

# Love Thy Neighbor

I have a couple of questions for you today...what do you think is the most important commandment? Can you even remember them all? (Now would be a great time to memorize them, they are worth a lot of Kingdom Cash) What if I told you that the whole Bible could be summed up in just one word? What do you think that might be?

It's LOVE. And that is what the commandment is, actually. The most important thing we are to do is to love. Jesus described this and said that the most essential priority in our lives should be loving God with all of our heart, our mind, and our soul. And He said we are to love our neighbor. What does this mean? Who is our neighbor? Is it someone living next door or across the street? Someone we don't even know?

We know that God loved everyone, and wants us to do the same. So who is our neighbor? It's Everyone! This does not always mean that things they do are okay, but it means we show them we care and demonstrate that God does, too. Remember, Jesus was always more involved with the people that others saw as 'bad'. He knew that those people needed His love more than the others.

So how do we do that? Think of it this way...you should love other people the way you love yourself. But what does that mean? I remember when I was little girl, I was fighting with my brother, and I kicked him and made him cry, and my mother yelled at me and said: "You should love your brother as yourself." I wondered what that meant, and my mother explained that it meant *I should treat my brother the way I would want him to treat me*. "Oh, the Golden Rule. I remember that. So I said I would play Barbies with him, because I would want him to play Barbies with me." But my brother did not want to play Barbies. Hmm

So what does it really mean to love other people the way you love yourself? There are two kinds of love. One kind of love is the love that I have for chocolate. I love chocolate. But this does not mean that I want to make chocolate happy, to give it joy, to give it good things. No, it means I want the chocolate to give *me* joy; I want to eat the chocolate and taste its sweetness. To love other people the way I love chocolate would not be enough. If I love other people by wanting them to give *me* good things, give *me* joy, make *me* happy, then I do not love them in the right way. But there is a second kind of love. It is the kind of love that I have for myself. I love myself, and this means that I want myself to have joy and happiness and good things. We all love ourselves in this way. All of us want ourselves to be happy and have joy and good things. So this is what it means to love yourself. And so, to love your neighbor *as yourself*, means to love the other people in your life in this way: to want to make them happy and give them joy and every good thing. Not to make them sad and cry, but to make them smile and laugh.

This is the way that God loves you: He wants to give you joy and happiness, and He gives you every good thing that you have.

In the Bible, there's a story about a man who came to Jesus and asked Him what he needed to do to go to Heaven. Jesus asked him, "What does the Bible say?" The man answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus said. "Do this and you will live forever in Heaven."

But the man wanted to know more, so he asked Jesus another question, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered the man's question by telling a story or a "parable". A parable is a simple story that teaches a valuable lesson about what God thinks.

Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho." Robbers attacked him. They stripped off his clothes and beat him. Then they went away, leaving him almost dead.

A priest happened to be going down that same road. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. A Levite also came by. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side too.

But a Samaritan came to the place where the man was. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him. He went to him, poured olive oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey. He brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins. He gave them to the owner of the inn. "Take care of him," he said. "When I return, I will pay you back for any extra expense you may have."

"Which of the three do you think was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by robbers?" The man said, "The one who felt sorry for him." Jesus told him, "Go and do as he did."

It is important to be kind, but who should we show kindness to? EVERYONE! Jesus tells us to not only love our neighbors, but to love even those we don't know. If we can help someone else, we should do it!

The story we just read teaches us to show kindness, even when it's not the popular thing to do. One of the people in the parable was a Samaritan—someone who was from a place called Samaria. Jewish and Samaritan people didn't get along, and it had been that way for a very long time. So, it would not have been typical for a Samaritan to help a Jewish person, even if that person were hurt and needed help.

