, and took her to a hospital.

Who is my neighbor?

### OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

*The opposite of love is not hate.  
It is something much cooler, more pallid,  
and really much more cruel.  
The opposite of love is indifference.*

— William Hague

- Do you agree with William Hague? Why or why not?
- Why did so many people ignore Eleanor Bradley?

### LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

#### — THE STORY BEFORE THE STORY —

Luke 10:25-29

<sup>25</sup> On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>26</sup> “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” <sup>27</sup> 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.’”* <sup>28</sup> “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”  
<sup>29</sup> But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

- Why did the lawyer want to justify himself?
- Why did Jesus tell this story as His answer to the lawyer?
- What is the connection between loving God and loving neighbors?
- Jesus said these two will bring life. How?

### — AVOIDING COMPASSION —

**Luke 10:30-32**

<sup>30</sup> A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.  
<sup>31</sup> A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

- What reasons, religious or not, could the priest and Levite invent that would stop them from offering help?
- List and discuss the conflicts between their being official representatives of God and their choice to avoid compassion?

### — EMBRACING COMPASSION —

**Luke 10:33-35**

<sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. “Look after him,” he said, “and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.”

- Identify the six action verbs describing the Samaritan in verse 34.
- How do these actions fill out or illustrate the meaning of compassion?
- Explain the risk that the Samaritan took in verse 35. Why did he do it?

## — THE STORY AFTER THE STORY —

Luke 10:36-37

<sup>36</sup> “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” <sup>37</sup> The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

- Jesus asked the lawyer to pick a person from the story who was a “neighbor,” but the lawyer couldn’t bring himself to say the word “Samaritan.” Why?
- Compare the lawyer’s question in verse 25 with Jesus’ question in verse 36. How did they use the term “neighbor” in different ways, and how did Jesus change the whole question?

### USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- Nazi concentration camp survivor Elie Wiesel has written:  
*“What is indifference? Etymologically, the word means ‘no difference.’ A strange and unnatural state in which the lines blur between light and darkness, dusk and dawn, crime and punishment, cruelty and compassion, good and evil ... Of course, indifference can be tempting — more than that, seductive. It is so much easier to look away from victims. It is so much easier to avoid such rude interruptions to our work, our dreams, and our hopes. It is after all, awkward, troublesome, to be involved in another person’s pain and despair. Yet, for that person who is indifferent, his or her neighbors are of no consequence. And, therefore, their lives are meaningless. Their hidden or even visible anguish is of no interest. Indifference reduces the other to an abstraction ... Indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor — never his victim, whose pain is magnified when he or she feel forgotten. The political prisoner in his cell, the hungry children, the homeless refugees — not to respond to their plight, not to relieve their solitude by offering them a spark of hope is to exile them from human memory. And in denying their humanity, we betray our own. Indifference, then, is not only a sin, it is a punishment.”*

— From **Speeches That Changed The World** “The Perils of Indifference”

- How do you respond to Wiesel?
- We don’t usually find victims along the road, so where is, or what is the roadside where we find people today?
- When we show “compassion” today is it usually careful or risky? Why?
- What kind of person would you be least likely stop and help? Who would you be most likely stop and help? Explain the difference.
- Who are some “Good Samaritans” that you personally know? Why do you think of them as such?
- Ask God to show you what compassion really means and to give you an opportunity this week be His Samaritan.