

Loving Our Neighbor Leviticus 19:9-18

Loving Our Neighbor Introduction

- Linus from Peanuts: “I love mankind. It’s people I can’t stand!”
- How we sometimes see it: LOVE your neighbor as YOURSELF
- Hugely important concept
- Fascinatingly buried in Leviticus
- Jesus highlights its importance.
- Matthew 22:35-40
- Read through the passage: Leviticus 19:9-18

Generosity 19:9-10

- Concern for the poor
- Concern for the sojourner (foreigner, temporary resident)
- Willingness to meet people’s needs
- God provides for us. We should share with others.

Honesty 19:11-12

- Honesty is foundational to relationships.
- True in both business and personal life.
- No ulterior motives.
- Genuinely wanting the best for others as well as ourselves.

Integrity 19:13-14

Dictionary definition:

- adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty.
- Related to *integer*, that is, a whole number – thus, relating to the characteristic of being undiminished, wholeness.

- Fair treatment of workers.
- 19:14 prohibits more than cruel practical jokes.
- People need to be aware of what we do to them.
- Related to honesty in business and personal dealings
- Not doing anything subversive.
- Not “pulling the wool over somebody’s eyes.”

Justice 19:15-16

- No favoritism or partiality in judgments.
- We might think that God is partial to the poor.
- He is, but mainly in the sense that he is concerned for them and sympathetic to their needs.
- This doesn’t mean they are allowed to commit crimes.
- 19:16 slander, also could be viewed as “gossip”
- See Proverbs 11:13 and 20:19.
- Ezekiel 22:9 connects slander with murder.
- This is the case here.

Love 19:17-18

- 19:17 Make an effort to resolve disagreements.
- 19:18 Don't try to get revenge.
- See Romans 12:17-21, Paul may have been thinking of this.

I am the Lord.

- Repeated statement in 19:10, 12, 14, 16 and 18.
- In the Bible, ethics are built on a foundation more basic than human beings – on God.

- *"If there is no God, then everything is permitted."*
 - *Fyodor Dostoyevsky in The Brothers Karamazov*
- *"Without God, morality is reduced to a matter of opinion."*
 - *Rabbi Joseph Telushkin*

- Our neighbor is, like us, created in God's image.
- A command to love our neighbor "as ourselves" is, therefore, very reasonable.
- Treating others "well" can be seen as treating them "right."

- Jesus teaches it in John 15:12-17.
- Paul in Romans 12:9-10.
- Peter in 1 Peter 1:22.
- John in 1 John 4:7-12.

Loving Others

- Jesus takes love to an extreme.
- See Luke 6:27-36.

- Christianity has lost its credibility, at least in part, because we Christians have not made loving others the high priority that the Bible says it should be.

- Loving others gives credence to our faith, making it:
 - Visible
 - Understandable
 - Believable
 - Acceptable

- Let's not be like Linus
- We can't only love humanity in general or abstract terms.
- We have to love the actual people that we know.

- How we need to see it: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF

Loving Our Neighbor – One Last Look

- The Good Samaritan
- Luke 10:25-37