

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

Good morning Life Fellowship. It is good to see you today. Before I get started into our series I would like to give an little update. I try to do this about once a month, usually the first Sunday of the month if possible. We have a lot of good things going on and a lot of things happening so I wanted to give you a quick update. First of all in March we had a wonderful Missions Conference. We met a guy by the name of David Nelms, who is the founder of TTI, The Timothy Initiative. He actually pastored the church I used to pastor in West Palm Beach after I left there. And they started this church planting effort around the world that has now been responsible for nearly a 100,000 churches being planted around the globe. This is largely in the 1040 window, and that is the area on our globe that has a lot of third world countries in it.

And they have something that they do where they go in and they train national pastors how to plant churches. These national pastors are called Timothys. They are men that feel called to be a gospel preacher and they plant churches. They are not churches like what we think of in the United States; these are churches who in Arabic countries sometimes have to meet underground. In fact I know of one of the churches that meet under a stairwell in an apartment building. In other places they meet under trees, like in Africa, Myanmar and parts of Asia where it is rather tropical.

Some places they might actually have a rough building, sometimes with no walls but just a covering over the top. Eventually some of the churches get large enough where they become more like a traditional church. More often than that what they do is begin dividing and starting other churches around their community. Many of these people don't own cars do they don't have the ability to be able to commute to churches. As a result there are just many, many times when we have to look at how churches are done around the world because they are unique.

So what we do for three hundred dollars is bring these guys to a city, we keep them there for a period of time and they are trained through a series of ten books on doctrine, on the gospel, on how to minister to people, and on things like hermeneutics and so forth, just the basics of being a pastor. And then they go back to their community and they start a church. We don't send them monthly money; the only money we spend is for training them and then releasing them.

We count it as a church whenever that pastor goes back and has a congregation that meets at least once a week and usually they have five to ten people as they get started. Then they identify one person who will be the next planter, the next Timothy. And then also they have to support through their church body a widow or an orphan. When those things are accomplished we count them as a church. And those churches are exploding around the world.

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

Again, sometimes we Americans think the only way to do things is the way Americans do them. Right? Well, it doesn't work the way we do it here in most of the parts of the world. They don't have the resources, the time, or the transportation, but their way works. So what we have done is get a bunch of little 'old school' banks that are like what many of us grew up in churches with. I grew up in church with these little missionary banks so we got some of these just to use kind of like a memory tool.

By the way we have already had enough money donated for twenty-five churches to be able to start. We would like to get that up to 100 churches. And if you can put three hundred dollars in one of these little banks for one church that would be great. But if you can't we understand. Some people might even be able to do ten churches, but you do whatever the Lord lays on your heart to do. Then turn this bank in sometime before the end of the month because during the second week of November I am actually going to a big conference, and I am going to present the church's gifts to the president of TTI, David Nelms. And we will know then how many churches we were able to be a part of starting around the globe.

So I just want this bank to kind of be a reminder. You may have seen the little video I made already, but I just wanted to be sure everyone was aware of it. I also wanted to tell you that we had a great September. We had baptisms, we had salvations, and we had all kinds of training going on. There are things going on here all week long that many people aren't aware of. For instance we have an AA group that meets here every Tuesday. And literally dozens of people are coming and being a part of that.

We have Bible studies Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We have a Mop ministry going on. We have training that has been occurring on Friday and Saturday, and men and women's coffees on Saturday mornings. There are literally things going on every day of the week all across the campus. And thank you all for being so faithful and inviting your friends and neighbors. We have another New Members class starting at the end of the month. And we want to continue to invite you to be a part of what God is doing here at Life Fellowship.

Praise the Lord we hit budget last month! Pastor Ben preached on giving last week and he threw me completely under the bus, but we hit budget with a record September offering. So Pastor Ben can throw me under the bus anytime he wants to on giving. He and I have a good time joking back and forth. By the way pray for him as he is in Pennsylvania this week training pastors who are planting churches all across the northeast. It is part of our extended mission program to see these churches planted.

