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# The

# Steward's Philosophy

Luke 10:25-37

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by Bill Smith

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JESUS emphasized concepts because all of our actions are influenced by our concepts. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus dealt with our view of the people who are different from us. In it He also dealt with man's concept of life in general. He knew that our concepts of life will determine our conduct with our fellow stewards and the world.

This has become so obvious to us in recent years, as we have confronted Communist governments bent on expansion. In the Korean and Vietnam conflicts it was not unusual for the Communist military leaders to fling thousands of their young men into a charge against impenetrable defenses. While a Christian nation spares no expense to save the life of even one man, the atheistic government uses their people for gunfodder. They view people as mere animals, without the dignity of a Creator.

Look at the contrast between the atheist's concept of lifestyle as opposed to that of the Christian's. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die!" is the hedonistic philosophy of the "accidents of nature." How different the Christian's, whose purpose in life is to develop a Christ-like nature and whose mission is to serve God and his fellowman. He has hope of eternal life, and it shows in his living.

Everyone has a philosophy of life. What is yours? Have you ever stopped to examine and evaluate it? In this parable Jesus forces His hearers to look at their philosophy of life. He gives

them the three possible views of life and expects them to choose the proper one.

## I. THE ROBBERS' PHILOSOPHY

You can sum up the philosophy of the robbers in these words: "What is yours is mine, if I can get it!" This is the "might makes right" view, the "survival of the fittest."

This is the philosophy of the aggressor, whether the aggressor is an individual or a nation of people. James deals with this problem in James 4:1, 2: "What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. . . ."

This philosophy is the choice of the criminal, the looter, the gambler, as well as that of the rapist and molester. These are lazy, cruel, unloving, self-seeking people. They fill our jails; they make our world a fearful, armed camp.

Unfortunately, not all who hold this philosophy have gained the ill repute that they deserve. In business you see respected men eliminate their competition with power squeezes. They take advantage of any weakness to destroy their peers. They are cruel and unloving as the gangster with a gun, but they are harder to recognize because they are clothed with respectability. They are wolves in sheep's clothing!

In sports, these are the ones who would deliberately cripple an opponent to win a game. In

morals, these are the men who would rob a young girl of her virtue, her reputation, her self-respect, and maybe her life, for a few minutes of pleasure. These do not consider the consequences that their actions may have on others. They actually believe that to destroy another shows their own superiority. This is the result of the theory of organic evolution. Certainly, it is a philosophy unfit for a Christian or anyone who desires to be more than a beast.

I hesitate to make this next observation because it is so accusing. Yet it is necessary that I do so. I honestly believe that the Christian who lives in such a way as to rob a person of his soul has this philosophy. By this I mean the one whose influence turns another away from his Savior. Or, the Christian who gets what he wants and in doing so causes some soul to be lost. It might be his evil example that another follows, or it may be his failure to do what could prevent one's doom. But to deliberately do that which destroys another, or to neglect to do that which would save another, demonstrates this philosophy of life. Paul rejects this attitude in 1 Corinthians 8:4-13 as unworthy of his calling.

## II. THE PRIEST'S AND LEVITE'S PHILOSOPHY

You get the idea that the priest and the Levite would never be guilty of doing to this man what the robbers did. Instead, their philosophy seems to be: "What is mine is mine, if I can keep it." To them, "Charity begins at home!" They are content to "mind their own business." They do not want to become involved in something that is none of their business.

The lawyer of our text desired to escape responsibility by appealing to a technicality: "Who is my neighbor?" (10:29). This view of life seems to be marked by a detached, aloof attitude. The people who espouse it are the spectator-type, who "haven't done anything"! Sadly, it is more than a coincidence that these two who held this view in the parable were religious people. Those who are restrained from abusing another by their religion may not be prevented from neglecting another by it.

Which is worse: to inflict pain or to deliberately leave one in pain? You would not push a helpless child into deep water, but would you jump in to save one that someone else had

pushed in? Neglect has killed more people than abuse.

Let us try to apply this Levite's philosophy to today's situation. A missionary from Africa makes an appeal for financial help in order to go preach the gospel to the lost people in Africa. Would you give to make his mission possible? I know you would not steal out of the collection plate, but would you feel that you had too many responsibilities of your own and that someone else should take care of this man's needs?

How long has it been since you went looking for needy people to assist? Do you depend upon the government, secular organizations, or even the church to do your benevolent work for you? You may not have caused their poverty, but can you assist them with it?

Does it affect you to see prejudice and discrimination in your society and even in the church? Or do you mind your own business and let everyone else do the same?

An honest charge made against the church is neglect. Those outside the church cannot challenge our doctrine, but there is room for doubt that we are practicing what we preach. Covetousness is mean and ugly. No wonder God equates it with idolatry (Colossians 3:5). God is a giving God. He gave us the universe; He gave us our bodies; He gave us our lives; He gave us people to love. He gave us food, clothing, shelter; and the sun and rain. Even more important, He gave us a Savior, a spiritual family, a beautiful life, and a hope for eternity. When you think of God, you think of gifts!