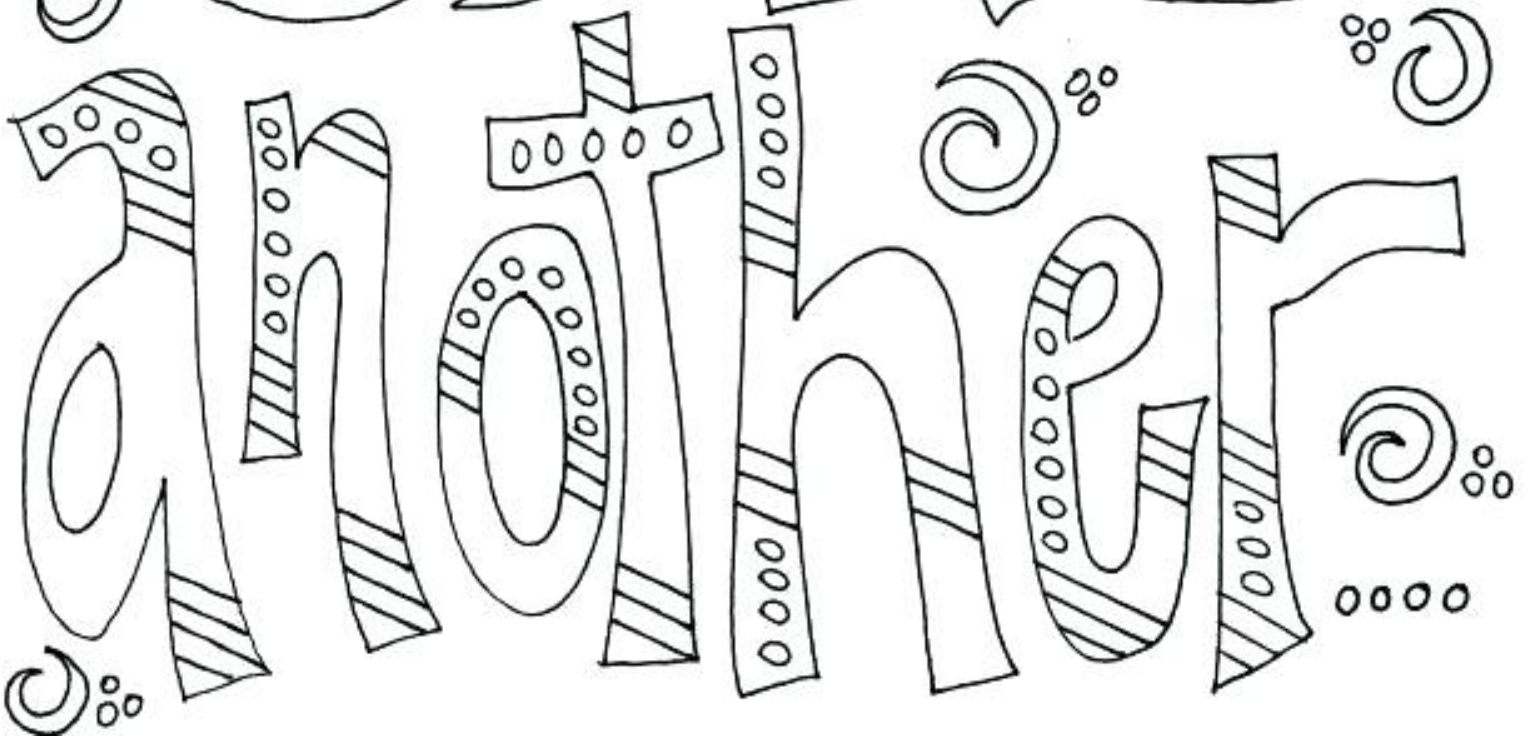
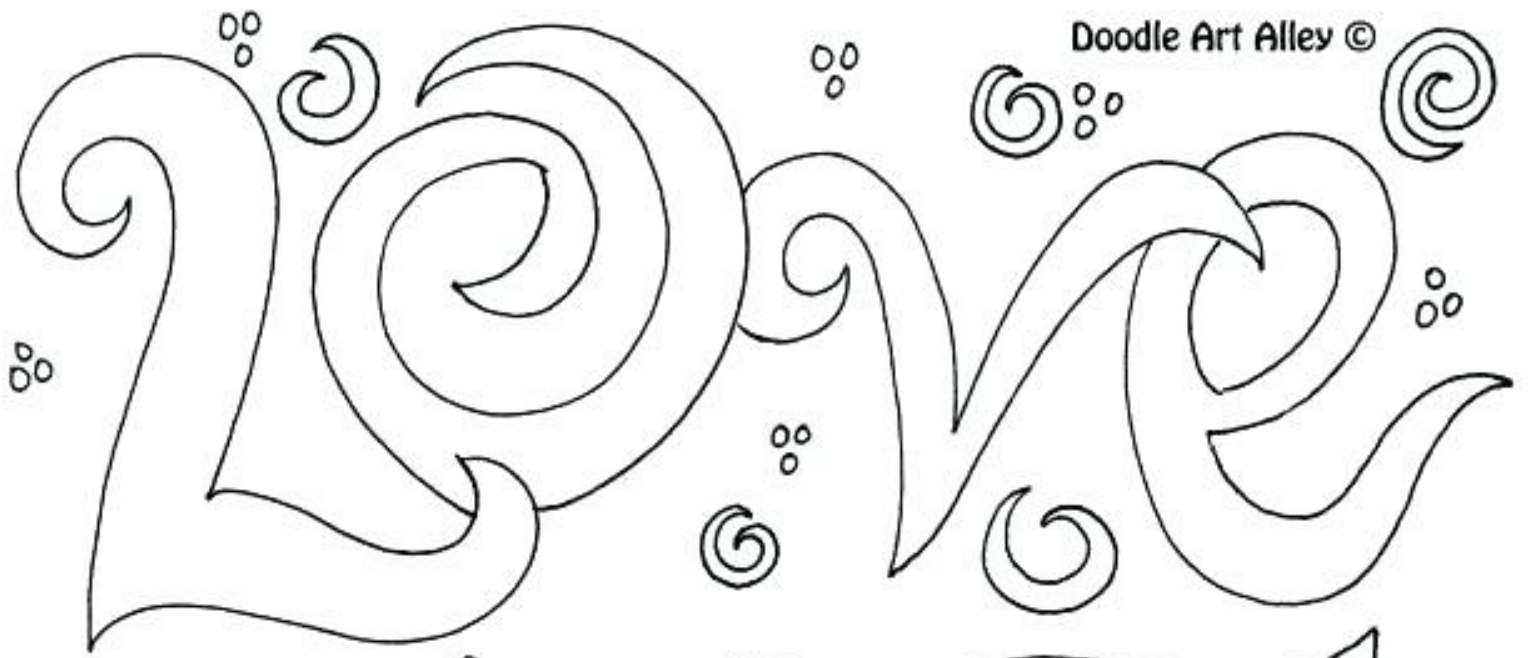
In this story, however, not only did the Samaritan man bandage the injured Jewish man and take care of him all night. But the next day he took him to a hotel to make sure that he was able to recover in a safe place.