This year, 2019, we have been focusing on the letter E in the L-I-F-E which is 'embracing the Great Commission.' For the last two years our elders got together and

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

they gave us a challenge to do a better job on that. And we really bore down on that this year. That is why we have been teaching through the book of Acts, that is why we are doing this series. Next year we are going to kind of broaden our focus a little bit and I will explain that in a moment. We did what we call a ‘hard reset’ on our focus for evangelism, and praise the Lord we have seen many people saved this year, and many people being baptized.

Now what we did last week is we took our entire staff team, which was the first time we have done this in 15 years, and the entire staff team went away for a little retreat. We went up to the Lifeway Conference Center at Ridgecrest where they have a really great facility. It was private, no televisions, and good food. We took our team there and we prayed over the church and over individual needs. But we also got deeper into the preparations for things we want to accomplish in 2020. This is going to be a really important year to address some things that we have heard from you that were on your heart, things regarding family, marriage, training, discipleship and all different kinds of topics.

So while this year we have stayed really focused on the E in L-I-F-E, next year I think you can kind of expect us to be hitting a lot of different areas that will be really practical for us. Please be praying for the staff as we complete these plans. We have a tremendous team, and we had a great time in prayer, sharing and planning. I just want to say thank you again for your support of this team, for your generosity in giving, and for your participation. These are important things and I believe that is why God is using Life Fellowship.

This morning we are starting this series called, ‘The Art of Neighboring.’ And that is not just here, in fact nearly one hundred churches all across the Metrolina region are participating in this series. Here in this area I know for a fact Grace Covenant is doing it, Lake Forest is doing it in a couple of their different campuses, as well as in Denver, and Davidson. And in Huntersville and in Cornelius there are churches that are participating also. So you are a part of something that we are trying to do in terms of unifying the body of Christ to make a difference in our communities, to change the amount of loss-ness, and to increase the number of Christians that are there.

You know we plant churches, but sometimes when we plant churches what happens is people move from this church to that church and little churches die and big churches get bigger. We strategically want to move away from that impact, and instead see people who do not know Christ, and who have not been a part of a church body, absolutely turn their lives upside down because of their devotion to Jesus Christ. And it begins with us.

## LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES Dan Burrell

---

But let's be honest, when we are in here we are not neighbors; we are family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. For the most part 98 percent of us would be self-proclaimed Christ followers. We love Him, we care about Him, and I think sometimes when we do things for neighbors we are actually doing things for family, people we know, people we go to church with, people we go to Bible study with, and that is good, that is healthy, that is part of being part of the body of Christ. In fact the Apostle Paul talked about taking care of the spiritual family first and we need to do that.

But beyond that we have been called into the community. You know we throw out the term 'neighbor' around rather fluidly. For instance if you are a native southerner you know it is kind of a greeting. You see someone and you say, '*Howdy neighbor.*' It is just kind of a generic term, and it means we recognize them as a member of the local community when we use that term. Insurance companies also use it as a sales technique. '*Like a good neighbor,*' that insurance company is supposed to be there. Actually I found out a few years ago that they weren't there for me because after 40 years they dropped me like a hot potato and I hadn't even had a wreck. I don't know what brought that on.

Now probably someone here works for them, and I will apologize now, I am just griping. I am sure they are a fine company; they just got tired of me. But the fact is there is that kind of corporate value that says we want you to count on us as being there for you when you are in need. Perhaps one of your favorite television shows when you were growing up may have been, '*It's a Wonderful Day in the Neighborhood.*' And who was that? (*Audience says - Mr. Rogers.*)

I took my wife to see a movie the other night and we saw a preview where Tom Hanks is starring in this movie that I am looking forward to seeing because it is about Mr. Rogers. He was a Presbyterian minister as well as this children's PBS host, and I am interested in his story. We kind of grew up with the idea that 'would you be, could you be my neighbor.' And that was considered a core value that we would want to have as part of our life. But let's be honest, our world has changed a lot in the last 50, 60, 70 years.

Our neighborhoods no longer have houses with big front porches on them. If you go through an old community such as we would see if we drove through Georgia. All these houses would have big front porches on them, and because it was before air conditioning they would sit out on these porches where it was cooler. There were sidewalks in front of the houses and they would exchange greetings with their neighbors as they passed by. '*How are the kids? How is your garden this year? Have you heard about the neighbor down the street?*' You gossiped, you visited, and you caught up with happenings in the neighborhood from your front porch.

