

Lesson Twelve – “Community & Involvement: God Cares; Do I?”

Introduction

For many centuries, Christians have taken it upon themselves to address the needs of the poor and the outcast in their communities. But today, much of that work is left to the state. Even the general call for involvement in our culture at large has become a matter of debate in some contemporary Christian circles.

A careful examination of Scripture will reveal that believers have a mandate to reclaim their place in this important arena. We dare not, like Jonah, try to escape God’s call to be involved.

Quote Unquote

What does Scripture say? Fill in the blanks as you watch this presentation.

1. “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who _____ _____ _____ _____.” –Luke 10:36-37
2. He raises the _____ from the dust and lifts the _____ from the ash heap; he sets them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor. –1 Samuel 2:8
3. “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am _____ and _____ _____ _____, and you will find rest for your souls.” –Matthew 11:28-29
4. For God did not give us a spirit of _____, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. –2 Timothy 1:7
5. My whole being will exclaim, “Who is like you, O LORD? You _____ the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them.” –Psalm 35:10
6. But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their _____ _____ from their _____, and many cattle as well.” –Jonah 4:9-11

Notes or Questions

While watching the video, use this space to record your thoughts, any facts you want to remember, questions that arise, etc.

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?”

Matthew 5:13

TRUTH 1 – God So Loves the World

Our Lord is actively involved in the world, and He wants us to join Him in that work.

1. Does God care just about saving individuals, or does He want to renew the whole cosmos? Has He given up on the physical universe He once made? Consider the words of Genesis 1; Romans 8:18-25; Colossians 1:15-20.
2. Dr. Tackett runs through a long list of all the things he sees God doing in the world. Have fun creating your own list (maybe on an extra sheet of blank paper!).

TRUTH 2 – Who is My Neighbor?

We are called especially to reach out to our “neighbor” in need—including the poor, the orphans, widows, and outcasts.

1. Who are our neighbors? Who is poor in some way? Who are the lonely and outcast, and what are we being called to do for each of those individuals? What did C.S. Lewis mean when he said that “there are no *ordinary* people. You have never talked to a mere mortal”?
2. What is it in God’s nature that makes Him care especially for widows and orphans and outcasts? Do we really care for the needy? Whom do we weep and pray for often? What tangible help do we offer?
3. How do you feel about the fact that God, the Lord of Creation, is humble and gentle? Do *you* find it difficult to be humble? To do away with pride? What is the difference between humility and timidity?

TRUTH 3 – Pulling a Jonah

Today’s Christians are relatively uninvolved in the culture, compared to believers who’ve gone before.

1. What examples from the past or present make you feel good about the Christian community’s involvement in the world?
2. Why are some Christians today seemingly reluctant to help out a “sinking ship”? Where do you think we got the idea that God is interested only in saving us and getting us to heaven, rather than resurrecting our bodies for eternal life in a new earth?
3. For you, what is a good balance between church activities (mingling with other Christians) and community involvement? Is one keeping you from the other?

Wrap-Up

The Bible clearly presents the perplexing reality that God has entrusted us with carrying out His mission and purpose in the world.

The God of the Scriptures is the lord of the lonely, the savior of the outcast, the defender of the defenseless, and the sustainer of all who find themselves in need. Our call is to become like Him by discovering what it means to love not only Him, but also our neighbor.

Check It Out

For your reference and further review, here are some of the key Scripture passages that were mentioned in the video you just watched.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 15:11; 24:14

1 Samuel 2:1-10

Job 5:11, 15

Psalms 12:5; 22:4; 35:10; 138:6

Proverbs 14:21; 28:27

Isaiah 57:15; 65:1-2

Jonah 4:9-11

Matthew 5:43-44; 11:28-29;
19:16-17; 22:33-40; 23:37-38; 25:33-36

Luke 1:51-52; 10:25-37

John 13; 14:4-9; 17:6

2 Timothy 1:7; 2:15

James 2:8; 4:6

1 Peter 5:5-6

1 John 3:17