

Loving Experts (and Law-Making Leaders)

Janelle Walsh

PURPOSE: In this lesson, we will seek to learn how to be respectful of lawmakers, even if we disagree with their actions.

MUSIC: (Hymns of Heritage & Hope) Make Me a Servant #527. If it is not possible to sing, read the words together.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 10:25-29, 36-37; Matthew 22:34-40

PREPARATION Needed:

Skit: Run off a copy of the opening skit and assign the needed readers. You may choose to make signs for the various characters to wear during the skit. Keep these signs to use in all the other skits.

Music: If using music, acquire enough hymnals for each person to have one. Optional: Have a recording or an instrumentalist play accompaniment.

Scripture: Have Bibles available for those who need one, and assign Scripture pieces at the start, to make reading through them smoother.

Hook

This devotional will focus on loving experts. In the Scripture about the Good Samaritan, this person was probably a lawyer. Luke 10:25 calls him “an expert in the law.” As the Scripture is being read, the characters will act out the reading. At the end of the reading, the character who is the expert will stand and share her part.

Invite the people who are in the skit to go over to the side of the room and come in as their parts are read. If you have a small group, you may ask them to stay seated and just get up and act out their parts as appropriate and then be seated. The person who is acting out the man who is beaten does not have to get on the floor, but may sit in a chair or recline on a couch. The point is to have each person walk by, and then go to the other side.

This devotional will focus on experts or others in authority. At the end of the reading, the character who is the expert will stand and share her part. The narrator may be the one giving the devotional, or it may be someone else. The narrator should read the Scripture slowly enough for the actors to play their roles.

To introduce this lesson, share the skit below: **Loving Experts**

(Luke 10:25-37)

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

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

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’”

“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 had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

The expert will look at the audience and say,

“I have been amazed listening to this teacher, this man called Jesus. But, I am an expert in the law. His teachings are making me very uncomfortable. People are going to him with their questions now. What if they think he knows more than I do? What if he teaches something I think is wrong?”

“At first, I thought he was a harmless man, but what if he leads others astray? What if he teaches something that makes me look bad? I just don’t know what to do!

“But, when I hear him teach my heart is touched. It’s as if my heart is recognizing a truth that I have never understood. Am I wrong for questioning?”

Book

In our passage from Luke, the person asking the questions is an expert in the law.

ASK: Who are the modern experts in the law? (lawyers, city, county, state and national leaders and politicians)

ASK: What does the expert want to know? (how to inherit eternal life)

ASK: What does Jesus tell him is the answer? (Love the Lord your God and love your neighbor)

Read Matthew 22:34-40

ASK: In the Matthew passage, who are the people asking the question? (the Pharisees)

ASK: What seems to be their motivation? What did they want to learn? (motivation: test him, learn: what is the greatest commandment)

ASK: What does Jesus tell them is the answer? (Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.)

Say: “I deeply appreciate the consistency with which we are taught throughout the Bible. Jesus is quoting the Old Testament: Deuteronomy 6. In it, the Israelites are about to enter the Promised Land. In verse 5, the recap of how they should live their lives is given.” Read Deuteronomy 6:5.

“Whether we are experts in the law or not, the direction to love the Lord and our neighbor can be acted upon. Let’s take a moment to think about a couple of passages that define love.”

Look

Share:

1 Corinthians 13 gives us a full definition, ending by telling us that love is the greatest of the three: faith, hope and love.

Take a moment to think quietly or to share with the group what aspects of love are easier for you to enact and which one(s) may be the hardest. (Allow time for people to think.)

1 John 3:16-18 also tells us how Jesus showed his love and directs us towards loving ways to share his love with others. What stands out to you?

Verse 18 guides us. “Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”

Took

The expert in the law recognized that the neighbor was “the one who had mercy on him.” It’s easy to point at the politicians and lawmakers of today and decide that they are merciless or opposed to the Bible. I’ve been told many times to be careful when I point because three fingers are pointing back at me. When I make an announcement about somebody else, I need to watch that I am also filled with mercy.

NOTE: This is not the time to have a political discussion – it is instead a call to offer mercy to those people who have taken significant responsibilities on their shoulders. We are given directions for what we should be doing to support our leaders.

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

ASK: What are we called to offer for all people? (petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving)

ASK: For whom are we offering these? (kings and all those in authority)

ASK: Why? (That we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness)

As we leave today, let’s be aware of our attitudes toward the lawmakers. Whether we agree or disagree with their personal or professional decisions, we should still be respectful toward them. We are commanded to pray for them. More importantly, we should be showing Christ’s love to them. Join me in praying for all of the civic leaders.

Shared by: Janelle Walsh attends the Princeton (W. Va.) Advent Christian Church where her husband Sam is pastor. Their two adult children and two dachshunds live with them. Janelle is an itinerant music teacher, splitting her time between an intermediate school and an early learning center.