

## "Love Your Neighbor"

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Below is a transcript of this week's video blog post:

Good morning faithful eNews readers. It's Lance Finley coming to you from Findlay, Ohio. I don't know about where you live, but here in Findlay, March didn't necessarily come in like a lion, but it's not necessarily a lamb either. So we're out in the neighborhood on this chilly morning in March and we're just a couple of blocks actually from the General Conference office. The General Conference office is actually located more in a residential neighborhood. And I'm guessing that many of you work in places that might be a residential neighborhoods or even your church may be located in a residential neighborhood.

One of the things I've been thinking about for a long time now and even feeling convicted about and trying to do my homework to be obedient in this matter is one of the things we find in Scripture, Luke 10. We are told that Jesus was asked by a lawyer, "How do you inherit eternal life?" Of course, Jesus, being the teacher that he is, turned that back to the lawyer and said, "You know the law, how do you read it?" The lawyer replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind and love your neighbor as you love yourself." And Jesus answered, "You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live." And we're told that the lawyer wanted to justify himself. So he asked the question, "Well who is my neighbor?" And in response to that, of course, Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan, which I think most of you are

probably familiar with. A man is traveling and attacked on the road and left for dead and, as the story goes, a priest passed by and he didn't decide to stop and help. A Levite passed by and he too decided it wasn't worth the risk. And then along came a Samaritan, probably the least likely person to stop and give aid - but he did. He took care of the man, transported him to a local inn and made sure he was cared for. And in wrapping up that story Jesus asks the lawyer, "Who was a neighbor to the man that was injured?" He answered, "...the one who had mercy on him."

Of course, we know that the implication of that is, this idea of loving our neighbor as we love ourselves really has no geographic boundary or relational boundary. A neighbor could be someone we happen along that is in need of mercy and we can be God's agent in demonstrating that mercy. But I think it's interesting that in our culture we've seen a shift where many of us live in neighborhoods where we may not know our neighbors. That's just one of those things about North American culture these days. We pull into garages, we have back yards, we don't do front porches so much anymore. And so many of us may live in a place or work in a place or maybe even worship in a place where we have lots of neighbors. We are in a neighborhood, but we don't know very much about those neighbors. And we certainly don't have much of a connection or relationship.

And I just wonder this morning, as you think about the second greatest commandment, "to love your neighbor as you love yourself", is it really possible for us to love people that we don't know? We may not know their names, we may not know anything about their lives. And so I've been challenged here recently in my own life and in my own neighborhood to make a real effort to just try to introduce myself, to learn my neighbors' names, to learn a bit about their lives so I can be better equipped to actually love them and to serve them and bear witness to the reality of Jesus in my life and allow them to see that. So I'm wondering this morning maybe for you personally, maybe you are in a neighborhood where the neighborhood has changed and you don't know many of the neighbors. Maybe the best thing you can do in doing the work of spreading the good news of Jesus is just simply to introduce yourself to your neighbors. Take that first step of loving your neighbor as you love yourself. I just wanted to encourage you with that today. It's not rocket science. Jesus calls us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. When we do that we have the opportunity to take the gospel to the world.