

Luke's Ancient Biography of Jesus 2

Notes on Lesson One: Priorities

Lesson One: Priorities

Luke 10: 25-42

Central Message

Loving God is the first and most important commandment, yet Jesus links it closely to loving our neighbor. Why? God first loved us, all of us. God wants us to love as a way of responding to His love. It is not just a rule, it is something that happens naturally when we know God's love. At least, that is God's plan. Some of us have never understood that God loves us. Some of us are too busy or too worried about things to pay attention to God's love, even when we know it is there.

Life Application

Do you see yourself in any of these characters? Are you like the lawyer who tests Jesus? Are you like the priest who walks past the man who is hurting? Is there a group of people that you hate like the Jews hated the Samaritans? Are you like the good Samaritan? Are you like Martha who is always helping but not always willing to stop and listen to Jesus? Are you like Mary who wants to learn as much as she can?

Community-Building Activity

Personal Priorities

Preparation: Write the instructions on a board, or print the worksheet or cover page from the supplementary materials. If you use the instruction strips, copy and cut enough strips for each person.

Instructions: Meet in groups of three. It is not necessary for them to write the answers.

Personal Priorities: Our personal priorities are the people, things, ideas, or actions that we consider to be the most important. Who are the most important people in your life right now? List five and tell your friends. What are the most important things that you will do this year? Tell your friends about one of them.

Teaching Notes: The lesson suggests groups of three. In addition to the cover page and strips, there is a mini-lesson on memorizing Bible verses and flashcards. These

Luke's Ancient Biography of Jesus 2

Notes on Lesson One: Priorities

represent different options for the beginning of the lesson. For some lessons, you will not want any opening activity.

Alternate Community-Building Activity and Introduction¹ ***Prejudice***

Preparation: There are alternate worksheets and cover sheets for this lesson.

Instructions: Meet in pairs. It is not necessary for them to write the answers.

Prejudice: Why do people of one group (or race or nation) hate people from another group? What are some of the causes? Give some examples of this type of prejudice?

Teaching Notes: This question can be used instead of the question about priorities. If you think it is a good question, but not an easy one to start with, you could insert it into the lesson.

Note the introduction to the lesson that is in the workbook. It is an introduction to a second major section in the book of Luke. The first section of Luke, chapters 1-9:50, takes place mainly in Galilee. In this section, the disciples are getting to know Jesus. In the second section, chapters 9:51-19:40, Jesus and his disciples are traveling to Jerusalem. Jesus trains his disciples, and many people follow him. The final section, chapters 19:41 to 24:53 narrates Jesus' last week in Jerusalem, his death, and his resurrection.

Lesson Notes

Part One: The Good Samaritan Luke 10: 25-37

Preparation:

Note that the numbers below refer to the numbers in the workbook.

The introduction to Part One states that there will be more information about the Samaritans after the reading. You may want to read the LINK section together before the reading

1.2. Notice that the exercises in this section help the readers to understand the organization of the text, and prepare them to read it in three parts: Jesus, the expert in the law, and the narrator. There is no need to check to see if they

¹ The community-building activities and the introductions are often combined in the lesson notes because sometimes the introduction is first, and sometimes the activity is first.

Luke's Ancient Biography of Jesus 2

Notes on Lesson One: Priorities

marked the text correctly before you read.

3. Usually, the Bible reading is done as a whole group. If you have at least one good reader per group, you can divide into groups of three so everyone has a chance to read something.
4. It is important to think about the lawyer's motives; he was testing Jesus. Did he want to know the answer to the questions so he could inherit eternal life, or so he could find out more about Jesus? Was he asking to see if Jesus was from God or to see if Jesus would give the "correct" answer? Likewise, when he asked, "Who is my neighbor?" we can guess that he wanted a specific answer, something that he could *do*. At least, he wanted to justify what he *was doing*. Would he have imagined that someone outside of the Jewish faith was his neighbor? (The lawyer's first question will be studied more in the following sections.)
5. His question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" is a basic question. Another way to phrase it is, "What must I do to get to heaven?" A more basic question than this is, "Is there a God? How can I know Him?" All these questions are related. The answer is found in Luke 10: 28, "Do this and you will live." The man knew the law, and Jesus agreed with him: "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." Notice, however, that there is a problem with the man's question. We cannot do anything to receive an inheritance. (Well, in our case, maybe being nice to Aunt Sally will help....) Yet an inheritance is something we receive based on our family - the people we are related to. This is the way to think about eternal life - it is all about our relationship with God and not what we can *do*.
6. The answer in the text is, "The one who had mercy on him." We know this was the Samaritan, even though the expert in the law didn't (wouldn't?) say so. If even "the one" in the story is my neighbor, anyone can be my neighbor.
7. Luke 10:27 ..."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." They may not include loving their neighbor, which is fine at this point.
8. They will use this list of people to help them retell the story later. In the story, we meet the traveler, the robbers, a priest, a Levite, and the Samaritan, and the innkeeper.

Luke's Ancient Biography of Jesus 2

Notes on Lesson One: Priorities

LINK Note that there is a short map activity at the end. The map activity reinforces the information in this section.

9. Jesus told the story to answer the man's question. We cannot make little laws about "loving our neighbor" and ignore the main point of the law. If we love God, we will love the people whom God loves.
10. He wanted to shock the man into seeing that anyone can be our neighbor.
11. This is an opinion question, not a historical one. The footnotes give a little information about the priests and Levites. It is not important to know particulars about these men. It is enough to know that they were religious leaders who should know the law. Perhaps they were in a hurry. Perhaps they were afraid of the man. And surely they did not want to become unclean.
12. This is an excellent story to retell or act out. It only takes a few minutes. Begin by dividing the group into pairs so they can tell each other the story. They can look at the list of characters while they tell it. If you want to also have them act it out, this oral activity will be a helpful prelude to the drama.

