



SKIDDING INTO ETERNITY

LESSON 123 → Luke 10:25-37

Victor learned what it means to be a good neighbor.

The rain was coming down in sheets as Victor and his family drove home from church. His dad had trouble seeing through the blurred windshield, so they wound their way slowly up the dark mountainside.

Victor's thoughts drifted to the sermon they had heard that night. The topic was loving your neighbor as yourself, and the minister had used Jesus' example of the Good

Samaritan. The words of Jesus echoed in Victor's mind, "Go, and do thou likewise."

Just then, Victor's sister screamed. He looked up and saw the headlights of a car that was careening wildly toward them. Their father quickly swerved to avoid hitting the oncoming vehicle and then struggled to get back on the curving road. The tires skidded uselessly on the rain-slick pavement and the van slid sideways toward the embankment. The



JESUS HELPS ME TO LOVE EVERYONE.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. — Mark 12:31

last thing Victor remembered was his parents' praying as they all went over the edge into the darkness.

Victor opened his eyes on an amazing sight. He saw thousands of people standing before a Throne, and upon the Throne sat a Person too marvelous to describe. As Victor watched, he noticed the people were being separated one by one into two groups.

I'm dead, he thought, and this is the Judgment!

A hand touched him on the shoulder and Victor spun around to see the shining figure of an angel with a loving face.

"Victor, thirteen years of age," the angel began, "and how have you spent your short life?"

Victor stood speechless.

The angel continued, "Your time has come to stand before the Throne. Can you answer that you have loved the Lord with all your heart, mind, body, soul, and strength?"

Victor knew that he had prayed and was really saved long before the accident happened so he relaxed a little and answered, "Yes."

The angel bent a little closer and looked straight into Victor's eyes. His voice was serious as he asked one more question. "And have you loved your neighbor as yourself?"

Questions began to rise in Victor's mind as they had when he heard the sermon that night. He began to think about his family and his friends at church and at school. He knew he had treated them like he wanted to be treated.

"I think I have."

The angel looked at Victor for a long moment, then said, "What about the Sunday school boy that walks to the night meetings and always sits over to the side of the room? He looks so lonely, and never speaks up in class. Nobody talks to him except some of the adults. Is he your neighbor, Victor?"

Victor looked startled. "Well, I guess he is, in a way."

"How about the boy that lives in the old house on the corner whose father is disabled?" the angel continued. "Remember him? He's the one that always gets left out because he doesn't have a bicycle like the other kids. Just last week, Andy said not to include him because he couldn't keep up with the rest of you. How did you respond, Victor? Is he your neighbor?"

Victor nodded soberly. "Yes."

"What about the elderly lady who lives across the street? She needs someone to talk to her to fill the lonely hours, but no one has the time. You've noticed on sunny days how she stands by her gate and watches everyone who walks by. Is she your neighbor, Victor?"

Again Victor nodded. "Yes, she is. And you don't have to go on. I realize now I have neglected those that Jesus wanted me to love. Oh, how I wish I had thought to reach out to them before."

When he heard his name called, Victor turned to face the Throne.

"Victor! Victor! Can you hear us?" His parents' voices seemed to come from a long distance away. Feeling as if he were struggling through a mist, Victor slowly opened his eyes.

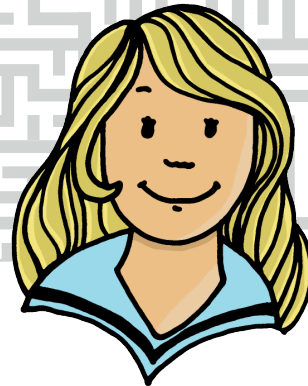
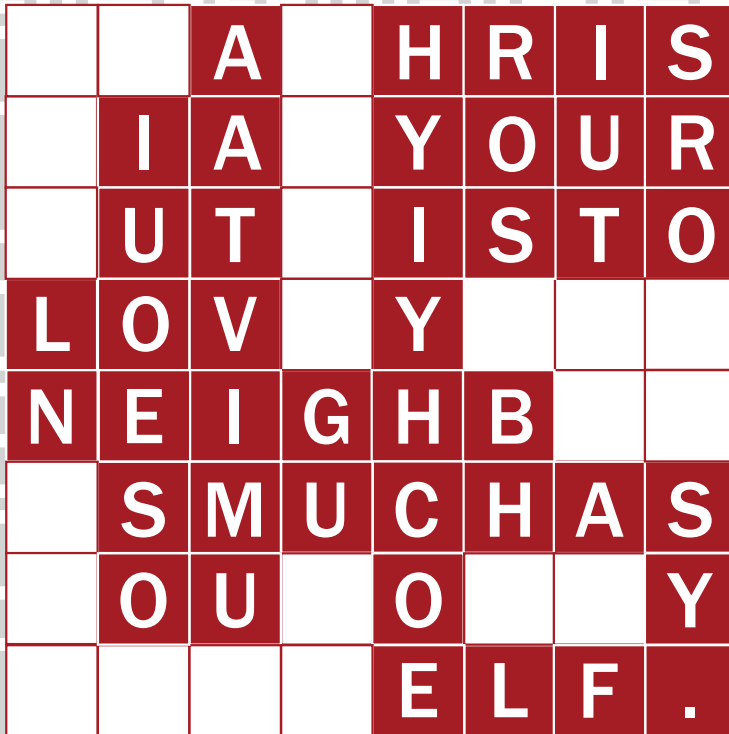
"Dad! Mom! What happened? Where am I? Am I alive?"

His dad's face came into focus. "Yes, thank God you're alive. It's a miracle. Two trees stopped us from plunging down into the canyon. You must have hit your head because you've been unconscious for a little while."

Then I really wasn't at the Judgment, Victor thought. It must have been a dream. But I am glad I had it! I've learned an important lesson. I now know what it means to love my neighbor as myself.

WHO IS YOUR NEIGHBOR?

Your neighbor is anyone you come in contact with. How should you feel about that person? To find the answer, solve the puzzle below. Decide where each shape fits and write in the missing letters. Then write the letters in the order given on the lines below.



The important thought in this lesson is...
