

# ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah  
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## Understanding Torah Society

Part 10 – Loving My Neighbor

***Matithyah [Matthew] 22:39***

***39 “And a second like it is this,  
You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”***

There is this false idea today, in which these words of Yeshua have been twisted to mean, that one is commanded to love himself. This is not anywhere near the truth. Yeshua did not say that, nor did He mean that one is to love himself before he can love his neighbor. Nor does it mean that one has to love himself or else he cannot love his neighbor. This false idea has spawned a whole generation which has grown up with this false teaching of having one focused upon loving oneself. This is not Scriptural in the least! So what did it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?

Let us briefly consider what has become known to us today as the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Here are the last two verses of that parable.

***Luqa 10:36-37***

***36 “Which of these three, do you think proved to be a neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?”***

***37 And he said, “He that showed mercy on him.” And Yeshua said unto him, “Go, and you do likewise.”***

Yeshua fairly well answered that question when He was asked, “Who is my neighbor?” The answer Yeshua gave to answer that question was the story about the man who fell among thieves and was beaten and robbed and left for dead. Then a priest passed by and did nothing to help this man. After that a Levite passed by and did nothing to help this man. Both of these men took notice of the wounded man because they both went to the opposite side of the road. Then, finally, a Samaritan man passed by and he stopped and helped the man. Then he loaded him up and took him to the nearest inn. There he arranged for care of this man until he was well enough to leave.

So who was the neighbor, Yeshua asks? The answer, of course: the man who helped him. So let us put the question in a slightly different form; the answer still will be the same, but with greater instructional value for us. "Which of these men loved his neighbor as himself?" The answer is, once again, that the Samaritan man showed true self-sacrificing love towards the man in need. The Samaritan man loved the man in need as he would himself if he was in that same need. This is what it means to love one's neighbor as oneself.

Simply put, to love one's neighbor as oneself means to meet the needs of my neighbor as they become known. For instance, if you are hungry, what do you do? You get something to eat. So if your neighbor is hungry, what are you going to do to show your love for him? Feed him! If you are cold, what are you going to do? You are going to put on a coat. If your neighbor is cold, but has no coat, what are you going to do to show your love for your neighbor? You will get a coat for him and put it on him so he will not be cold. Whatever the need that we have in ourselves, we will meet that need in our neighbor. Likewise, if we see a need in our neighbor, then in order to show our love for him, we must meet his need.

Years ago, a friend of my wife was in need during the winter. She was without heat in her house. She had the means to burn wood, but no wood to burn to heat her house. My sons and I cut a load of firewood and took it to her house, unloaded it, and stacked it for her. If we would have needed wood for our own house, this is what we would have done. To love my neighbor then, simply means that I needed to cut some wood for her because she was in a position in which she could not do this herself.

***Ya'aqov [James] 2:15-16***

***15 If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food,***

***16 and one of you say to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled'; and yet you give them not the things needful to the body; what good does that do?***

Notice that Ya'aqov teaches this exact thing in his epistle; i.e., that we are to meet the needs of those around us. Otherwise, what good is our faith? It is good for nothing, unless we love our neighbor enough to meet his needs. Please understand that loving one's neighbor as oneself is about meeting his needs, not his wants. It is about helping him when he is unable to help himself to meet the needs of his life.

Loving our neighbor as ourselves is about how we are treating others! It is not about loving oneself as some teach. When one examines the Torah Moshe, he will find such commandments as pulling a neighbor's ox out of the ditch, even on Shabbat. The ox's life is in jeopardy and needs help to live. See, here is the thing: if we have an ox and it falls into a ditch, we will pull it out. We will do that even on Shabbat. As well we should! Likewise, if our neighbor's ox falls into a ditch, then we are to get that animal out of the ditch as if it were our own animal. That is the commandment of Torah! The saving of a life, even on Shabbat, is the highest and foremost commandment.

Another Torah commandment is that if we see an animal that has fallen under its burden, we are commanded to relieve it of its burden so it can get back upon its feet. We would certainly do this for our own beast of burden. And to show our love for our neighbor, we are to do the same for his beast of burden. Loving our neighbors as ourselves is about taking care of our neighbors. It is about watching over those around us as if they were our own family, because they are our family! This is what it means to live in a Torah society: knowing that each and every person around me, my neighbors, is all family. And because they are all family, I have a responsibility to watch over them and to care for them and to help them whenever possible.

It does not necessarily mean that I have to agree with everything in that person's life, that is, the way that he does things. YHWH leads that person in the way He wants them to live. He does the same for me. Loving my neighbor is allowing my neighbor to serve YHWH in the manner that YHWH directs him to serve Him. In fact, it means that, if necessary, I will actually help my neighbor accomplish what YHWH has led him to do, if he needs my help to get it done.

