

# THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

**Biblical Passages:** Luke 10:25-37

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Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a pastor and theologian born in Breslau, Germany, in 1906. With the world on the brink of World War II, Bonhoeffer landed a job as a seminary professor in New York. He was a continent away from all the dangers of the war when he wrote, "I have come to the conclusion that I made a mistake in coming to America and I shall have no right to take part in the restoration of Christian life in Germany after the war unless I share the trials of this time with my people." Therefore, after less than a month of safety in the United States, Bonhoeffer returned to Germany and worked to sneak Jews out of the country. Tragically, the Nazis eventually caught Bonhoeffer and executed him. But the Nazi doctor who was present at Bonhoeffer's death said that he had "hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God." Bonhoeffer had decided that there was no cost too steep when it came to caring for those who were in need.

Read Luke 10:25-37. Notice that the lawyer in today's passage did not ask Jesus any clarifying questions about loving God. Instead, the lawyer focused his attentions on the part about loving his neighbor. It's possible that the lawyer glossed over the part about loving God because he thought he had that bit figured out. After all, he had spent his entire life in careful, diligent study of God's Law. Surely, he had done his part in knowing what was important to God. He was able to declare that he loved God with all of his being.

However, Scripture emphasizes that if we don't love one another, then we certainly don't love God. When we encounter God's love for us, when we experience His compassion, when we enjoy His fatherly care, *then* it becomes impossible not to love others, to have compassion on others, and to care for others. We see this kind of full tilt, extravagant love in Bonhoeffer and in the Samaritan.

## CONNECTION QUESTIONS

1. What benefits do we experience when we begin caring for others?
2. Why does Scripture celebrate those who have compassion on others?
3. Why is it incorrect to suggest that people should just look out for themselves?
4. In what ways will today's passage change the way we serve others this week?