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

I live in a beautiful community off of 84, and it is a wonderful place that we love, but my front porch is about four times the size of the top of this pulpit right here. I mean if there are more than two people on it somebody is going to fall off. There aren't any railings, and it kind of gives a message of *'don't stay long on my front porch.'* There isn't even an overhang, so if someone knocks on my door when it is raining they are going to get wet.

The fact is that in my neighborhood there are no sidewalks, so if you are going to walk your dog you walk in the street. And there are very few front porches in my neighborhood, and most of those are not conducive to sit on. But I will tell you that I have a beautiful deck in my backyard. And my backyard is about five times the size of my front yard. And I have a pergola out there with a fire pit and a ceiling fan to keep us cool. And all around the pergola the previous owner put big beautiful shades up so I can sit out there and nobody can see me. And by the way I have a big fence all the way around the back yard.

And if that is not enough my neighbor was good enough to put like 40 foot tall pine trees between me and him. Now they were there before I moved in so it was not a reaction to me and my crazy family, but there is a lot of privacy. And that is how we have built our communities, isn't it? It used to be that kids would run through the neighborhoods in packs on their bicycles - remember that? Not any more. They are on their trampolines that have the sides on them so they don't fall off and break their necks. And they have their own private swimming pools. And if a neighbor happens to come over mom is going to dash out assuming that they are the local child molester. No one is supposed to talk to our children.

We have changed a lot, and some of it is because of bad things happening in the community. We are nervous about everyone. *'I saw my neighbor looking in my backyard and I wonder what is going on. Do I need a security system?'* Things have changed. There used to be a phrase between neighbors like, *'I need to come over to borrow a cup of sugar.'* When is the last time anybody in this room had somebody come by and actually need a cup of sugar? We don't do that today, right? No, you get in your car, drive 30 minutes and stand in line with weird people at Walmart to get your five pound bag of sugar, hoping not to make eye contact with anyone. That is how we function. It just doesn't work in the neighbor department the way that it used to.

They have this new invention, and I have asked for one for Christmas, and it just shows you what kind of neighbor I am. It is a doorbell with a camera, and you have an app on your phone so you don't even have to get out of your recliner when the doorbell rings, right? *'What do you want?'* At my house when the doorbell rings you hear

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

something like this: *'Do you think they know we are here? Oh no, there are cars in the driveway.'* (Laughter.) *'Did you order something from Amazon maybe? No, well it is probably Jehovah witnesses.'* (Laughter.)

But that is our culture today, isn't it? So let's talk about the art of neighborliness, because to be honest, most of us are really, really bad at it. In fact State Farm probably is more like a good neighbor than we are. At least they know our names, our addresses, our age and what kind of car we drive. And as I was preparing for this message several weeks ago, I came upon some hard truths, some hard realities, things I don't want to admit about myself.

In fact I live in a neighborhood that has 54 homes and I started counting how many of my neighbors that I actually knew their names. It was only three, two of whom are members of Life Fellowship. And the other neighbor, one of two know them, and you told them your pastor lives in their neighborhood. So they came over and introduced themselves to me. *'We know so and so who goes to your church,'* and they are Christians. I am embarrassed. I need this sermon, and I am telling you that up front.

I make excuses. I do. They are not good excuses, but I hide behind them. I am an introvert. Many people don't know that but most pastors are. We love people because being an introvert doesn't mean you don't love people; being an introvert means that after a period of time people drain your batteries and you need to be recharged. There are some people who like to be around people, and when they are they get excited. Their batteries are charged and they want to go out and have more coffee, more neighbors and more fun. And you are really one or the other. It is not good, and it is not bad, it is just a reality.

It is not like I don't like people, but you make me tired and then I need a nap. Okay? Then I am ready to go again. So often when I go into my home it has been after a busy day, and I isolate. But who do I spend most of my time with - y'all. That is who I spend my time with - y'all - which is a good southern term for 'you people.' And as much as I love you, there are also people that their yard is connected to mine that don't know Jesus, that don't know me, and I don't know them. And when I look at the passage of Scripture we are going to look at this morning, I am convicted.

