

International Conversation Café

Is Faith Relevant to My Life?

Human Need: Contribution

All of us are made with the need to feel that we contribute to the growth and development of others. Looking at families, we see much of parenting involves nurturing our children, in their physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual development. Parenting, while often challenging, brings enormous pleasure as we see our children grow and develop into loving, intelligent, wise, and productive young people. Outside of family life, people contribute in a variety of ways to help those in need.

Name organizations, careers, and examples of ways people contribute to the welfare of others. Tell about a time you have been helped by someone outside of your family?

Jesus emphasized the idea of giving to others in need. Assign the parts for the following reading.

Narrator- One day an authority on the law stood up to test Jesus.

Legal Expert- Teacher, what must I do to receive eternal life?

Jesus- What is written in the Law? How do you understand it?

Legal Expert- Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your strength and with all your mind; and, love your neighbor as you love yourself.

Jesus- You have answered correctly. Do that and you will live.

Narrator- But the man wanted to make himself look good. So, he asked Jesus,

Legal Expert- And who is my neighbor?

Jesus- A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Robbers attacked him. They stripped off his clothes and beat him. Then they went away, leaving him almost dead.

A priest (a temple worker) happened to be going down that same road. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

A Levite (another kind of temple worker) also came by. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side too.

But a Samaritan (someone from the northern part of Israel) came to the place where the man was. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him. He went to him, poured olive oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey. He brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins. He gave them to the owner of the inn. 'Take care of him,' he said. 'When I return, I will pay you back for any extra expense you may have.'

Which of the three do you think was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by robbers?

Legal Expert- The one who felt sorry for him.

Jesus- Go and do as he did.

Part of the significance of this story comes from understanding the main characters. The priest and the Levite were religious workers in the temple in Jerusalem. Touching a dead body would have excluded them from serving in the temple, which was their job. Samaritans were a people that were racially mixed. Their ancestors were Jews that married people from other nations. As such, Jews and Samaritans hated and mistrusted each other.

*Retell the story in your own words.
How would you describe a "neighbor?"*

The humor of the story is the Samaritan was the one that did what was good. In the Jewish mind, they were capable of nothing good. Yet in this story, he is the hero.

*What then does this story teach us about God and his attitude toward people?
How should this influence our attitude toward people?*

Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Yet giving to others usually requires a sacrifice on our part. It might be our time, money, or preference to do something else.

In what way could the person giving be more blessed, deeply satisfied, than the person who receives the help?

What role does faith play in contributing to others?

Look at each part of this painting.

What do you notice?

How does the painting help you understand the story better?

If you were going to paint a picture of loving your neighbor, what would you paint?



Theodule-Augustin Ribot. The Good Samaritan. Before 1870. Oil on Canvas, 98 x 131 cm. Musée des beaux-arts de Pau, Pau, Aquitaine, France