For a selfish, unsharing, covetous person to claim fellowship with God is ludicrous. He has nothing in common with God. We help others because we have been helped. (See Matthew 18:21-35.) We freely give because we have freely received (Matthew 10:8). We cannot pass by on the other side. What if Christ had not come our way and stopped to pick us up?

## III. THE GOOD SAMARITAN'S PHILOSOPHY

We do not know the name of the hero of this story, but the ages have bestowed upon him the title of "good."

What better name could we wear? The word *good* has a bad connotation with evil and rebellious, but it is a worthy designation. The term

“Good Samaritan” has become synonymous with helping those in distress.

What was his philosophy? “What is mine is yours, if you need it!” What a beautiful attitude toward the material. It is the proper attitude, and one to emulate. Paul said, “For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content” (1 Timothy 6:7, 8).

The Good Samaritan had caught the spirit of true stewardship. All things belong to God (Psalms 24:1). He was using his time, talents, efforts, and money the way God would have him use them. He had no doubt in his mind what God wanted him to do when he came upon a pitiful, abused, dying man who was created in the image of God. He would do what God did: “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). He would do what Jesus did:

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:5-8).

This was an application of the Golden Rule: “However you want people to treat you, so treat them” (Matthew 7:12). The Samaritan’s philosophy was a *do* philosophy, not just a *say* one. Jesus despised the philosophers or talkers. He pronounced woes upon the scribes and Pharisees because “they say, and do not” (Matthew 23:3). Jesus wasn’t interested in what His followers were saying about their calling; He wanted to know, “What do you do more than others?” (Matthew 5:47).

Surely what we have believed will be important at the judgment, but only inasmuch as it has moved us to action. The goats and the sheep were separated according to what they had done:

“Come . . . for I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; . . .” (Matthew 25:31-46).

## CONCLUSION

As you reflect upon these three philosophies of life, can you tell me which one is yours?

You might not ever waylay an innocent person on the highway and beat him to death for his money, but you might have the same philosophy that led the robbers to do so. This is the danger: Your actions may be more sophisticated, but your motives may be the same. If this is your view of life, it is unworthy of you. This view should be exchanged for a better one.

Is yours the philosophy of the religious people who passed by the hurt Jew? They were not going to attack anyone, but neither were they going to help anyone. They were going to stay out of it. You cannot stay out of it! Jesus said, “Come!” and to refuse is to rebel. We have come upon broken, lost, and doomed souls. If we walk by on the other side, they will die in their sins. God forbid that we live for self and not for Jesus and His work! Christians who are trying to stand on the sidelines and let others win the game are unworthy of their calling and destined for destruction.

May yours be the philosophy of the Samaritan’s. You too, will be called “good,” and the One that you represent will receive the glory (Matthew 5:16). People will say, “God must be good because His people are good!”

Which should be your philosophy? Jesus answered this plainly in our parable: “Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?’ And he said, ‘The one who showed mercy toward him.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do the same’” (Luke 10:36, 37). We know what to do. Let us do it!

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## *Illustrations*

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### *Ain't It Good to Give?*

When a feller's feeling friendly  
'Cause he's got a bit ahead,  
And he sees some little person  
With a heart that feels like  
lead  
(Perhaps a helpless babe, or  
cripple,  
Crying for the right to live),  
Ain't it good to have a nest egg?  
Tell me . . . Ain't it good to  
give?

Little babies, pale and helpless,  
Older youngsters, bent and  
gray;  
Folks like you and me with feel-  
ings  
Hurt by pranks that fate can  
play.  
They are looking and a-hopin'  
For a better chance to live.  
When so much help costs so little,  
Tell me . . . Ain't it good to  
give?

When you see a youngster  
stumble  
When by stretchin' out your  
hand  
You can get him past the rough  
spot,  
And help him straight to  
stand?  
You can take the chance of leavin'  
Helpless tots in pain to live?  
When at night you face your  
conscience,  
Tell me . . . Ain't it good to  
give?

### *Speak to the Present*

It has well been said that no-  
body goes to church to find out  
what happened to the Jebusites.  
A sermon that lingers in the past  
tense is not really a sermon at  
all: it is either a Bible story or a  
lecture. We *live* in the present  
tense and we need to hear what  
God has to say to us *today*.

Warren Wiersbe & David Wiersbe,  
*The Elements of Preaching*

### *If We Give*

It doesn't matter who you are,  
Or what you have to do.  
If you give of your very best  
The best returns to you.

A law of compensation works,  
We get just what we earn,  
If we love others with our hearts,  
We get love in return.

The little things we sometimes do  
For others day by day,  
Return quite unexpectedly  
In some peculiar way.

Herbert Parker

### *Be Organized*

God is not the author of con-  
fusion, but some preachers are.