So this is not a series I chose. This is not a sermon that all of a sudden the Holy Spirit came down and said, *'Dan, this is important for you to teach to the people at Life Fellowship.'* This one was assigned to me. We are part of a hundred churches doing this. I got the first sermon. Next week it will be Pastor Ben, the week after that it will be one of our Elders, Andy Barker, who is going to speak on the next one in this series. But I

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

think the Holy Spirit has been speaking to me, and hopefully if He has spoken to me maybe there will be something that will connect with you as well.

So let's look at Luke Chapter 10 and find out what was going on here. We are going to start in verse 29. And let me kind of set this up for you, because throughout the chapter Jesus is teaching principles here and there. If you have a red letter Bible you will see that most of this chapter is Jesus speaking and teaching. By the time you get to verse 25 what is going on is this smart aleck attorney, this Jewish lawyer who has come up to Jesus and he is playing a game of 'gotcha' with Him. He is basically trying to get Jesus to say something that will get Him in trouble with the Law, with the authorities.

In doing so, he asks Jesus this question, *'What do I have to do, Mister Rabbi, Mister Son of God, Mister Messiah, in order to inherit eternal life?'* Jesus knew exactly what he was up to, and He wasn't going to fall victim to the game, so He used the cratic method of bringing people to truth by asking questions. Jesus looks back at the man and He says, *'Well, what does the Law say? What does your training say, Mister Self Righteous Jewish lawyer? What is it that you have read that you think needs to be done?'*

So the lawyer thought *'Game on,'* and he answered Jesus like this: *'I know that there is a great commandment given and the great commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and all your might, and your neighbor as yourself.'* Jesus said, *'You have answered well. You have the right answer.'* And the lawyer thought, *'I have to figure this out. I still have to catch Him.'* So he winged another question back at Jesus hoping that he could get Him to say something that would offend people.

Let's look in verse 29. ***"But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'"*** And Jesus replied by telling him a story. ***"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side."***

***"But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarli and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'"***

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

End of story, now the question that Jesus is going to ask the self-righteous, pious, religiously observant Jewish lawyer is this: *“Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?”* There was only one answer, and the lawyer gave it reluctantly: *He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You go and do likewise.’* What a beautiful setup, wonderful turns of phrase, and twists of verbal acuity going on here. You have an arrogant lawyer who is planning on nailing Jesus to the wall, and getting Him to say something outside of the Jewish law and tradition, and maybe even getting Him put in prison. And Jesus is thinking, *‘Watch this. I am getting ready to teach a very, very important lesson.’*

So when you peel the layers off this story there are some things we should know. First of all, we have the three travelers in addition to the man who was robbed and beaten. The road that they were speaking of when this man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho was a well-known trade route, but it was also one that had robbers and bandits constantly looking for victims. People would be killed for their money, because the robbers knew that men traveling that road had probably done business in one of the two cities, and they would be carrying their profit with them on their way home. It would be like our I77, an important route.

Now this man probably should have known better than to travel alone, but he did so, and he fell among robbers, got stripped, and then beaten half to death. He was left lying there on the road with no possessions left. Three men go by him, the first one was a priest, a holy man, a religious leader, a man of faith, but what does the Bible say he does? He sees the injured man, but he walks over on the far side of the road and continues on. The second guy was a Levite, once again from a religious tribe of scribes and scholars, people of faith, known for their piety. What does he do? He goes over on the other side of the road as well, and continues on his way.

The third man was a Samaritan. Who were the Samaritans? They were considered to be trailer trash. If you live in a trailer I am sorry; I used to live in one myself, but trailer trash is just an expression. But the Samaritans were considered to be unworthy because they were not Jews and they were not Gentiles; they were half-breeds. So the Jews hated them because they were half Gentile, and the Gentiles hated them because they were half Jews. Nobody liked the Samaritans. In fact an orthodox devout Jew would not even have been allowed to walk through the land of Samaria where the half breed Samaritans lived. Instead they were to walk around it.

Every time you read about a Samaritan in Scripture and Jesus interacting with them, like the woman at the well, it would cause a scandal, because good Jews were not supposed to talk to Samaritans. They were not considered to be good people in the eyes

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

of the self-righteous. And so in this story here is a man who has always been at the receiving end of discrimination, bias and hatred, a man who would probably have had a chip on his shoulder if he lived today. He was oppressed, he was in the minority, he was a guy that no one cared about except his own clan. And yet when he went by the injured man, this Samaritan was moved to compassion, and he stopped and ministered to him.

