

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

The Cost of Investing – Nah, I’m Good

September 5, 2022

It was so nice to have Pastor Shawn Bellner from the Whitehouse campus speak this week. He challenged us to pray at work for God to show us someone we can help. What a wonderful concept!

I understand the inner battles though. I get busy at work, there are constant interruptions, and then one more person walks through the door needing something. Yes, I really could help, but instead, I say, “Nah, I’m good,” and send them on to look for help elsewhere.

After all, wouldn’t helping someone else take time away from my own responsibilities? Am I willing to pay the cost of spending what little I have on someone else? What’s in it for me?

Selfish and self-centered is often our way. God’s way is to go out of our way.

Putting others' needs above our own always comes with a cost, but think of it as an opportunity to join God in the work he’s doing. In Luke 10, we learn of a Jewish man who had been attacked and left for dead.

Luke 10:30

Jesus replied with a story: “A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.”

If you had been traveling that day and came upon the man, what would you have done? Would you have helped or looked the other way? Would it take more energy to love or to hate?

God gives his commands out of love. He asks us to go out of our way, and when we do, the reward is so much greater.

Leviticus 19:18

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.”

We teach our children not to bully, to stand with a friend against bullies—not because it’s the easy thing to do, but because it’s the right thing to do. It’s God’s way of doing things. We should go out of our way to do the same.

Leviticus 19:16b

“Do not stand idly by when your neighbor’s life is threatened. I am the Lord.”

Questions:

Where are the everyday, ordinary opportunities for you to make a difference in someone else's life? Can you name at least three?

Next Steps:

Get to work a little early this week and take time to pray for God to bring you someone who needs your help.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for taking time for me today. Help me to see that person who needs to know I care. Remind me that the people who need my help are opportunities to reflect the love you have for me, not interruptions. It may not be convenient, and it may cost me, but I know it’s a good investment. In Jesus’ name, amen.

We Are All Neighbors – Nah, I’m Good

September 6, 2022

Admittedly, I like to add my interpretation to some rules, instructions, or orders by twisting the meaning to fit my wants. I did this as a kid more times than I should’ve.

Sometimes I wanted to ride my bike to the Findlay Mall to go to The Barrel of Fun Arcade, even though my mother and grandparents told me, “I better not catch you at the arcade.” You might have heard I wasn’t allowed to go, but I heard I could go to the arcade *if I didn’t get caught*.

We don’t always read the rules and laws of humanity the way they were intended. Sometimes it’s due to a lack of understanding, but quite often, it’s because we’re attempting to keep the focus on us alone.

Luke 10 clarifies the true meaning behind the most important commandment.

Luke 10:26-27

²⁶ Jesus replied, “What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?” ²⁷ The man answered, ““You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ And, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.”

I had fun manipulating the instructions, but explaining why I went to the arcade after getting caught didn’t work in my favor.

This past weekend, we learned that we often justify who we love and connect with and who we choose to distance ourselves from because our interpretation isn’t the same as God’s. The neighbor who looks like us, votes our way, or goes to CedarCreek is probably the person we don’t have any issues with when it’s time to “love your neighbor as yourself.” But why do we shy away from extending that love to someone who looks different, votes for the opposite party, or believes God is part of a fairytale?

God doesn’t choose to love. He *is* love, so why do we continue to believe we love God while ignoring the rest of his commandments? It’s more accurate to say we *like* God when we only live for ourselves.

Questions:

What are you doing to love God's people? Do you know it's okay to disagree with others? Do you take the time to show people you're living out God's word?

Next Steps:

Invite people to church who don't think like you. Pray that God reveals that one person to you. Take the time to understand the differences in other people.

Prayer:

Lord, help me reach those looking for you who don't know where to start. Grant me the patience to develop relationships with people who don't have faith in you, and keep me mindful that patience isn't always easy. Remind me of those who showed love to me when I wasn't willing to be loved. Amen.

Comfort or Compassion? – Nah, I’m Good

September 7, 2022

Growing up in a Christian household, I was very familiar with [“The Parable of the Good Samaritan.”](#) I have always been quick to judge the priest and the Levite—why didn’t they help the man who was brutally beaten and battered? How could they pass by such a heartbreaking scene in good conscience? Had they no compassion?

