

July 18, 2021

7. Who Is Your Neighbor — Luke 10:25-37

Last week I noted that Jesus elevated *neighbor* to “anyone who had need.” In Luke 10:29-37, when asked, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus responded with the parable of the good Samaritan, where the above idea has its genesis. This week, I share a personal parable.

At an Aldi store in Punta Gorda, Florida: “Can you spare some money for lunch?” She looked like seven miles of gravel road. A terse thought: *Not the first time she’s done this. Talking to her? What difference will that make? I’ve heard these routines before. Does that matter?*

I listened to my better angels: “Hi. Mind telling me your story?” “What do you want to know?” “Whatever you want to tell me.” She told me: “I bought an old jeep in Michigan. Drove it here. Wiring shorted out. No one will help me. Can’t find work. Nowhere to live. Everything’s filled up because of the virus.” *Has she really tried to find work? Does that matter?*

I inquired about family. “Momma and Daddy’s both gone. I’m an only child. By myself, mostly.” *Is she being honest? I noticed rotten teeth, scabs on skinny arms. Meth head? If I give her money for lunch, will she buy drugs? Does that matter?*

“People act like I’m not here. ‘Specially those with nice cars.” I looked at our car. *Nice car? “Those drivin’ Lexuses and Cadillacs are worst. Won’t look at me. Don’t care. Mostly I hang around, sleep around here. Sometimes restaurants give me food.” I noticed the cigarette in her hand, cell phone beside her. Does that matter?*

“What’s your name?” “Angela.” “Angela, it’s too easy for me to say that I hope things work out and that God loves you. So I won’t say that. But I do want you to know that God is aware of you. God knows your name. And I sincerely hope things get better for you.”

Angela was fidgeting, tired of talking with me. *Should I give her money?* I did. Our conversation ended. Angela walked away.

What would you do? Did my response to a woman sitting on grocery store bench matter? I think it mattered to Angela . . . and maybe to Jesus, too.

—Ruben Chupp
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Ruben Chupp of Nappanee, Indiana, is a spiritual director, chaplain, and retired pastor. His personal goals: “love God and the person in front of me at any given time; read some, write some, think some, pray some, and take a nap every day; love my wife, Idella, my children, and their children with all the grace I possess; and finally, get home before dark.”

Resources for this session

Salt & Light Videos

Jaye Lindo is the presenter for unit 2, Neighbors. These teaching videos are great for leader preparation or introducing each session. They are available on [MennoMedia's YouTube channel](#). Jaye is the pastor of 7 Ways Home Fellowship, Bowie, Maryland.

Additional commentary for this session is available at:

<https://www.mennomedia.org/salt-light-supplements/>