He put oil and wine on his wounds. Why would that be significant? Well, the wine had alcohol in it and that was an antiseptic that would flush out the germs. And the oil was a soother. It would be like putting a cream on an abrasion, and that would keep the friction from making it more painful. So the Samaritan poured antiseptic and a soother on, and then he wrapped up the wounds. Then he picks up the injured man and puts him on his own donkey, takes him to an inn, and tucks him in bed. And then he goes to the innkeeper and pays for the room, leaves a little extra money for his care, and tells the innkeeper if there is more due when he comes back he will repay it also.

Wow! And Jesus asked Mr. High and Mighty, Mr. Self-righteous, Mr. Expert in the Law, *‘Which of these three guys understood what it means to be a good neighbor? Was it the priest? Was it the educated devout man? Or was it the low life that you probably wouldn’t have even spoken to had he came across your path?’* And the lawyer was trapped. There was only one answer. It was the man who had compassion, the man who reached out, the man who made a difference, the man who invested in someone.

And so today, I want us to look at some of the characteristics of neighborliness, and for us to ask ourselves, *‘Am I a good neighbor? Am I really there for people in need?’* This isn’t a hugely deep message; in fact it is very easily understood. If you study the wonderful ministry of Christ you understand that the message of the gospel, the message of Christianity, the message of Godly living is not complicated. You don’t have to be a lawyer, you don’t have to be born on the right side of the tracks, you don’t have to be educated, and you don’t even have to be grown up. In fact it is so simple that even a child understands it.

Everybody should be able to do this, everybody should be able to be a good neighbor, and everybody should be able to understand the difference that Christ makes in their lives. Everybody should understand that we are sinners in need of a Savior and that Jesus paid that price for our sins so we could go to Heaven. It is that childlike faith that makes a difference. All of us can make a difference in the Kingdom of God. All of us can be a good neighbor. All of us can have an impact. You don’t have to be wealthy, you don’t have to be articulate, you don’t have to be gregarious, all you have to be is willing.

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

So let's look at these five very basic characteristics that we see in this story. Here is the first one - you have to have open eyes. Listen to what it says in verse 33, and by the way it was true of all three of these guys, they all had this same thing apply to them, ***“And when they saw him.”*** But there is a difference between seeing him superficially than seeing him and being moved. The first two guys saw him only as a nuisance, as a problem, as an inconvenience, as something they didn't want to get involved with. It wasn't until the Samaritan came along that he was seen for what was needed and what could be done for him.

And I will say this, one of the things the Holy Spirit has had a lifelong mission in my life to change is the fact that it is quite possible for many of us to see people all around us, to look at people all around us but without seeing their real needs. I am an intense kind of guy as you probably have already figured out. People all the time ask me if I am mad about something. No, I am just thinking. I wish I had a happier face. I wish there was some kind of magic formula that would make me look cheerful all the time because I would do that. Maybe we should take an offering sometime for plastic surgery for Pastor Dan. (*Laughter.*)

I am not an unhappy person; I am a very happy person, I just look like the pigs just ate my grandpa or something. (*Laughter.*) I don't know what it is, but I think I need to get a staple gun and tack my lips up, but it is probably just genetic. But the fact is I am intense, and there are many times in my life when I will be so intent on where I am going, what I am thinking about, what is next on my schedule, who do I need to talk to that I will walk cluelessly wherever I go. I will walk by people that I need to speak to, I will miss needs and opportunities, and it drives me crazy. And the Holy Spirit is still working on me in this area.

I will share an illustration with you that I have argued with the Holy Spirit all week long about this one illustration. I hate using this illustration, and I think I have only used it one other time here. In fact this isn't even in my notes today, but I handwrote it in this morning because finally the Holy Spirit won. When I first went to Albania on one of my very first mission projects it was right after Communism fell in the early 1990s. It was a sad pathetic place because the Communists had absolutely ravaged that country. The people there were so broken, there was such poverty, there were kids lying out in the street sleeping on cardboard, gypsies everywhere, and drug addict babies. There were little kids begging for money everywhere, and it was a tough, sad place.