***B'reshit [Genesis] 4:9***

***YHWH said to Qa'yin, "Where is Hevel your brother?" And he replied, "I don't know; am I my brother's keeper?"***

In the previous part of this series we looked at being our [brother's keeper](#) in detail. This is what it means to love our neighbors as ourselves. When we are living and keeping Torah, then we will always be watching over one another in love, care, and respect. The thing that we need to see here is that the matter of obeying the second greatest commandment is about what we are doing to our neighbor. It is not about what we believe (doctrine). There are many who wrongly teach that these types of commandments only apply between believers. And, some go so far as to teach that these commandments can only rightly be applied to those of the same doctrine. Furthermore, if one is not a part of the same group, then these commandments do not apply to others outside their group. These types of teachings are clearly against Torah and all of Scripture.

Commonly, in the days of Yeshua, there was animosity between the Jew and the Samaritan. When the Samaritan man helped the man who had been robbed and beaten, he crossed that divide to be a neighbor. They did not believe the same way. They did not live the same way. To them, they were not neighbors. The Jewish man who had been robbed and beaten was passed by and not helped by fellow Jews, a priest and a Levite. Yeshua points out that it was the man who helped the wounded man, who was the neighbor. Helping our neighbor, loving our neighbor, is about what we do for him, not about having the right "beliefs" or needing to be in agreement with another person before I can extend a helping hand.

Let us consider this passage.

***Shemot [Exodus] 12:49***

***One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourns among you.***

Unless the Torah specifically states otherwise, all Torah commandments are for the entire nation of Israel and those who live among them, regardless of what they believe.

Don't you think that it is about time that we started acting like His people and behaving in a way that is pleasing to Him? Should we not begin by loving our neighbor whom we can see?

***Yochanan Aleph [1st John] 4:20***

***If a man says, "I love Elohim", and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, cannot love Elohim whom he has not seen.***

Yeshua tied the two greatest commandments together for a very good reason. We cannot truly keep one without keeping the other. If we are to have any hope of keeping and obeying the greatest commandment to love Elohim, then we must, of necessity, keep and obey the second greatest commandment. This is how we prove to those around us, and to Elohim Himself, that we love Him, by loving our neighbor.

The doctrine of loving self is focused upon self and who my neighbor is. This is what the Pharisees wanted to know that day. Who is my neighbor? Yeshua did not answer that question, but in typical fashion, replaced that question with a better question, a question more to the point. It is not, "Who is my neighbor?" Rather it is, "To whom are you being a neighbor?"

If a person sees a need in another person and passes by, then he has failed to be a neighbor to that person. In a Torah society, this should never happen. In a Torah society, each and every person is looking out for the interests of others.

***Philippians 2:4***

***not looking each of you to his own interests, but each of you also to the interests of others.***

I grew up in rural America. I still live in the country on a farm. The people around us, our neighbors, are not of the same beliefs as we are. However, if I have a need, if I need help in some way, all I need to do is ask and they are there for us. On occasion we would go for a walk along country roads. People whom we did not even know would stop and ask if we needed a ride or needed some type of assistance. These people did not claim to keep Torah as some do. Yet, they are much closer to the Kingdom than some who do claim to keep Torah and do not understand what it means to be a neighbor.

***Romans 2:14-15***

***14 (for when Gentiles that have not the Torah do by nature the things of the Torah, these, not having the Torah, are the Torah unto themselves;***

***15 in that they show the work of the Torah written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them);***

I have experienced more abuse and mistreatment at the hands of so-called “believers,” than I have ever experienced at the hands of those who make no such claim. Brethren, this ought not to be so! Let us all, with one heart, determine, as far as is possible for each of us, to treat all men with the kindness and compassion which He has bestowed upon us, for He has commanded us to do so.

The way a person lives every day of his life reveals what is in his heart. If the Torah is written upon a man’s heart, then the Torah will be manifested towards those around him, that is, he will be a neighbor towards those around him. If the Torah is not written upon his heart, then it will not be possible for the Torah to be manifested towards others; he will not be a neighbor to those around him. He will not show love, kindness, and respect towards others, but will wrongly expect love, kindness, and respect to be given to him, without his giving it to others.

A Torah society consists of individuals who know and understand what it means to be a neighbor. As such, regardless of what need is presented to him during the course of a day, he does what is within his own power to help meet that need. Then, those who may be waiting upon his arrival shall fully understand and support his being tardy, because they, too, understand what it means to be a neighbor and live by that same standard. In short, they are his neighbor as well.

Are you being a neighbor to those around you?

**1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:7**

***Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.***

Do those around you consider you a good neighbor?

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[www.onetorahforall.com](http://www.onetorahforall.com)

[zerubbabel@onetorahforall.com](mailto:zerubbabel@onetorahforall.com)

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