

“WHO qualifies as your neighbor?,” by Dr. Chris Jones

The Christian Bible says, **“Love thy neighbor as thyself”**. Almost every religion known to man commands or calls us to treat our neighbors with love, care, kindness, and respect.

I’m an ordained minister, so I’m most familiar with what the Bible says. But here is the real question: **WHO qualifies as your neighbor?**

Does someone need to act like you to qualify as your neighbor? Does someone need to have the same upbringing or the same hopes and dreams to qualify as your neighbor? Does someone need to be in the same tax bracket to qualify as your neighbor? Does someone need to be your same race or color to qualify as your neighbor?

As you spend time with family and friends this holiday season, I ask you to take time to think about that question – **WHO qualifies as your neighbor?**

Let me leave you with what my Christian Bible says about WHO qualifies. There are many scriptures that apply, but in this case, I will use Luke 10:25-37.

*29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, **“And who is my neighbor?”***

30 In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the inn keeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

36 *“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”*

37 *The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” **Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”***

I would love to hear how you determine WHO qualifies as your neighbor. Let me know by sharing your thoughts at chrisjoneslistens@gmail.com.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to each of you!