I was working with orphans and planting a church traveling back and forth from the USA to Albania and leaving my poor wife and our four kids alone a lot. We would helicopter up in the villages to do all this mission work staying very focused on the work

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

that needed done. One day I was walking down the street in Tirana, Albania, and I can tell you what it looked like to this day because the Holy Spirit has etched it in my mind. I was walking toward the center of the city, talking to a friend of mine who was my interpreter, intensely planning what all we needed to do that day.

And I see this little kid going back and forth about 50 yards ahead of me. I see him, I absolutely see him, but I am continuing to walk and talk. Here is this kid and he didn't have any legs. I don't know whether they had been cut off or he was born without legs, but instead of legs he used his hands. He had rags wrapped around his hands and he was using his hands to walk. And he was fast, dashing in and out of the street, trying to stop the people who were walking by stopping in front of them, and holding out his hand for money. That was how he survived because he probably didn't have any parents.

And I see this going on as I am walking and talking about the church we are going to plant and so on, and boom this kid comes right in front of me. And do you know what I did? I literally just hopped over him, kept on talking and walking without even breaking my stride for about 15 or more paces. And then the Holy Spirit reached down and grabbed me by the nape of the neck. *'Pastor and Missionary Dan, what did you just do?'* And it dawned on me how horrible I had been to just step over this little crippled kid without even pausing.

I hate admitting that. But I will tell you this, it was one of the most important lessons the Holy Spirit has ever taught me. I turned around and I went back and I engaged that kid in a conversation through the interpreter and I gave him some money. I happened to have a tract with me that had been translated in the Albanian language, and I gave it to him hoping he could read or someone would read it to him. And there may be people from Albania watching us on the feed this morning, and they may know me well enough to remember this story. But from that point forward whether I was in Albania or wherever I go, the Holy Spirit still uses that to remind me, to keep me humble, and more importantly, to make me more aware.

I wish I could tell you that I have solved this problem in my life, but there will still be times when I am talking to someone at lunch, and I can literally talk to them, read the menu, order my lunch, and never make eye contact with the server. And then the Holy Spirit will say, *'Remember the Albanian crippled boy? What are you doing, Dan?'* And I have to stop and focus in on my surroundings. And do you know what I often see whenever I am looking through His eyes and not mine? I see someone who is having a hard day, who is overworked, who is a single mom trying to keep her kids fed, or a guy who has lost his way, or a college student who is struggling with his faith. And when I take a moment and start a conversation with them I can find out a little about them,

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

maybe where they go to school, and ask them if they go to church anywhere. And a good conversation can just flow out of that.

But you know what my tendency is? I'm busy, I'm here for a meeting, I have to eat lunch quickly and get back to the office. And yet we have neighbors all along our path. People who are broken and crippled, people who are beaten and bleeding, people who are hungry and needy. How many times is it easier for us to look at them, but not really see them? And this hits me where I live.

The second thing we see in verse 33 is this - the third man had a compassionate heart. The difference between looking and making a difference was the compassionate heart. The priest went by and he looked, but did nothing. The Levite walked by, looked at him and did nothing. The Samaritan walked by, looked at him, really saw him and had a compassionate heart. It was not said of the first two men, it was only said of him.

The difference between the two religious men and the Samaritan was found in the response, "***he had compassion.***" This was kind of a risky action taken by an unlikely neighbor who was in the wrong neighborhood. He was willing to proactively minister to make a difference in this man's life. And he might have been afraid the injured man would say to him, '*I don't want you touching me because you are a filthy Samaritan.*' But he didn't let that stop him, he just knew this was a man who needed some help. How many times in our lives do we miss the opportunity to make a difference because of our prejudice, our pride, our busyness, our callousness, our politics, our background, our education, or our accents. We let those be the barriers that cover up our compassion that we ought to have because of what Christ has done for us.

I was preparing this message over a week ago, because I knew we were going to have a staff retreat, and I wanted to get it started before we left. And I saw something start coming across my Facebook feed, and probably some of you saw it as well. It was a story and when I read it I got choked up. It was the story of a 19 or 20 year old college student by the name of Juan O'Neal who attends Stetson University, which is a Southern Baptist liberal arts school. Juan is an African American, and he was in a restaurant in Deland, Florida.

