

University Heights Church
of Christ
445 Columbia Ave.,
Lexington, KY 40508
(859) 255-6257
www.uheightschurch.com

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday

Bible Study: 9:45 AM

Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 PM (This is
immediately followed by a
short worship period)

First Friday of Each Month

Singing: 7:30 PM

LEADERSHIP

Elders

David Collins
John Thompson
Troy Antle

Evangelist

Adam Litmer

Deacons

Richard Brundige
Matt Thompson
Adam Litmer
Bill Morelan
Jim Parsons
Pat Seabolt
Adam Daniels
Jamie Powell

In need of prayers

Jim Parsons, Jackie Litmer, Rick
Small, Bobbie Atkisson, Edith
Huffman, Diane Thompson, Karen
Spivey, Jeff Howerton (also his aunt),
Rhonda Boyd (and her sister,
Dorothy), Paul Atkisson, Lois
Weatherholt, Cassie Neel, Keia
Burton, Robert Brundige, Valerie and
Barry Boyd, Erlene Young, Larry Sells,
Evelyn Damron, John Blessing,
William Roberts, Paul Lyda, Annie
Allen, Elijah Ossege, Chassey and
Paisley Seabolt, Tammy Goble,
Veronica Bowman, Cindi Bradbury,
Jennifer Strutz, Steve Stewart, Linda
Humphrey, Karen Eifler and Chery
Botts (aunts of James' Weatherholt),
Roy Daniel (Adam's uncle)

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The Extra Step

John Thompson

I was at the cash register at a local hardware store paying for my purchases and by way of conversation asked the young cashier if he was working hard. Apparently, this was his cue to expound on his philosophy of work and employment, which he proceeded to do. He said he never works hard. If he did his employer would have to pay him more. He went on to say he only does the minimum and never takes the extra step.

Walking to my car I found myself being rather critical of this young man and immediately began composing this bulletin article in my mind. What a shame, I thought, that this young man was content with just getting by. How selfish he must be to consider "going the extra mile" to be beneath him or too much for him to handle. Since then, however, I'm a bit ambivalent about this fellow. On the one hand there is a need for people who are content doing their little bit towards a well-functioning society, and too much ambition can lead to all sorts of misbehavior. On the other hand, there is a need for those who are willing to take what might be considered extra steps. They are the ones who pick up the pieces, take up the slack, pitch in without being coerced, and give of themselves in a variety of ways.

The Bible is filled with examples of people who took the extra step and we learn great lessons from them. Perhaps the one that stands out the most in the minds of Bible students is the parable of the Good Samaritan. The parable is found in Luke 10:30-37. A man travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho was robbed, beaten, stripped of his clothing and left for dead. You will recall that a Levite and a Priest went out of their way, not to assist the injured man, but to avoid him by crossing to the other side of the

road. It is true that the Law of Moses contained numerous provisions regarding being in contact with dead bodies, but neither the priest nor the Levite troubled themselves to go look. They simply crossed to the other side. The farther they removed themselves from the injured man the easier it was for them to pretend they didn't even see him, and there was less chance they would be seen by someone else and criticized for their neglect.

Then along came a Samaritan who had compassion on a Jew who very likely would have had no compassion on him were their situations reversed. The Jews and the Samaritans had a history of hatred for one another for several centuries, but this particular Samaritan had compassion on this injured Jew when the Jew's own countrymen had none. His willingness to take the extra step put to shame the pious Levite and the Priest. The Samaritan did not just go up to the injured man, stand over him, shake his head, proclaim how unfortunate, and then continue on his journey. Here is what the Bible says the Samaritan did for the injured Jew: *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 denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'* (Luke 10:34-35)

One cannot commend the Samaritan enough for what he did for the injured Jew. He seems to have acted spontaneously without regard for his own personal inconvenience. Nor does he seem motivated by a desire for personal gain. After getting the injured man to an inn and caring for him overnight, the Samaritan continued on his journey the next morning, having left money for the Jew's continued care. Perhaps the most exemplary action by the Samaritan was his intent to remain interested in the Jew's welfare and pay for additional costs. Any of his actions alone would have been enough to establish him as a compassionate man, but, taking all of his actions together, he is an extraordinary example of selfless generosity. We wonder if we could ever measure up to such a one. It is easy to conclude that this is just a story Jesus told to make a point and that the Samaritan's actions are so idealistic as

to be unrealistic, but we must not lose sight of who Jesus told this story to and why.

A lawyer, intending to put Jesus to the test, questioned him, "*Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*" Jesus answered, as he often did, the question with one of his own, "*What is written in the Law? How do you read it?*" Apparently, the lawyer knew the law because he answered correctly, "*You shall 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 your neighbor as yourself.*" Then, Jesus answered the lawyer's original question, "*You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.*" What was the lawyer to do to inherit eternal life? Love God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind and his neighbor as himself and he would live eternally.

But the lawyer wasn't finished. Continuing to test Jesus and desiring to justify himself, he asked, "*And who is my neighbor?*", That question is what prompted Jesus to tell the parable of the Good Samaritan. The incident concludes with Jesus asking the lawyer, "*Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?*" ³⁷ He said, "*The one who showed him mercy.*" And Jesus said to him, "*You go, and do likewise.*"

Jesus informed the lawyer of what was expected of him: 1) Love God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind and his neighbor as himself; and 2) be a neighbor and show mercy as he had opportunity. It seems to me that Jesus considered those two expectations to be ordinary, not extraordinary. It seems to me that Jesus is saying what man considers to be the extra step is really just the next step that a Christian ought to be taking. What do you think?

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:10)

