

**PSALM 25: 4-5 "SHOW ME YOUR WAYS, O LORD" GROUP BIBLE STUDIES –
LEARNER'S PACKET - LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES**

LESSON #8 – GOD'S WAY OF CARING

GOD'S WAY - A sparrow built its nest in a freight car while it was in the shop for repair. When the car was placed back into service, a nest full of young sparrows seemed about to be robbed of a mother's care. The car traveled several hundred miles, but the mother would not desert her young. The sympathy of the trainmen was touched and they notified the division superintendent. He ordered the car out of commission until the little birds were able to care for themselves. I wonder, if a great railroad system can be protect helpless sparrows, is it not possible that God, the great Superintendent of the universe, will order all things for the good of His children? We begin with prayer:

THE PRAYER -Dear Lord, it is often easier to love all of humanity than it is to love the neighbor next door. We forget the lesson that Jesus showed us: people need loving the most when they deserve it the least. Help us to love our neighbor when he needs it. In the Name of our Savior, we ask it. Amen.

THE WORLD'S WAY – Most of our planet's citizens believe that everyone, everything around is there to help them. They are the ones who should be cared for. They are the ones who should be treated with respect. But it isn't their job to care for, or help, anyone else. The best anyone can expect is that they don't go out of their way to cause anyone any discomfort. Live and let live is their motto. That falls far short of the Christian way of caring that the Savior encouraged.

THOUGHT: Jesus expects His followers to love their enemies, love those who mock us, threaten us, inflicts pain upon us, and perhaps, worst of all, live next door to us. That is the kind of caring God had when He sent His Son to save us. It is the kind of caring that conquers the world. Let's take a look at Scripture and see how God's people care for those closest to them:

SCRIPTURE SEARCH 1 –

PASSAGE	QUESTION	ANSWER
Genesis 3: 12	Did Adam take the responsibility for sin?	_____
Genesis 4: 5-8	Did Cain rejoice for his brother's success?	_____
Genesis 27: 12	Did Jacob respect his brother's blessing?	_____
Genesis 30: 1	How did Rachel feel about her sister?	_____
Genesis 37: 4	How did Joseph's brothers feel about him?	_____
2 Samuel 11: 2 - 3	How did David feel about this next door neighbor?	_____
1 Kings 21: 4	How did King Ahab feel about his neighbor?	_____

We could produce other texts which say that it is hardest to love the person who is closest to you. Look at this passage and answer the questions:

PASSAGE	QUESTION	ANSWER
Luke 4: 16	Where was Jesus?	_____
Luke 4: 22	What was the initial reaction to Him?	_____
Luke 4: 24	What was Jesus reaction to them?	_____
Luke 4: 28	What was their reaction to His words?	_____
Luke 4: 29	What did they try to do?	_____

FIRST APPLICATION:

Like the people of Nazareth, most folks practice an eye-for-an-eye kind of life. When people are kind to them, they will repay the kindness. When they are treated unjustly, that is repaid, too. Christian care is different. It insists on giving mercy and justice to our neighbor. That's what John tells us in the epistle:

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2. SCRIPTURE SEARCH - THE WAY OF GOD IS GOOD AND BEST

PASSAGE	QUESTION	ANSWER
James 2: 1	What should we not do to our neighbor?	_____
James 2: 4	What happens we do that?	_____
James 2: 15-16	What kind of needs should Christians answer? For whom?	_____ _____
James 2: 16	Are good wishes, and pious platitudes enough?	_____

James is telling us that we need to transfer internal faith into external actions. That is what happened years ago when:

THOUGHT & ILLUSTRATION: - When Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes moved to Washington, D.C., the church he was joining called new members to the front of the sanctuary during the service. The first man called up was a Chinese laundryman. When the dozen or so other people were called forward they stood as far away as possible. Only Chief Justice Hughes took a place beside the Chinese laundryman. After the welcoming, the minister turned to the congregation and said, "Please do not miss the fact that at the cross of Jesus Christ the ground is level."

Can you think of times when we, at our church, and community, may not keep the ground level?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
4. The "untouchables" of our town are: _____
How can we remedy the problem? _____

Does this sentence make a difference: Care looks through a telescope; envy, through a microscope?
How? _____

What do we risk when we try to care for others, especially those close to us? _____

The closer we are to the ones we care for the easier it is for them to hurt us. Yet, if we are to follow Jesus, that is what we must do.

The only option we have to following Jesus is to make sure we care for no one and keep our Christian compassion and brotherly love occupied with foolish follies, little luxuries, and passionate pursuits. We need to keep our Christian care locked up, safe in a casket of selfishness. If we DO manage to close off our care, we will never be hurt or broken. We can be equally sure that others will not be touched by the Savior's reflection in us.

That is neither what Jesus asks or encourages. By the power of the Spirit, He tells us to _____ our neighbor as ourselves.....He gives us the _____ to turn the world from being a nasty _____ to a beautiful _____. That is the God's way of caring.

THE WAY OF PRAYER – Dear Lord, the test of Christian care is not how we relate to saints and scholars but to rascals, relatives and neighbors. Grant me daily grace to do well on this test so Jesus may be glorified. Amen.