Luke 10:31-32

³¹ *“By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by.”* ³² *A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.”*

The priest and the Levite were familiar with ancient Jewish Law: one of the earliest commands God gave his people was to love their neighbors as themselves. This is a command that still stands for us as Jesus followers today. This sounds simple on the surface; most of us would agree that we would step in if we saw someone desperately hurting and in need of help. However, when we come across these situations in our daily lives, do we live it out?

Leviticus 19:18

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.”

I am not someone who likes to be the center of attention. Unfortunately, there are times when I feel called to help someone, but I hesitate because I’m afraid of what others will think. I will also admit that sometimes I feel hesitant because going out of my comfort zone is scary. It is much easier to stay in my own little social bubble and turn a blind eye to the suffering of those I may not have a lot in common with.

I look back on these situations and grieve for the missed opportunities that I had to show the love of Jesus, instead, choosing my own comfort and protecting my pride. It is easy to think that we cannot make a difference in the lives of those in need and walk away, convincing ourselves that it doesn’t matter. However, we are called to take up our crosses ([Luke 9:23](#)) and follow the

example of Jesus who laid down his life for you and me, people bruised and battered by life.

Jesus could have walked by and ignored our suffering, yet he didn't. Just as the Samaritan showed kindness and compassion to the Jewish man, Jesus did the same for us, reflecting the immense love and grace of God.

Let us strive to follow the example of the Samaritan and exude the love and grace of Jesus to our neighbors, even when it means sacrificing our comfort and time.

Questions:

How does the love and compassion of the good Samaritan relate to the love and grace of Jesus?

Has there been a time that you passed by someone who was struggling? What do you think stopped you from stepping in to help?

Next Steps:

Ask God to open your heart and eyes to those in need. Pray that he gives you an opportunity to be the "Samaritan," and then graciously give your support to someone in your life who is struggling.

Make it a goal this week to get out of your comfort zone and intentionally perform an act of kindness for a stranger or someone that you don't know very well. Use this opportunity to spread the love of Jesus to those whom God places in your life.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for providing us with an example of how to say "yes" to your will even when it is uncomfortable. Give us the courage to leave our comfort zones and stop walking past those in need, showing them the same love and compassion as the good Samaritan. Please provide us with opportunities to help those who are hurting and struggling, and guide us on how to help them in the way you call us to. In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Isabelle Billnitzer, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Roadside Miracles – Nah, I’m Good

September 8, 2022

Have you ever seen anyone on your way to work broken down on the side of the road? Perhaps you contemplated helping them out, but that cup of coffee sounded better, and you thought: “Nah, they’re good. They probably have someone coming to help.”

They say it's the thought that counts, but in a situation like passing by someone in need, *the thought* doesn't really help. *The thought* doesn't help them change their tire or call for help if they don't have a phone.

I've been one of those people on the side of the highway. I had a tire explode while I was going 70 mph, and I thank God I didn't crash or hurt someone else.

It was Christmas night, and I surely thought someone would see me, struggling, cold, wet (Did I mention it was raining?), and scared. I lit a flare, but either no one saw it or they didn't pay attention. I was trying to hurry, but when you hurry, mistakes can happen.

Luke 10:33-35

³³ “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. ³⁴ Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, ‘Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I’ll pay you the next time I’m here.’”

We often think the people who stop to help stranded drivers fall into one of two types of people: good or bad. I personally wouldn't have cared if an axe murderer had shown up that night if they helped me get off the side of the highway faster. I would have accepted any help.

Put yourself in the beaten man's shoes in Jesus' “Parable of the Good Samaritan” (assuming they hadn't been stolen). You're lying on the ground after you've been robbed, beaten, and left for dead. Now imagine your worst enemy sees you like that, and ... they pick you up, take you to the hospital, *and* pay your medical bills. I bet that is how the man felt when he realized it was a Samaritan who helped him.