Jesus taught that we are to love our neighbors the way we love our ourselves. What if a bully at school was sad because his grandma was sick? You could just ignore him because he is always mean, or you could do what the Samaritan did and go out of your way to be nice to him.

Sometimes helping our neighbors is really hard, but we can choose to show others the love God has shown us. I want to encourage you to look for opportunities to be kind to everyone. Someday you will need other people's kindness in your life too!

This story reminds me of a Dr. Seuss book. No, not the Grinch, Horton Hears a Who. If you know the story, than you will remember that Horton had to do a lot of hard, dangerous things to keep the Whos safe. He didn't even know these people and yet he helped them anyways. Do you remember why? As he said, "A person's a person no matter how small." I like that saying. No matter what - a person is a person. No matter what - we should treat every person with LOVE.





# The Good Samaritan Parable

D	F	X	T	I	L	R	O	A	D	X	Z	D	G	D
T	S	I	R	H	C	O	M	O	P	C	H	O	C	Y
E	Y	N	R	X	I	Z	R	M	D	R	S	O	X	F
L	T	P	T	J	X	E	E	D	D	N	T	G	U	W
B	K	Q	N	H	N	L	V	O	J	I	O	Q	Q	R
A	I	X	D	Z	A	M	G	E	X	J	R	K	F	R
R	N	H	V	S	D	O	X	Z	S	F	Y	P	H	I
A	D	O	U	R	T	S	A	M	A	R	I	T	A	N
P	N	R	U	A	H	R	R	Q	J	E	S	U	S	N
J	E	R	I	C	H	O	S	E	H	T	O	L	C	E
J	S	A	F	Z	D	Q	O	F	J	Y	N	H	N	K
T	S	R	H	P	L	Y	J	E	W	I	S	H	L	K
B	L	E	V	I	T	E	J	A	N	Z	D	A	U	I
O	Z	W	T	M	V	C	S	D	A	Q	W	V	A	L
T	P	S	E	G	A	D	N	A	B	C	A	L	N	U

BANDAGES

JERUSALEM

SAMARITAN

CHRIST

JESUS

STORY

CLOTHES

JEWISH

THIEVES

GOD

KINDNESS

WALK

GOOD

LEVITE

INN

PARABLE

JERICH0

ROAD

**Jesus Teaches  
About Helping**

—Luke 10

Helping  
Others

The teachers of the law knew that they were supposed to love God and their neighbors. They were trying to test Jesus when they asked, "Who is my neighbor?" To answer them, Jesus told the story of "The Good Samaritan."

Follow the path that the man took from Jerusalem to Jericho. Every time you come to a capital letter, write that letter in the spaces below. When you are finished, you will know who your neighbor is.