So as he is walking in the restaurant he sees a police officer. And unless you have been under a rock you know that there is a lot of tension between young African American men and law enforcement, a lot of tension. And if you have young African American friends you can talk to them and they will tell you what that feels like. There are some great police officers who are doing their best to try to fix this, but it isn't fixed yet. But this young man paused by that officer whose name was Cameron Tucker and he

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

asked if he could pray over him. And then Juan reached down and puts his hand on the officer's shoulder and he begins praying over this police officer.



The officer's wife was sitting there, and she was flabbergasted. It may have been when Juan stopped at their table she may even have gotten nervous. But she pulls out her phone and takes a picture of what was occurring, and she posted it on her Facebook feed, after breaking down and weeping at the implication of what had just occurred at their lunch table. And in doing so the picture went viral over the Internet, because this young man looked, and instead of seeing an obstacle, he saw an opportunity. And he was Jesus in that moment. He not only caused healing in that little booth at that restaurant, but he caused healing across the nation when the story went viral.

There was another story this week that happened while I was at the Staff Retreat so I didn't read about it until later. But it was a story of the African American man who was murdered in his home by a white female police officer, Amber Guyger. She had claimed she had gone into the wrong apartment, she pulled out her gun and she shot this African American man by mistake in his own apartment. She was then found guilty of murder by a jury. And when it came to the sentencing phase the victim's family get a change to speak. And an 18 year old African American brother of the victim looked into the face of the white female police officer and asked the judge for permission to speak to her directly. He then spoke words of forgiveness, and of healing, and he told her she needed Jesus.

The African American female judge did something that she got a lot of heat for, but she told the defendant she was going to give her a Bible to read in prison. And in that courtroom there was healing that took place. There was compassion that flowed out and there was a difference that was made. When it hit the news some people were outraged, and some people were blessed, but I want you to understand that we could see a little bit of Jesus there. We could see good neighbors there.

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

Can you imagine the impact if every person in this room, if every person in the hundred churches that are hearing this message this morning, would leave church this morning and whether they go to a restaurant, their own home, to Kohl's, to work tomorrow, or to their neighborhood community, if just one time in the next 24 hours every one of us looked in the eyes of someone the world has told us we should look down on, or we should be afraid of, and said, '*I will be that neighbor who loves God first and love you because I love Him.*' (Applause.) What a difference we could make. And it begins with a compassionate heart and open eyes.

The third thing was willing hands, as the Samaritan did for the injured man. I love the fact that you have the head, you have the heart and then you have the hands. That's a holistic approach to the gospel right there. We know to do the right thing, we are moved emotionally, and we take action. So the Samaritan neighbor took care of his wounds, he lifted up on his own donkey, and he took him to an inn for assistance. It wasn't enough to just see, and it wasn't enough to just care; he had to do something. And I wonder how much good ministry is stopped between our heart and our hands, in that moment when it requires us to get involved.

The fourth thing is this - a generous involvement. Verse 35 says, "***He took out two denarli and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'***" This wasn't just about doing, it was about giving. He had to open his wallet. The Samaritan paid the tab for the room, and before the days of credit cards he opened up an account with the innkeeper and promised to settle up for anything else that was needed. He went above and beyond. Generosity doesn't do the minimum; it takes it to a whole other level. And that is what he did. What he had was God's, and because it was His, he was using it for the man in need.

The last thing is - dedicated time. He told the innkeeper when he came back he would take care of any additional costs. I don't know about some of you, but for me on many days my time is worth more than my money. It is easier to open my wallet, or to write a check than to give you an hour of my time. But the Samaritan was willing to put his business on hold, he went out of his way to make a return trip to make sure he didn't owe any more. His time may have been the greatest sacrifice of all for him to go down that road one more time, but he came back.

So what does that mean for us? What does it look like in practical terms? Let me give you four things to think about. Number one - will we notice the one that God is going to place in our path today as an opportunity to be the good neighbor? Would you join me in praying, because I have to pray for this myself all the time, that Lord, when

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

you put someone in my path this day that I will not do the two step shuffle, the walk by on the other side, the averted eyes, the check my wallet. But I will stop, I will be moved, I will take action, I will be generous, I will share my time. That is a good neighbor. And there is someone out there for every one of us if we will look.