Matthew 5:44-45

⁴⁴ *“But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! ⁴⁵ In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike”*

Even someone in this world who you thought would never help anyone can have compassion. God amazes us every day by putting people in our lives when we least expect it, and he works on his time, not ours. Remember how God arranged for Jonah to be on a ship with pagan sailors? By choosing to disobey God and going in the opposite direction, Jonah led the pagans to God, and they were saved.

So maybe the next time you *think* about stopping to help someone, say “Nah, I’m good” to that cup of coffee. Instead, show that person on the side of the road that they matter to you, and they matter to God.

Questions:

Have you ever been stranded and in need of help when someone stopped to do just that? Did you accept it, or did you say you were ok when you weren’t? Is accepting help from a stranger difficult? Would you rather be the one offering help?

Next Steps:

Volunteer your time to help others. Join an [outreach group](#) and let people know they matter. Take [GrowthTrack](#) and learn your gifts so you can serve others.

Prayer:

God, show me how I can help others within my capabilities. Guide me in gaining the courage to stop to ask if someone needs help. Father, open my eyes so I can see those in need, and allow me to use any situation I come across to lead others to you. In Jesus’ name, amen.

This post was written by Casey Stengel, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Show Up - Nah, I'm Good

September 9, 2022

What a series “Nah, I’m Good” has been! I have found it both challenging and encouraging. Frankly, this journey has been like some vacations. You know, the vacation with a daily itinerary packed so full, a period of recovery is required when you return home. This message series has offered much spiritual meat to process. Whew!

Thankfully, we have *finally* reached its end. Now we can wrap up the weekly lessons in a sturdy box, tie a lovely bow on it, and place it on a shelf.

After all, isn’t that how many of us live life? We step into our daily ritual, leaving no room for God. Sure, we may spend five minutes reading the Bible and offer a quick “bless my family and me” prayer as we rush into the new day. But then, it’s off to the races!

There is no measurable amount of room left in our schedule for God to show up—in big ways, much less small ways. We are hard-pressed to find any wiggle room in our day-to-day living. Would God expect any less of us? To be busy from sun up to sun down trumps the do-nothing couch potato! Right?

W-R-O-N-G!

When we slow down and choose to notice those around us, God often shows up. Such was the case as I interacted briefly with a young man in an elevator at Toledo Hospital years ago. Sleep deprivation had caused noticeable confusion. He briefly shared his great concern for his mother. He was staying by her bedside, escaping periodically to sleep in his van in the parking garage. Upon asking, he quickly allowed me to pray with him that morning. What an honor! We parted ways—he, to the van to sleep, and me to work.

It was a refreshing encounter when God arranged our paths to cross again two days later. It was profound to hear him report that his mother was significantly better. God had generously shown up!

Those memories remind me of God’s goodness—to me and to others, especially when I have a helpful mindset. Sadly, there remains within me an overabundance of self-centeredness and stinkin’ thinkin.’ I must choose each day to medicate these chronic conditions.

A daily dose of this week's bottom line is a great place to start: "God's WAY is to go out of OUR WAY." Another powerful antidote is found in Isaiah 55.

Isaiah 55:8-9 NASB

⁸ "For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord.
⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways
And My thoughts than your thoughts."

Questions:

What keeps you from getting involved when a genuine need presents itself?
What keeps you from altering your schedule to meet the needs of another?
What determines the number of times you are willing to reach into someone's life mess?

Next Steps:

Make a deliberate decision to get involved with someone in need when it is not convenient to do so. Be willing to leave the path you planned for the day to step into someone's messiness. Join a [Group](#). Extend an invitation for someone to join you at church.

Prayer:

Father, purify my heart. Cultivate the hardness within me. I want to be pliable in your hands, putting your goodness and your love on display. Help me see opportunities to go out of my way, boldly stepping into your way. Help me step into relationships where undeniable differences exist. Continue to equip me with the courage necessary to step past my comfort zone into the lives of others. Help me differentiate between the wisdom of silence and the weakness of cowardliness. Help me see opportunities where others see roadblocks. Give me gentle words to say when harsh words easily surface. In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Karen Peck, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.