Lesson Notes

Part Two: Mary and Martha, Luke 10: 38-42

Preparation:

Note that the numbers below refer to the numbers in the workbook.

- 1.2. This activity prepares the readers for a "dramatic" reading of the text with characters and a narrator. Divide into groups of three if you can.
3. Martha opened her home to Jesus and the disciples. Martha was Mary's sister. She was distracted by all the preparations, and Jesus says she is worried and upset about many things. She complained to Jesus, asking for Jesus to get Mary to help her. (She must have known Jesus already. Otherwise, how could she ask this?) Jesus says, "Martha, Martha...." It appears that she is a close friend.
4. The sister Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet, listening to what he was saying. This is what a disciple would do. In fact, since the disciples are there, they are probably also "sitting at his feet." Jesus said that Mary chose the right way, and he was not going to stop her (to take it away from her.)
5. Martha was busy loving her neighbors; she opened her home to Jesus and the disciples, and prepared (we can assume) food and lodging for them.

Luke's Ancient Biography of Jesus 2

Notes on Lesson One: Priorities

6. Mary loved God by being a disciple of Jesus. She listened to Jesus and learned from him. Note that Jesus' words and Mary's actions would be shocking to most Jewish men.
7. I have changed the question to read: "In these two accounts, what do we learn about Jesus' priorities regarding race and culture?" A simple answer will be fine. In the examples, Jesus said that a Samaritan could love his neighbor and a woman could be a disciple. He was implying that we are to love our neighbor regardless of race or culture, and perhaps also that even a Samaritan could inherit eternal life. (However, we have no evidence that he loved God.) He was also implying that anyone could become a disciple, regardless of traditional cultural rules.

LIVE

You can see the different spiritual levels in the questions. However, the questions can be answered by both Christians and non-Christians. They can answer according to the principles they have learned in the gospel, even if they do not yet know God personally. My answer to the first question is in the Consider section.

Note: You may consider question #3 to be too personal. If you do, read it as part of the "consider" section and do not discuss it.

Be sure to read the "Consider This" section.

Loving God is the first and most important commandment, yet Jesus links it closely to loving our neighbor. Why? God first loved us, all of us. God wants us to love as a way of responding to His love. It is not just a rule, it is something that happens naturally when we know God's love. At least, that is God's plan. Some of us have never understood that God loves us. Some of us are too busy or too worried about things to pay attention to God's love, even when we know it is there.

The Final Word

You do not need to read this in class.

Luke's Ancient Biography of Jesus 2

Lesson One: Priorities

Priorities

In the last lesson, we discovered the importance of prayer in Jesus' life. Prayer was a priority* for Jesus.

In this lesson, Jesus teaches about loving God and loving our neighbor. These are also priorities. Jesus will discuss:

What must I do to receive eternal life¹?

Who is my neighbor?

Is it more important to love God or to love my neighbor?

Community Time



Personal Priorities

*Our personal priorities are the people, things, ideas, or actions that we consider to be the most important.

Who are the most important people in your life right now?

List five and tell your friends.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What are the most important things that you will do this year?

Tell your friends about one of them.

¹ Eternal life is living forever with God. We can begin this new life now, and continue it in heaven when our bodies die.

Luke's Ancient Biography of Jesus 2

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Community Time



Prejudice

Jesus' ideas about race and culture are shocking to many of his Jewish listeners. He showed honor to people of all nations and genders (men and women). He was against prejudice, pre-judging ("pre" means before) people based on their group, race, or any other reason.

Discuss these questions about prejudice:

Why do people of one group (or race or nation) hate people from another group?

What are some of the causes?

Give some examples of this type of prejudice?

² Eternal life is living forever with God. We can begin this new life now, and continue it in heaven when our bodies die.

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Luke's Ancient Biography of Jesus 2

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Memorizing Bible Verses

Some Bible verses are so important that we should memorize them. This Bible verse is the “first and greatest commandment.”

Deuteronomy 6: 4,5

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength.

After God gave this commandment, he told them:

Deuteronomy 6: 6,7

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress³ them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Jesus said that the second greatest commandment is this:

Leviticus 19:18 (Jesus' words are in Mark 12:30)

... love your neighbor as yourself...

The lawyer in our lesson knew these commandments.

Luke 10:27

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 mind⁴; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Now to memorize. What is your favorite way to learn new words?

This time we will work on important words. Fill in the important (or “key”) words in the sentence below and memorize them in order. The first and most important is “love.”

“_____ the _____ your _____ with all your _____, and with all your _____, and with all your _____,” and “_____ your _____ as _____.”

**To remember this later, you will probably only need to practice: heart soul strength mind

**There are flashcards on the next page to help you.

³ Make sure they have a clear and lasting understanding.

⁴ Jesus also included the word “mind” because it is in one of the ancient texts. To the ancient Jews, there was not a big difference between heart, soul, mind, and strength. Together they mean that a person was to give his or her “all.”

Luke's Ancient Biography of Jesus 2

Lesson One: Priorities

LOVE	soul
heart	God
mind	neighbor
yourself	Lord
strength	LOVE

Here are some more verses about loving others.

I John 3: 16-18

I John 4: 9-11

I John 4: 19-21

Luke 6: 32-36