Second - are we willing to make a goal of learning the name of the neighbors whose homes and yards border our own this week? The person that we have waved to for years, but we don't even know their name. The person who is on the other side of that fence, who we might get a little irritated at because their leaves fall over in our yard, or their crabgrass spreads under the fence. Or that neighbor that you see their kids out there blowing the dandelions into your yard. (*Laughter.*)

Would you learn their names? Understand what we are asking, we are not asking you to pull a Billy Graham and preach them a sermon. That is not what we are asking. We are not asking you to turn into the neighborhood Jehovah Witness, knocking on their door every Saturday morning at 9 o'clock. We are asking you to start by learning their names, to be interested in them, find out how many kids they have, find out about their jobs, where they moved here from, just get to know them.

Number three - are you willing to ask this question - what does generosity look like for me in how I conduct my life and business? For some of us generosity means investing some time, to others it means opening our wallets. For some of us it means when we go to get the mums at Home Depot or Lowe's, instead of buying one we buy two and we put one of them on our front porch and we walk over to our neighbor and say, '*Hey neighbor, I have an extra mum. Would you like it for your front porch?*' It can be as simple as that. Start there, it is not hard. All of us can do that.

The last thing is this - will we take this moment to identify which facts of being a good neighbor are we are most likely to struggle with? Which one of those areas is it? Is it the look, is it the compassion, is it the being willing to do something, is it the generosity, or is it the time? Which one of those five areas are we most likely to struggle with? Let's identify that and then let's stomp it. Let's do something about it.

You see it is easy in this room to hear something, to see a picture, and to understand a story, but the transformative work of the Holy Spirit begins when we get in our cars and we drive away. We are family here, so of course we love each other, even when we get irritated with each other, because that is what families do, but we are still family. But out there we are neighbors. Are we willing to take the next step? And as we go through this, my challenge, the church's challenge, the challenge of the pastors, and the challenge of the word of God is - let's figure this out and let the gospel take root by just being a good neighbor. It is the first step in the journey toward healing.

**LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR**  
**THE ART OF NEIGHBORING SERIES**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

Our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed and we invite you at this moment to begin that process of self-examination and response that ought to be part of all of our lives, it ought to be a discipline for us. Ask the Holy Spirit to show us what we needed to hear this day. And then ask Him to remind us whenever the opportunity comes to put into practice that which we have identified in this room. So will you begin that process now by inviting the Holy Spirit to speak to you? And I pray for you and for me that we will have fewer future moments where we walk by the on other side, fewer future moments when we hop over the crippled boy, fewer future moments when we don't look the waitress or the waiter in the eye and be interested in them. I pray that we will have fewer moments when we get irritated at our neighbor rather than looking for the opportunity to bless them, fewer moments when we would walk by someone with whom the world has told us we should have animosity or fear or bias or hatred toward, the person who has the co-exist bumper sticker on their car that just irks you, or the one who has the Bernie Sanders sticker or the Trump sticker that you would really like to give a piece of your mind to, and the person in front of you who just doesn't seem to get that you are in a hurry. Would you be, could you be, their neighbor?

The altar will be open and you can pray up here, or one of our pastors will be over at the side if you want to pray with them. If you want to take communion, if you are a Christ follower, and you want to remember the sacrifice of Christ to draw you closer to Him, you can do that over here. If you have sin in your life that you are not dealing with, then don't take communion, but let this be a moment of calling you to Him. Maybe even as we sing these songs, you will let the Holy Spirit bring a name of a neighbor to your mind and you make a holy vow before God right where you are and say this week I will make a difference. Let's stand as we pray.

*Father, thank you for this story. We have heard it since we were kids, and yet Father, so many times we just don't live it, even though we know it. Father, I pray for myself that you would keep me from ever jumping over a crippled boy again, that you would keep me from being so busy and self-centered and self-righteous that I don't see the needs around me, the ones for whom you died, the ones that you would have me be you for them. Holy Spirit, keep me sensitive that my eyes would be open, my heart would be compassionate, my hands would be ready, my wallet would be emptied, and my time would be invested, so that we will indeed practice that great commandment to love you first and to love others like we love ourselves. And let it begin with me. For it is in Christ's name I pray. Amen.*

*The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.*