

September 28, 2010

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## **Monday**

Matt. 10:38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it."

If you thought that becoming a Christian would bring comfort and ease, you were wrong. Jesus constantly challenged the thoughts and actions of His followers. Reflect upon the Disciples' lives. They were challenged to give up profitable businesses and to make radical changes in lifestyle. More discomfoting, Jesus was constantly stretching their spiritual lives and rebuilding their character. He forced upon them a radically new understanding of the requirements of salvation and discipleship. Is God's word concerning your responsibility toward your neighbors challenging you to new understandings and commitments? Good, it should!

## **Tuesday**

Luke 10:33 "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion..."

Neighbors come in all types, languages, and skin colors. God put no caveats upon His command to love your neighbor. He did not say love them only if they are of your religion or background, only of your color or nationality, only of your mindset or only if they are easy to get along with. Instead He used this story to make exactly the opposite point. Neighbors may be totally different in every way from you, but God has placed these people in your path, along your way, specifically for you to befriend -- as He befriended you. Expand your concept of 'neighbor' and see the whole of your path as your neighborhood. Be at work where God is at work.

## **Wednesday**

James 3:15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

Sometimes being religious can make us hard of hearing. That was the case with both the Priest and the Levite. They were so religiously secure that they no longer heard the voice of God. They no longer felt the heart of God. They no longer understood the purpose of God. Make sure that your 'religious' nature does not make you feel superior to others. Do not let your religion breed intolerance. If your religion makes you less likely to really hear another's heart, see another's hurt, or respond to another's need. It is indeed *your* religion and *not* God's.

## **Thursday**

Matt. 22:39 "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'"

"A church in the heart of the city with the city upon its heart." It is a saying printed on much of our literature, but is it just a saying or is it the truth? Of course you are the church. You are First Baptist. The truth of the saying is only true if you are following Jesus in making your neighbors a burden of grace upon your life. Will you be a part of a network of people to form a spiritual 'Neighborhood Watch' in our city? Will you captain your family to become prayer warriors in your neighborhood? It is time we took God's second great commandment to heart.

## **Friday**

John 4:9 Therefore the Samaritan woman \*said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?"

It was the oddest of things and most unexpected. Jesus sat down with two most despised characters embodied in one person. This new acquaintance was both a woman (Jewish men did not talk with women), and a Samaritan (Jewish people had nothing to do with Samaritans). Jesus broke social and religious boundaries when he asked this woman for a drink of water. Others of the day would frown upon it, but God was delighted! To whom are you reaching out with the grace and love of God? How will you reach others in your pathway? Will you make the effort?